

# TOPIC PAPER

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

## **HOUSING TOPIC PAPER**

Published November 2010



For further information on this report please contact Planning Policy, Woking Borough Council, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey, GU21 6YL. Tel: 01483 743871.  
Email: [planning.policy@woking.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@woking.gov.uk)

## Housing Topic Paper

### Table of contents

	Page
Summary	3
1. Introduction	6
2. Housing requirements	9
Background context	9
The case for housing growth	9
Financial incentive	10
Past completions	11
3. The policy context	13
National context	13
Local context	14
4. A summary of the evidence base	17
5. Housing need	19
The current picture	19
Current need	24
Future need	25
The specific need for family homes	26
Housing for older people	26
6. Housing land supply position	28
7. Development of previously developed land and greenfield sites	30
8. Making efficient use of land	31
9. Supply and capacity of deliverable sites – family homes	32
10. Viability	36

Appendix 1 List of developable housing sites 2017/18 – 2026/27

Appendix 2 History of Woking's housing requirement

Appendix 3 Housing options to test through Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal

Appendix 4 Justification of Woking's housing target

## **Summary**

This Housing Topic Paper has been prepared to support Woking's Local Development Framework (LDF). It sets out the contextual framework for the Borough in relation to housing development and seeks to aid understanding of the key issues and challenges that need to be addressed through the LDF.

Specifically, this paper sets out the key policies and strategies that influence housing developments in Woking Borough and describes the key messages emerging from the evidence base in relation to housing need and housing land supply.

### **The changing policy context**

- The policy context for new housing development is changing. Following the election of the Coalition Government in May 2010, a new Decentralisation and Localism Bill has been introduced which will introduce changes to the way in which the planning system operates. Prior to the Bills movement through Parliament, the Government has already taken steps to make a number of early changes such as the removal of a national minimum density requirement and the removal of back garden land from the definition of previously developed land. Significantly, in July 2010, the Government revoked Regional Strategies meaning that the South East Plan no longer forms part of the development plan for Woking.
- Access to decent and affordable housing for local people and key workers is one of the key aims of Woking's Community Strategy. In addition, the provision of affordable housing is one of the Council's own corporate priorities.

### **The case for growth**

- The background context to considering housing issues is the changing picture with regard to Woking's population and changing demographic make-up. Woking's population will continue to increase over the lifetime of the Core Strategy and, in line with the national trend, an increase in the number of single-person and older-person households is also expected.
- Sustainable growth is important to ensure the creation of a sustainable community for Woking. New housing development supports economic growth, maintains the vitality and viability of the town and village centres, aids physical regeneration and provides much needed affordable homes for key workers, for example. The Coalition Government has made clear that those local authorities who deliver growth will be rewarded financially through the New Homes Bonus.

### **Current and future housing need**

- Based on the most recent Housing Needs Survey (2007) it is estimated that there are around 1,030 households in genuine housing need in Woking.
- It is estimated that 499 net additional affordable dwellings per year are needed to house those in need. Whilst there is still a need to provide one bedroom affordable homes, the vast majority of need is for 2+ bed family homes. In addition, there is a need to ensure that sufficient suitable homes are provided for the Borough's growing elderly population.

### **Housing land supply**

- Local authorities are required to plan for 15 years of housing land supply from the date of the adoption of the Core Strategy (scheduled for 2012).

- The Council's latest SHLAA (2010) shows that there are sufficient deliverable sites for the seven-year period 2010/11 – 2016/17 when tested against the housing requirement that was set out in the (now revoked) South East Plan.
- However, the SHLAA has not identified sufficient sites which are considered to be developable against that target during the period 2017/18 – 2026/27. There is a shortfall of 554 dwellings. This points to the need for the Council to identify broad locations for development in the latter part of the plan period, which may require the release of some Green Belt land. It should also be noted that the majority of sites that are identified post 2017/18 are located in the town and village centres, and largely only suitable for flatted developments which will lead to difficulties in delivering the right mix of dwellings.
- On the basis of the evidence, it is considered that the level of housing growth being planned for in the Core Strategy (i.e. 292 new dwellings per year) is a reasonable and realistic target for the Borough given the capacity of sites and the level of environmental constraints present.

### **Previously developed land and greenfield sites**

- The re-use of previously developed land is an important objective for the Core Strategy. Since 2006, the Council has been successful in delivering 99.6% of new residential development on previously developed land. However, on the basis of the findings of the SHMA and SHLAA it is likely that greenfield land will need to be used in the future to ensure continued delivery of housing – and particularly affordable family housing.
- It should be noted that the recent changes to national policy regarding back garden land may mean that the level of development on greenfield land will increase.

### **Making efficient use of land**

- Making efficient use of land is important for housing delivery, and wider considerations such as reducing the impacts of climate change. It is important to note that the removal of the national minimum density of 30dph may have consequences for future delivery and it is therefore important that the Core Strategy has a strong policy on residential density.

### **Family homes**

- There is a need for around 70% of new affordable homes to be family homes.
- It is estimated that an additional 1,296 (gross) new family homes could be provided in the Borough during the seven year period 2010/11 and 2016/17 and it is possible that, subject to detailed planning consent, 514 of these will be *affordable* family homes. Against an estimated need for an additional 2,445 affordable family homes over that period there is therefore a shortfall of 1,931 dwellings.

### **Viability**

- The provision of new affordable housing is a key issue for Woking. Traditionally, new affordable homes are provided on the back of market schemes. However, ensuring that schemes are financially viable is crucial for ensuring the release of sites and therefore a continued housing land supply.
- The Council's Economic Viability Assessment has found that a headline affordable housing target of 40% applicable to schemes of 15+ dwellings can be supported through the Core Strategy. In addition to this, the requirement for a smaller proportion of affordable homes on sites less than 15 units is supported. Higher levels of affordable housing (up to 50%) are likely to be viable on greenfield sites and on land in public ownership.

- Flexibility will be needed on the application of affordable housing targets in the short-term with respect to current market difficulties and especially if the collective costs burden on schemes is to rise significantly (e.g. Code for Sustainable Homes and wider planning obligations).

## **Housing Topic Paper**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Housing Topic Paper has been prepared to support Woking's Local Development Framework (LDF). It sets out the contextual framework for the Borough in relation to housing development, and seeks to aid understanding of the key issues and challenges that need to be addressed through the LDF.
- 1.2 The new Coalition Government is introducing a number of changes to the planning system. In the Queen's Speech on 25 May 2010, the Government announced a new Decentralisation and Localism Bill. Details are yet to be published, however, key elements of the Bill will be:
- The abolition of Regional Strategies
  - The return of decision making powers on housing and planning to local councils
  - The introduction of new powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure
  - The creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships to replace Regional Development Agencies.
- 1.3 The changes to the planning system are being introduced at a fast pace. On 6 July 2010, Secretary of State the Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP used his powers under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to revoke Regional Strategies with immediate effect. This means that the South East Plan (published in May 2009) no longer forms a part of the Development Plan for Woking, with immediate consequences for the determination of planning applications and appeals.
- 1.4 Prior to the revocation of Regional Strategies, local authorities were required to prepare LDF documents to be in conformity with Regional Strategies. The South East Plan contained spatial policies concerning the scale and distribution of new housing, priorities for new infrastructure and economic development, the strategy for protecting the countryside, biodiversity and the built and historic environments, tackling climate change and safeguarding natural resources. The South East Plan set the context and framework for the level of growth to be planned for at the local level through LDFs.
- 1.5 Under the new localism agenda, levels of growth to be planned for through LDFs – including the level of housing provision - will be determined at the local level. The Government has not yet issued detailed guidance for local authorities on the methodology that should be used to determine that level of growth locally.
- 1.6 It should be noted that in the guidance note accompanying his Ministerial Statement, the Secretary of State is clear that the revocation of Regional Strategies should not be seen as a signal to local authorities to stop making plans for their area. It also makes clear that the Government is committed to housing and economic growth and that financial incentives will be available to those authorities that deliver growth<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.7 Sustainable growth is important to ensure the creation of a sustainable and balanced community in Woking. Supporting economic growth, maintaining the

---

<sup>1</sup> Statement by the Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP 10 August 2010

vitality and viability of the town and village centres, improvements to the transport infrastructure network, regeneration and providing much needed affordable homes for key workers are all essential for achieving the communities' aspirations for the Borough.

- 1.8 Planning for sustainable communities, including ensuring that sufficient land is available to meet identified housing need, is a fundamental role of Woking's LDF. Planning for housing is not just about the quantity of new residential development, but also about location, quality, affordability and choice. The planning system cannot deliver all of the answers, however, policies relating to housing development contribute to meeting the needs of individuals and communities as well as achieving wider social, economic and environmental objectives. Woking's LDF must have regard to a number of factors including national, regional and local pressures, changes in demographics and climate change considerations, for example.
- 1.9 The Core Strategy is the first LDF document that the Council will produce. All other LDF documents must be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The overall objective of the Core Strategy is to help create a sustainable community for Woking and improve upon the well-being of the people who live, work and visit in the Borough. How well it provides a sound framework for delivering the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the corporate priorities of the Council will be a key measure of its successful implementation.
- 1.10 The Core Strategy will set the level of growth that will be delivered in the Borough. This will include a housing target. This paper describes the context for housing development in Woking, including:
  - A summary of the key messages emerging from the policies and strategies that influence housing development in Woking
  - A summary of the key messages emerging from the analysis of the evidence base as they relate to housing need and housing land supply.

#### **Status of this document**

- 1.11 This document has been prepared in support of the LDF. It should be read in conjunction with the emerging Core Strategy and the detailed research reports that form part of the evidence base.
- 1.12 The most up-to-date information has been used to inform this paper where possible. It should be noted that the Council undertakes regular monitoring of its policies and reviews of the evidence base. This paper will be updated when new information is available. As different sources of information have been used and timeframes for information differ, caution should be taken when comparing statistical information.
- 1.13 Much of the content of this paper is based on factual information. However, it should be noted that some information, particularly that which relates to the identification of sites and assumptions made about the potential capacity and deliverability of those sites, is based on Officer opinion. Information contained within this Paper does not commit the Council to allocate land through the LDF or grant permission for any future planning applications.
- 1.14 The views of the local community, key stakeholders and partner organisations who all have an interest in the future of the Borough forms part of the evidence

base for the LDF. The Council therefore welcomes comments on this Paper. If there are any sources of information or facts and figures that the Council has overlooked, please send comments to:

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

Or by email to: [planning.policy@woking.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@woking.gov.uk)

## **2.0 Housing requirements**

- 2.1 This section sets out the case for housing growth in the Borough, describing the positive benefits that new housing brings to the community and the economy.
- 2.2 Woking has always seen growth and enjoyed the positive benefits that come on the back of that growth (for example, the new retail and leisure opportunities that have been delivered through town centre redevelopments). Growth is essential if Woking is to continue to prosper and be a place where people want to live, work and visit. Continued growth – including housing growth – will provide opportunities to improve everyone's quality of life, creating job opportunities, and the upgrade of essential infrastructure such as better transport links. Even in the current economic climate, the fundamental need for growth remains.

### **Background context**

- 2.3 The background context to considering housing issues is the changing picture with regard to the population and household demographics in the area. Some of the key factors are as follows<sup>2</sup>:
- In mid-2009 Woking's population was estimated at 92,400. This is an increase of 2.8% from the 2001 Census.
  - The population of Woking is expected to increase to 104,100 by 2027 which represents an increase of 11% over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. The increase in population is a result of net migration, increased life expectancy and high fertility levels.
  - By 2011 it is estimated that there will be 39,814 households in Woking. This is an increase of 8.13% from the 2001 Census. The number of households in Woking is expected to continue to rise over the lifetime of the Core Strategy 39,814 (2011) – 44,083 (2026).
  - The average household size fell from 2.58 in 1991 to 2.42 in 2001. By 2026, household size is expected to fall to 2.12. The fall in household size is attributable to a number of factors including an increase in the number of single-person households due to the ageing population and increased divorce rates, for example.
  - In line with the national trend, the Borough is expected to continue to have a positive net migration trend.
  - In Woking, there is expected to be an additional 4,800 older people (aged 65+) between 2009 and 2027 (an increase of 35%). The ratio of people of working age to those of pensionable age is expected to fall from 4.4 to 3.5 over the Plan period. Therefore, there will be fewer people working at a time when the ageing population is likely to have more reliance on public subsidy to pay for care services. This is likely to result in a change in the requirements for housing and care facilities.

### **The case for housing growth**

- 2.4 As set out above, Woking must continue to grow in order to create a sustainable community and provide homes for an increasing population and

---

<sup>2</sup> Note that the most up-to-date information has been used where possible, therefore due to different sources and timeframes the data is not always directly comparable.

changing demographic. The positive benefits that new housing development can bring about are often overlooked. Some key factors are outlined briefly below.

- There is a strong link between housing and economic development with housing impacting on labour mobility, productivity and business competitiveness.
- The recent recession has meant that there is an increase in the number of people needing homes but a fall in supply as house building has slowed down.
- New housing development brings about physical regeneration, bringing vacant and under-utilised sites in to use, therefore improving the urban environment.
- New housing plays a role in maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town and village centres.
- New housing development can increase people's quality of life through provision of adequate and affordable housing.
- As detailed later on in this paper, there is a significant need for affordable housing within the Borough. Generally, new affordable homes are provided on the back of market housing.
- Widening housing choice broadens the appeal of an area and assists in meeting the needs of existing residents as well as attracting new residents to the Borough. Ensuring that new housing takes account of local need and existing provision to create neighbourhoods where there is a genuine choice of the right housing to meet local need, both at neighbourhood and Borough-wide level, is essential.

### **Financial incentive**

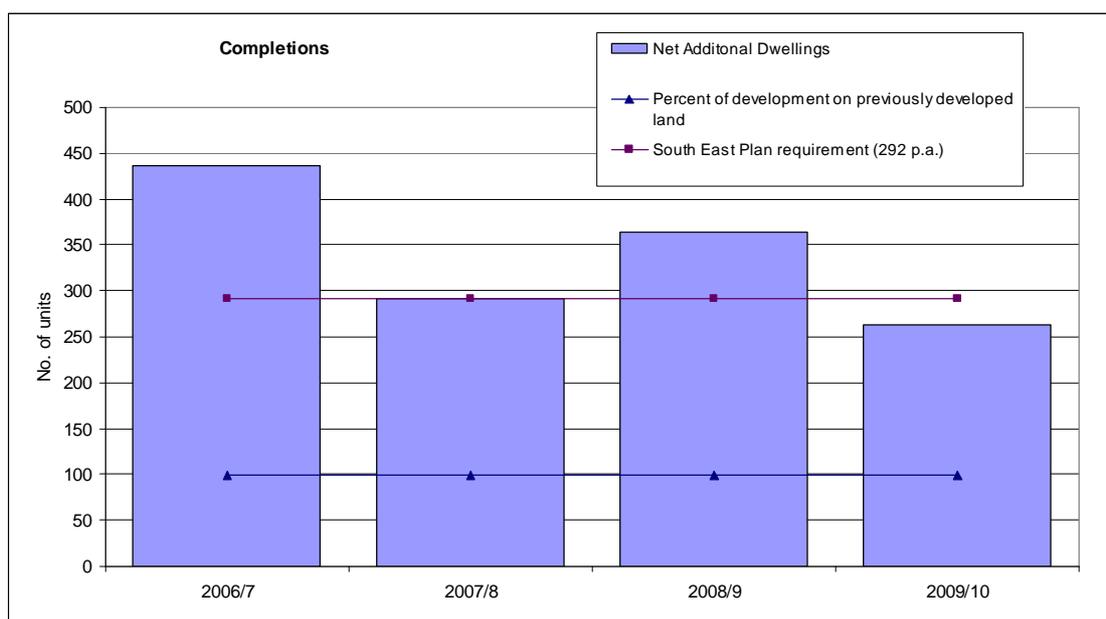
- 2.5 On 10 August 2010, the Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps MP announced that the Government would reward local authorities who provide new homes with financial incentives through the New Homes Bonus. Details of how this reward scheme will work are yet to be issued<sup>3</sup>; however, match-funding the council tax raised on new homes for a period of six years has been raised as a possible mechanism for reward.
- 2.6 The following provides an example of how much income a council tax match-funding scheme could potentially generate for the local community, based on a number of assumptions:
- The Woking Borough Council element of council tax will be match-funded
  - Band D Woking Borough Council element of council tax is estimated at £204.77 per annum (2010/11 level) and that this will not increase
  - 1,752 new dwellings will be completed over the next six-year period (292 x 6).
- 2.7 It is therefore estimated that around **£358,722** could be generated from housing development in the Borough over a six-year period. Clearly, this figure could increase if the Woking element of council tax or the level of house building increases over that period.

---

<sup>3</sup> A consultation paper is expected to be issued following the Government's Spending Review in autumn 2010

## Past completions

- 2.8 Between 1 April 2006 (the start date of the now revoked South East Plan) and 31 March 2010, 1,355 net additional dwellings were completed in the Borough as shown in the graph below. The graph shows that the level of completions dropped in 2009/10. Completion levels for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are also expected to be below the previous South East Plan annual average requirement. It is considered that this is a reflection of market conditions rather than issues with land supply.



- 2.9 99.6% of developments were completed on previously developed land between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2010.
- 2.10 A total of 252 new build social rented homes have been provided in the five year period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2010.

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	Total
New build	95	62	29	45	21	252

- 2.11 During the same period, 149 existing homes were purchased by Woking Borough Homes for let at intermediate rent.

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	Total
Street purchase	45	3	3	30	68	149

- 2.12 Also during this period, £6,242,462 was agreed and collected from S106 affordable housing contributions. This has been used for grants to Woking Borough Homes. The average cost of a street purchase home by Woking Borough Homes is approximately £200,000. Therefore the £6.2m will have been used to purchase 31 of the street purchased homes set out in the table above.

- 2.13 On 27 July 2010 £2,085,513 was received from Enterprise Place (Land Adj to the Holiday Inn). This has not yet been spent but is likely to be used for PFI costs associated with the Moor Lane development.

### **3.0 The policy context**

- 3.1 This section of the Topic Paper provides an overview of the key national and local strategies and policies that will influence the preparation of LDF housing policies.

#### **National context**

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1), published January 2005.

- 3.2 PPS1 sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It states that sustainable development is the core principle that underpins the planning system, ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now and for future generations. This principle also relates to planning for housing and the key requirements for local authorities in PPS1 are:

- Make suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life
- Ensure high quality development through good and inclusive design
- Promote the efficient and prudent use of resources (e.g. building housing at appropriate densities on previously developed land)
- Ensure new development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community
- Encourage policies that seek to tackle the causes of climate change and promote the development of renewable energy resources
- Reduce social inequalities and address accessibility, both in terms of location and physical access to housing
- Take account of the particular housing requirements relating to age, sex, ethnic background, religion, disability and income
- Deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live
- Ensure the provision of sufficient, good quality new homes in suitable locations, including through the conversion of existing buildings
- Ensure that everybody has the opportunity of a decent home in locations that reduce the need to travel
- Actively seek to bring vacant and under-used previously developed land back in to beneficial use.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3), published June 2010

- 3.3 PPS3 sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives. The main policy advice for local authorities in PPS3 includes the need to:

- Provide a wide choice and mix of market homes to meet the needs of the community
- Provide good quality and affordable housing for people who are unable to access or afford market housing
- Set targets for the type, size and tenure of affordable housing
- Widen opportunities for home ownership
- Ensure that new housing is of a high quality that is well designed and built to a high standard

- Create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities
- Ensure new housing is developed in suitable locations that offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure
- Ensure there is a deliverable five-year rolling supply of housing land that can respond to changes in the market
- Manage housing land supply in a way that makes efficient use of land and buildings
- Make effective use of existing buildings, including bringing appropriate empty buildings back into use for residential purposes
- Promote the re-use of previously developed land
- Apply the principles of the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to housing delivery
- Develop previously developed land strategies to assist in bringing previously developed land back into use, by identifying and addressing obstacles to their development.

3.4 It is important to note the following recent changes to national housing policy:

- On 19 January 2010 paragraph 41 of PPS3 was strengthened to include the statement *"there is no presumption that land that is previously-developed is necessarily suitable for housing development nor that the whole of the curtilage should be developed"*.
- Following the General Election, the Coalition Government re-issued PPS3 in June 2010, amending Annex b: Definitions, to specifically exclude 'private residential gardens' from the definition of previously developed land.
- In addition, the requirement for a national indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) was removed from the re-issued PPS3.

### **Local context**

Surrey Partnership Plan 2010 and Woking's Community Strategy

3.5 The Surrey Partnership Plan is the Sustainable Community Strategy for the county. It sets out how the Surrey Strategic Partnership will work together to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. The Plan covers the period to 2020. The Surrey Partnership Plan also includes a specific section that summarises the local priorities for Woking Borough. The Core Strategy seeks to provide a positive framework for delivering those aspects of the Surrey Partnership Plan that have spatial implications.

3.6 The Surrey Partnership Plan sets out five key challenges. These are:

- Climate change.
- The limits of sustainability in Surrey.
- Connectivity.
- The crisis in public finances.
- A new political context.

3.7 Ten priorities are identified and are described in detail under the following five themes:

- Children and young people.
- Safer and stronger communities.
- Health and well-being.
- Economic development.
- Housing, infrastructure and environment.

3.8 The following specific main aims for Woking Borough are identified:

- Create a strong community spirit with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility to promote a clean, healthy and safe environment.
- Have a transport system that is accessible and has good links, recognising Woking's potential as a transport hub.
- Give local people and key workers access to good quality and affordable housing.
- Have a community which values personal health and well-being.
- Provide opportunities and encourage people to participate in learning throughout their lives, so they progress and reach their full potential.

3.9 Woking's own Community Strategy, published in 2006, sets out six key aims, which help to define the vision for the Borough that is being developed through the LDF. These aims are:

- A strong community spirit with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility;
- A clean, healthy and safe environment.
- A transport system that is linked and accessible, recognising Woking's potential as a transport hub.
- Access to decent affordable housing for local people and key workers.
- A community which values personal health and well-being.
- Providing opportunities and encourage people to participate in learning throughout their lives so they progress and reach their full potential.

3.10 The Council will update Woking's Community Strategy by the end of 2010.

3.11 Following the publication of the Community Strategy, Woking Borough Council identified its corporate priorities as being:

- Decent and affordable housing
- Health and well-being
- The environment
- Economic development.

Housing Strategy (2005 – 2010)

3.12 The Council's Housing Strategy sets out how the Council will achieve its corporate priority - decent and affordable housing.

- 3.13 The Council is in the process of updating its Housing Strategy, which is scheduled for adoption in Spring 2011, following consultation on a draft Strategy which will take place in Autumn 2010.

#### Local Development Framework

- 3.14 The Council is in the process of preparing a new LDF which will guide future development in the Borough. The LDF will comprise a number of planning policy documents, including:
- Core Strategy – this will set out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the area. All other LDF documents must be in conformity with the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will set out how the Borough Council will meet known and anticipated development requirements to 2027, including the number of dwellings required. It will also set out policies against which planning applications will be determined.
  - Site Allocations - this will identify and allocate specific locations in the Borough where major development will take place in accordance with the vision and spatial strategy set out in the Core Strategy.
  - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) – a number of SPDs will be produced which will supplement the policies in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents. These SPDs will provide details of how the Council will implement policies and cover issues such as parking standards, infrastructure, design, climate change and affordable housing.
- 3.15 The new LDF policies will eventually replace saved policies of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999.

## 4.0 A summary of the evidence base

4.1 A significant amount of research has been undertaken by the Council to support the LDF:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2009. The SHMA was prepared by consultants jointly commissioned by Woking, Guildford and Waverley Councils. The SHMA provides local and sub-regional evidence of housing need and demand in terms of housing type, size and tenure.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2009. The main role of the SHLAA is to provide information on the opportunities available to the Council to meet the Borough's housing requirement. Specifically, the SHLAA must identify specific deliverable sites for the first 5 years of the plan period and identify specific developable sites for years 6 – 15 of the plan to enable the five year supply to be 'topped up'. The SHLAA is currently being updated and will be re-published in September 2010.
- Housing Land Supply Position Paper 2010. This paper sets out the Council's housing land supply position in accordance with the requirement in PPS3 to maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites.
- Economic Viability Assessment (EVA) 2010. The EVA was prepared by consultants Adams Integra. The report considers the economic viability of the provision of affordable housing in the Borough, taking into account a number of factors including land values, build costs and infrastructure requirements for example.
- Employment Land Review (ELR) 2010. The ELR has been undertaken in order to inform future policies regarding employment land supply and land use in the Borough, which includes an assessment of the suitability of existing employment land. The ELR comprises two reports: a Market Appraisal which was prepared by consultants Lambert Smith Hampton and an Employment Position Paper which was prepared by the Council, which contains information about employment forecasts.
- The Town, District and Local Centres Study 2009. The study was undertaken by consultants Roger Tym and Partners and provides an assessment of the vitality and viability of Woking Town Centre, and produces quantitative retail capacity forecasts for the Town Centre and West Byfleet.
- Audit of Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities 2008. This is also known as the PPG17 Audit. This study establishes the quantity and quality of open spaces, sports and recreation facilities in the Borough. The study has identified that there is not a surplus of open space in Woking.
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP which is due to be completed by the end of 2010, will assess the existing capacity of infrastructure services and facilities and consider what provision is required in the future, and where, related to future development. The IDP will cover transport, housing, education, health, social

infrastructure, green infrastructure, public services, utility services and flood defences. The IDP will include a schedule of what new infrastructure is required, when, where, how it is to be provided and will identify the responsible agency.

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2009. The SFRA provides information on the significance of flood risk across the Borough, where flood risk is likely to be important, how much of the Borough is defended, where new development is likely to add risk and where flood risk needs to be considered in more detail.
- A Transport Assessment, led by Surrey County Council, will develop a multi-modal model of the transport network to enable the implications of development options (particularly housing) to be tested for their impact on the network. The study is due to be published in late 2010.
- The Character Assessment, due for publication in autumn 2010. The key study objective is to identify, analyse and describe in a systematic and objective way the form and character of each main settlement as a whole, and each distinct sub-area within it. This analysis will:
  - Provide a legible analysis of the street and space environment
  - Note the mix of uses and activities
  - Analyse the residential density ranges across the urban area
  - Analyse residential form, character and layout, including representative plot characteristics
  - Identify areas of potential/ future change.
- The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007) assesses the particular accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- Population Paper 2010 has been prepared by the Council. It provides information about the current population of the Borough and information on likely demographic changes.

4.2 Further information about the LDF evidence base can be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldfresearch>

4.3 The remainder of this Topic Paper draws on the requirements of other strategies and policies as well as the evidence base to highlight the key housing issues and the means by which they can be addressed through the LDF.

## 5.0 Housing need

- 5.1 Woking is a relatively affluent Borough and is placed in the top 20% of wealthiest local authority areas nationally. However, affordability - a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households – is a key issue.
- 5.2 Housing need is defined as the number of households who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market and therefore require affordable housing.
- 5.3 Affordable housing is defined in PPS3: Housing:
- ‘Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:
- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
  - Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision’.
- 5.4 Key findings of the SHMA 2009 are reported in this section of the Topic Paper. Readers should refer to the full report<sup>4</sup> for a comprehensive picture of housing need in the Borough. It should be noted that the base date of the SHMA is January 2008 but that much of the data was gained through a Housing Needs Survey undertaken at the end of 2007. Woking, Waverley and Guildford Council’s are currently updating some of the data in the SHMA in order to ensure that the study is as up-to-date as possible to inform LDFs. The findings of this work are expected to be published in September/ October 2010.

### The current picture

- 5.5 The Housing Needs Survey 2007 estimated that at the time of survey there were 38,500 households in Woking Borough.
- 5.6 The table below shows the household type breakdown in the Borough. The survey estimated that around a quarter (23.9%) of households are pensioner only and that around a quarter (25.9) contain children.

Household type	Number of households	% of households
Single pensioner	5,269	13.7%
2 or more pensioners	3,915	10.2%
Single non-pensioner	5,876	15.3%
2 or more adults, no children	13,477	35.0%
Lone parent	1,077	2.8%
2+ adults, 1 child	4,151	10.8%
2+ adults, 2+ children	4,735	12.3%
TOTAL	38,500	100.0%

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldfresearch>

## Tenure

- 5.7 Overall the survey estimated that of the 38,500 households in Woking, the majority were owner-occupiers (77.7%). The table below provides a full tenure breakdown for the Borough.

Number of households in each tenure group		
Tenure	Total number of households	% of households
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	12,591	32.7%
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	17,316	45.0%
Council	3,485	9.1%
RSL <sup>5</sup>	1,211	3.1%
Private rented	3,605	9.4%
Other rented (e.g. tied)	292	0.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Type of housing

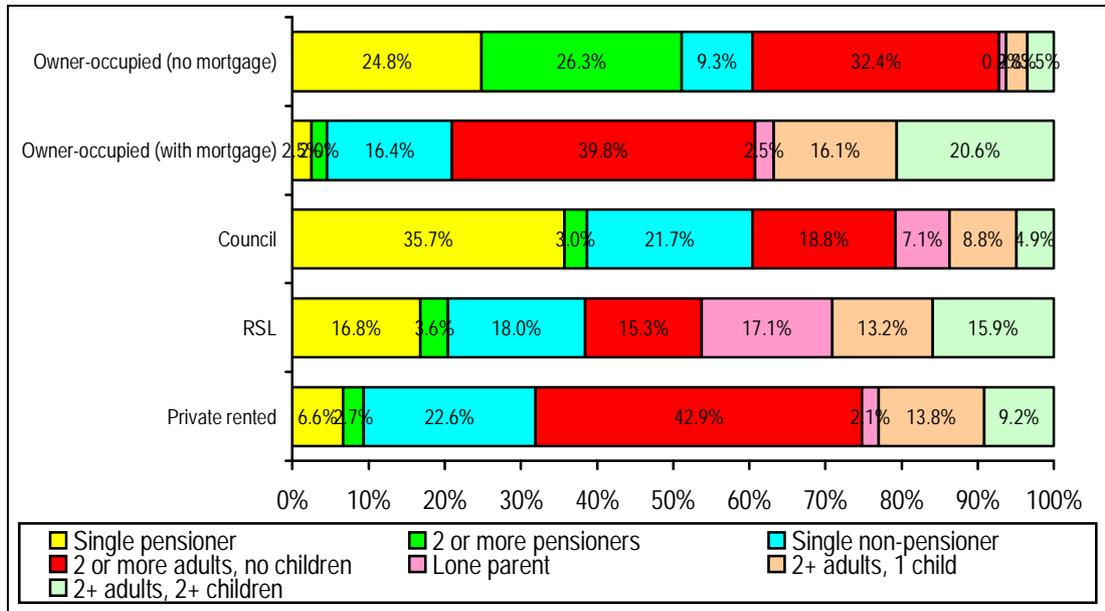
- 5.8 The table below shows households' accommodation type. The table shows that a large proportion of households live in detached houses or bungalows (32.1%), this compares with a national average of 22% (29% in the South East region). Nationally, around 17% of households live in flats whilst the figure for the South East region is around 15%. In Woking it was estimated that around 22% of households live in flats.

Dwelling type	Number of households	% of households
Detached house	11,181	29.0%
Semi detached house	8,366	21.7%
Terraced house	8,003	20.8%
Detached bungalow	1,186	3.1%
Semi or terraced bungalow	1,131	2.9%
Purpose-built flat	7,569	19.7%
Converted flat or shared house	595	1.5%
Flat in commercial building	288	0.7%
Caravan or mobile home	183	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Household type by tenure

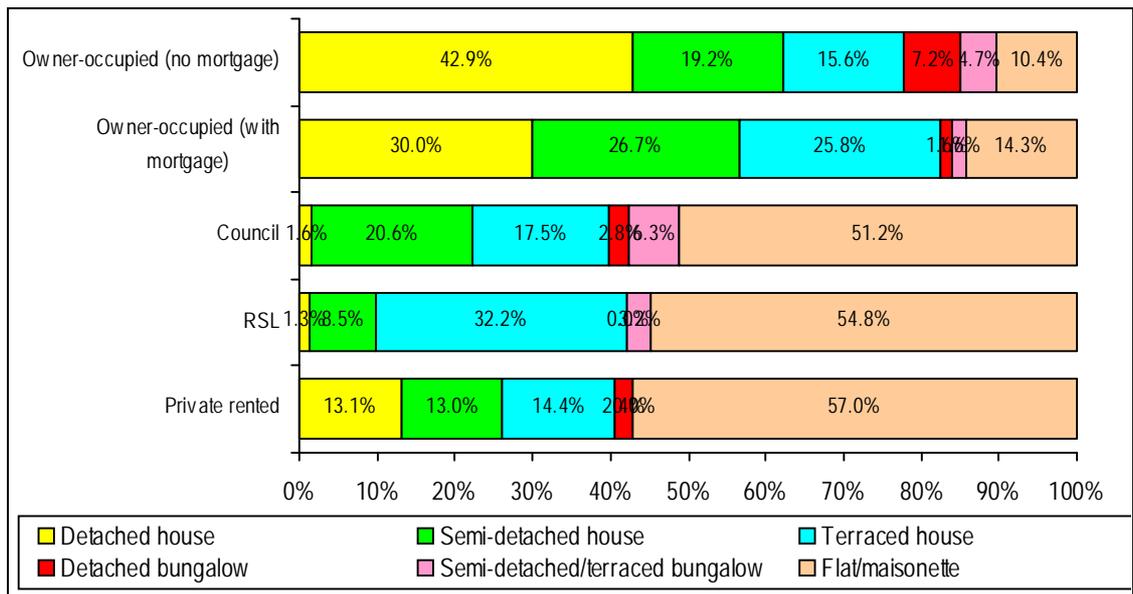
- 5.9 The figure below shows household type by tenure. As with dwelling type, there are clear differences between the tenure groups. The owner-occupied (no mortgage) sector contains a large proportion of pensioner households whilst lone parent households appear to be concentrated in the social and private rented sectors. The RSL sector has the largest proportion of households with children followed by owner-occupiers (with mortgage).

<sup>5</sup> The small sample size of RSL households should be borne in mind when viewing results presented for this group



Dwelling type by tenure

5.10 The figure below shows tenure and dwelling type information. Owner-occupiers are particularly likely to live in houses/bungalows and particularly likely to be in detached homes. There are very few detached homes outside of the owner-occupied tenure group. The social and private rented sectors have a high proportion of flats/maisonettes. For the purposes of this analysis the three flat categories have been merged into one whilst mobile homes are merged with detached bungalows.



## Levels of occupancy

- 5.11 Overcrowding and under-occupancy are measured using the 'bedroom standard' and is essentially the difference between the numbers of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household.
- 5.12 The table below shows a comparison of the number of bedrooms in each home against the number of bedrooms required by households.

Overcrowding and under-occupation					
Number of bedrooms required	Number of bedrooms in home				TOTAL
	1	2	3	4+	
1 bedroom	4,578	6,978	7,089	4,218	22,863
2 bedrooms	171	2,479	4,296	3,308	10,254
3 bedrooms	5	338	1,823	2,390	4,555
4+ bedrooms	19	41	161	608	829
TOTAL	4,773	9,836	13,368	10,523	38,500

KEY:  Overcrowded households  Under-occupied households

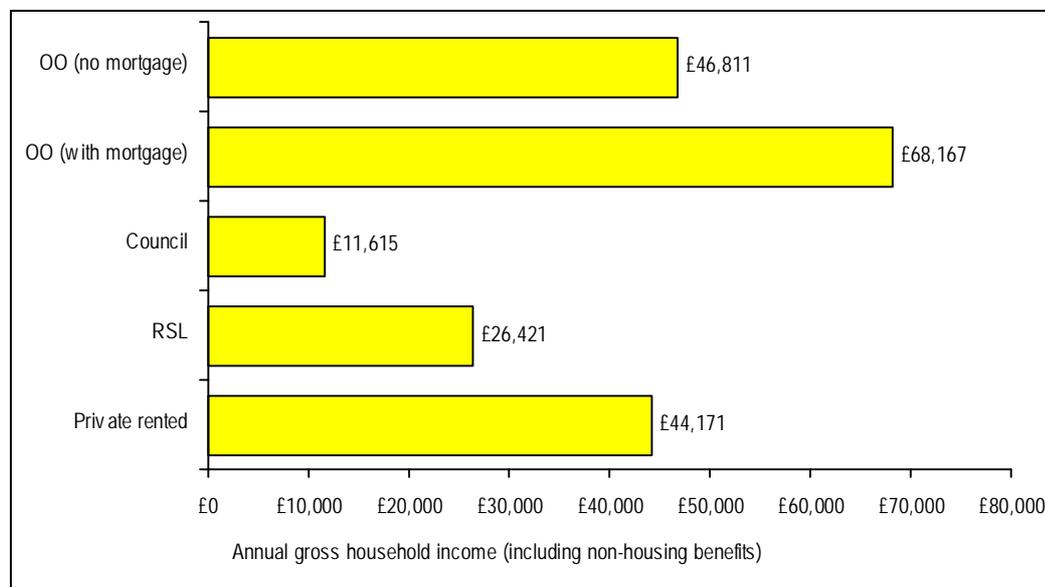
Note: The bottom two cells of the 4+ bedroom column contain some households that are either overcrowded or under-occupied – for example they may require three bedrooms but live in a five bedroom property or may require a five bedroom property but are currently occupying a four bedroom property.

- 5.13 The estimated number of overcrowded and under-occupied households in Woking is as follows:
- **Overcrowded:** 2.2% of households = 859 households (compared to 2.7% nationally)
  - **Under-occupied:** 40.1% of households = 15,454 households (compared to 36.6% nationally).
- 5.14 It can therefore be seen that in Woking there is a slightly lower than average level of overcrowding and a higher than average level of under-occupancy.
- 5.15 However, it should be noted that a total of 2,234 (5.8%) of households are living in unsuitable accommodation. The main reason for unsuitable housing is overcrowding, followed by health and/or mobility problems because of the condition of the home. Of these households living in unsuitable housing a disproportionately high number of these households are living in social housing compared with other types of tenure.
- 5.16 It should also be noted that in addition to those homes that are under-occupied as defined by the national 'bedroom standard' there is also a high proportion of households living in accommodation with more bedrooms than they actually need, which fall within the allowance of the bedroom standard. For example, the table shows that there are 6,978 households in Woking that only require a 1 bedroom property but that live in a 2 bedroom property, which are not added in to the under-occupancy figures, above.
- 5.17 It is also interesting to note the proportion of family homes that are actually occupied by families. 26% of the 38,500 households in the Borough are lone parent households or families with children. This is compared with 88% of the

Borough's housing stock being 2+ bed 'family' homes. It can therefore be seen that a significant proportion of family sized homes in Woking are not occupied by families.

## Income

- 5.18 Survey results for household income estimated the average (mean) gross household income level to be £52,322 per annum. The median income is noticeably lower than the mean (at £36,342 per annum). There were, however, wide variations by tenure; with households living in social rented housing having particularly low income levels (average £11,615).
- 5.19 The survey also collected data about households' savings and equity levels. It is estimated that the median level of savings for all households is around £7,000, whilst the average (mean) level of equity was estimated to be £283,346.



## House prices

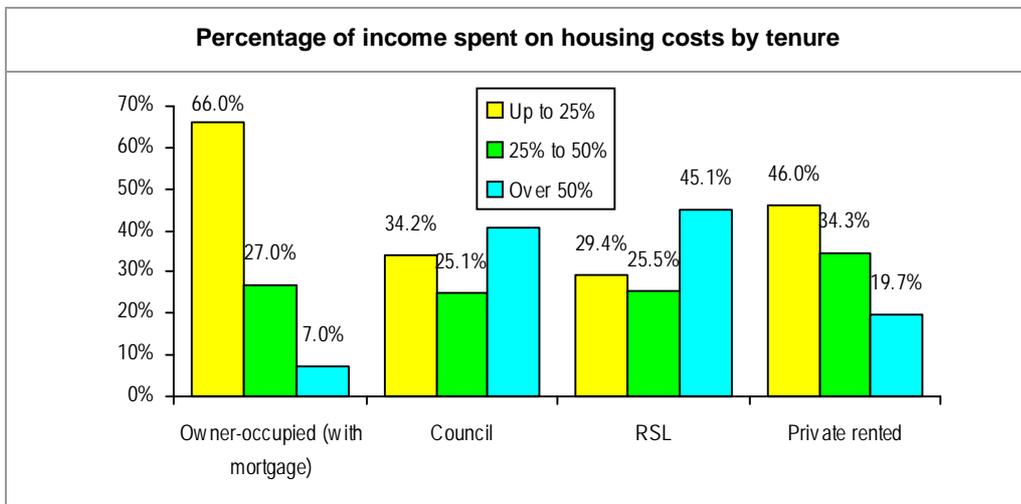
- 5.20 A survey of local estate and letting agents identified estimates of the minimum costs of housing to both buy and rent in the Borough. It was found that entry-level prices ranged from around £142,000 for a one bedroom property up to £423,000 for four bedrooms. Entry-level weekly rents varied from £156 (one bedroom) to £415 (four bedrooms).

Property size	To buy	Private rent (£/week)
1 bedroom	£142,000	£156
2 bedrooms	£214,000	£208
3 bedrooms	£256,000	£266
4 bedrooms	£423,000	£415

5.21 Information about minimum prices and rents was used along with financial information collected in the survey to make estimates of households' ability to afford market housing (without the need for subsidy).

#### Relationship of income and housing costs

5.22 The figure below show the number of households in each tenure group by what proportion of income is spent on housing. The figure shows that there are a significant number of households spending over 25% and in many cases in excess of 50%. Households paying more than 50% are most likely to be found in the social rented and private rented sectors.



5.23 The above analysis does not however take account of the fact that many households will be in receipt of housing benefit (or income support in the case of owners) which will be helping them to afford housing. The table below investigates the receipt of benefits towards housing costs. The table clearly shows that the greater the proportion of income spent on housing the greater the number of households who are claiming assistance.

5.24 The table shows that of all households paying up to 25% of income on housing costs some 5.2% are also claiming housing benefit, for households spending over 50% this figure rises to 41.9%. Whilst this finding shows that to a certain extent that the benefit system is meeting the needs of low income households the data does suggest that a notable number of households are spending large proportions of their income on housing and receiving no subsidy to help with the costs.

Percentage of households receiving housing benefit (income support) by tenure and proportion of income spent on housing					
	Owner-occupied	Council	RSL	Private rented	Total
Spend up to 25%	0.8%	46.4%	5.0%	5.5%	5.2%
Spend 25%-50%	0.4%	38.6%	11.9%	13.9%	8.0%
Spend over 50%	6.6%	60.4%	58.2%	51.8%	41.9%
Total	1.1%	50.1%	30.8%	17.5%	11.5%

### Current need

- 5.25 Current housing need is determined following an assessment of homeless households, housing suitability and affordability. The available stock to off-set this need is then taken in to account.
- 5.26 The SHMA found that there were ten homeless households in the Borough (snapshot data)<sup>6</sup>.
- 5.27 Currently, around 2,234 households (5.8% of all households) are in unsuitable accommodation. This may be for a number of reasons, including overcrowding or health and mobility problems, for example.
- 5.28 The SHMA found that there are 1,019 existing households that cannot afford market housing and are living in unsuitable accommodation – this represents 2.6% of all households in the Borough.
- 5.29 The table below shows the tenure of households currently in housing need.

Housing need and tenure				
Tenure	Housing need			
	In need	Number of h'holds in Borough	% of total h'holds in need	% of those in need
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	11	12,591	0.1%	1.0%
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	185	17,316	1.1%	18.2%
Council	247	3,485	7.1%	24.2%
RSL	256	1,211	21.2%	25.1%
Private rented	321	3,897	8.2%	31.5%
TOTAL	1,019	38,500	2.6%	100.0%

- 5.30 Taking the above information into account, the SHMA found that there are 1,029 households in housing need.
- 5.31 At the time of survey in late 2007, it was estimated that there a stock of around 566 units to meet this need. This leaves a net backlog of need for affordable housing of 463 units.
- 5.32 It is worth noting that in June 2010 there were 2,086 households on the Council's housing register. Of these, 849 (40.6%) were placed in Bands A – D and therefore deemed to be in 'genuine housing need'.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that this is based on official homeless applications made, but the Council's housing options policy is to prevent homelessness therefore mitigating the need to take official homeless applications.

## Future need

- 5.33 Future need is split into two categories:
- Need created by new household formation – 320 per annum
  - Need created by existing households falling in to need – 532 per annum.
- 5.34 Around 446 affordable units per annum are available (based on trend data) to meet this future need.
- 5.35 The backlog of existing need is annualised and added to the future need information. **There is therefore a net annual need for 499 new affordable homes in the Borough every year, of which 61% is required to be social rented and 39% in intermediate tenure.**
- 5.36 The table below provides a breakdown of affordable housing need by dwelling size and tenure.

Estimated size requirement for additional affordable housing		
	Intermediate	Social rented
1 bedroom	27.9%	33.8%
2 bedrooms	52.4%	27.6%
3 bedrooms	14.2%	19.3%
4+ bedrooms	5.4%	19.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

## The specific need for family homes

- 5.37 Woking's latest Housing Needs Survey sought information on the housing preferences of families (including lone parent households) that were seeking to move home. The key findings were that:
- No families preferred to live in flats/ maisonettes
  - An average of 96% of families preferred to live in detached/ semi-detached properties
  - No families preferred shared ownership as a tenure option
  - Around 30% of lone parent households preferred a two bedroomed property and 70% preferred a 3+ bedroom property
  - On average, 95% of families with children preferred a 3+ bedroomed property.

## Housing for older people

- 5.38 As outlined in Section 2, in line with the national trend, the population of Woking is ageing, as a result of demography changes. Advances in healthcare, increasing wealth and other improvements to people's quality of life means that people are now living longer than ever before.
- 5.39 In Woking, there is expected to be an additional 4,800 older people (aged 65+) between 2009 and 2027 (an increase of 35%). The ratio of people of working

age to those of pensionable age is expected to fall from 4.4 to 3.5 over the Plan period. Therefore, there will be fewer people working at a time when the ageing population is likely to have more reliance on public subsidy to pay for care services. This is likely to result in a change in the requirements for housing and care facilities.

- 5.40 The increase is particularly significant in older people over the age of 75. Naturally, people above 75, and particularly above 85, tend to require more care assistance when they reach these ages and many are unable to live independently without some level of care.
- 5.41 The SHMA has found that nearly a third of the Borough's households contain older people:
- 10.2% of the Borough's households are older people only households
  - 13.7% are single older person households
  - 7.9% of households contain an older person and a non-older person.
- 5.42 Nearly 39% of Council owned properties are occupied by older people. This has implications for the future supply of and demand for specialised social rented accommodation.
- 5.43 The SHMA also found that over half of older person households are in 3+ bed properties. Given that virtually all older-person households are comprised of only one or two persons, this would suggest that there is scope to reduce under-occupancy by freeing up larger units for younger families if the older households chose to move to smaller dwellings.
- 5.44 In view of the above, it is therefore essential that the Core Strategy considers the specific accommodation needs of the older population, which may include identifying land specifically to meet those needs, ensuring the provision of specialist accommodation (such as extra care housing, for example) and including a requirement for properties to be designed to Lifetime Homes standards.

## **6.0 Housing land supply position**

- 6.1 The Council published its first Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in July 2009 with a base date of 1 April 2009. The SHLAA identifies specific sites that are deliverable and developable over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. The Council is in the process of updating the SHLAA and will republish the study in September 2010 with a base date of 1 April 2010.
- 6.2 The table overleaf presents the results of the findings of the most recent SHLAA (2010).
- 6.3 It can be seen that, in accordance with the requirements of PPS3, there is a sufficient number of specific sites that are deliverable in the period 2010/11-2016/17 (i.e. the two year period prior to adoption of the Core Strategy and the first five years of the Plan).
- 6.4 However, insufficient sites have been identified that are considered to be developable (i.e. that have a reasonable prospect of coming forward for development) after those five years for the remainder of the Plan period - a shortfall of 534 dwellings.
- 6.5 In line with PPS3, the Council will therefore need to identify a number of broad locations where new housing development will be located during that period.
- 6.6 It should be noted that the vast majority of sites identified as developable during the latter part of the Plan period<sup>7</sup> (i.e. 2017/18 – 2026/27) are located within the town and village centres and are only likely to be suitable for high density flatted developments, often as part of a mixed-use scheme. It is therefore important that, when considering the identification of 'broad locations' for future development, that type of housing needed in Woking in terms of size, type and tenure (as described in Section 5) is taken into account.
- 6.7 The SHLAA only considers sites that are capable of accommodating six or more units. It is worth noting that historically, there has been an average of 43 net additional dwellings completed every year on smaller sites in the Borough. It is possible that this trend will continue<sup>8</sup> over the Plan period, providing in the region of an additional 430 dwellings during the period 2017/18 – 2026/27.

---

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1 for a list of sites

<sup>8</sup> This is dependant on the position the Council takes regarding back garden land development

		South East Plan Requirement	Net additional dwellings as evidenced in SHLAA	Surplus/ deficit
<b>Completions</b>	<b>06/07 - 09/10</b>	1168	1355	187
<b>Pre Plan</b>	<b>10/11 - 11/12</b>	584	285	-299
<b>Years 0 - 5</b>	<b>12/13 - 16/17</b>	1460	1795	335
<b>Years 6 - 10</b>	<b>17/18 - 21/22</b>	1460	1490	30
<b>Years 11 - 15</b>	<b>22/23 - 26/27</b>	1460	840	-620
		<b>4964</b>	<b>4410</b>	<b>-554</b>

12 year period 10/11 – 21/22 requirement = 3,504. Identified supply = 3,570 (66 surplus against requirement).

17 year period 10/11 – 26/27 requirement = 4,964. Identified supply = 4,410 (554 deficit against requirement).

## 7.0 Development of previously developed land and greenfield sites

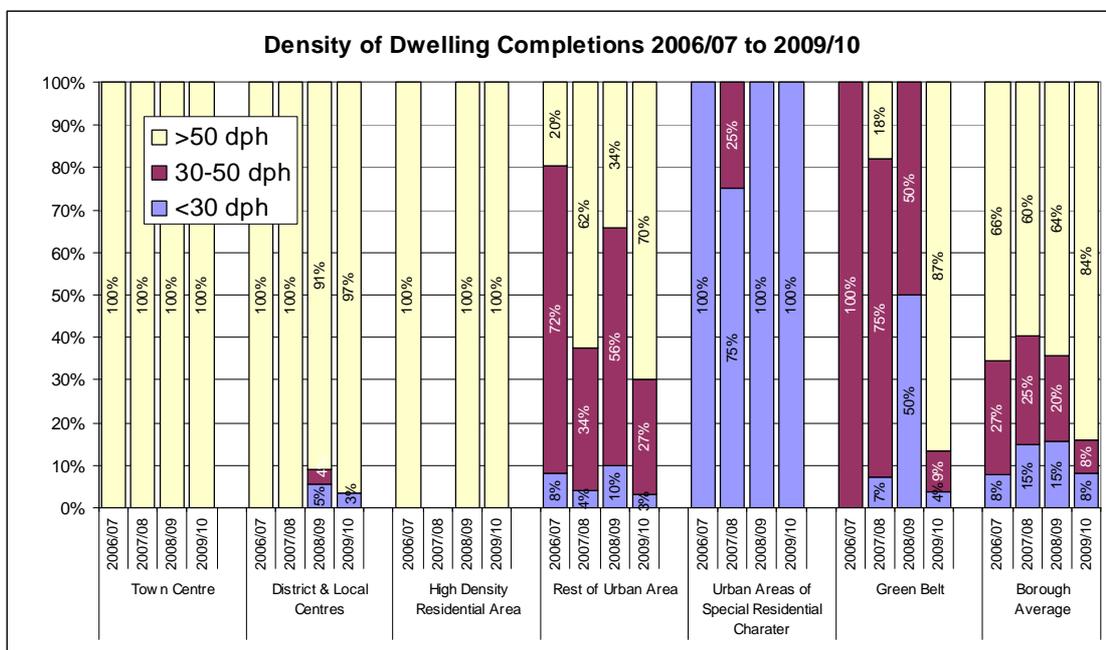
- 7.1 A key issue arising from national policy and the evidence base is the need to achieve a balance between development of previously developed land (pdl) and greenfield sites. Existing policy set out in PPS1 and PPS3 seeks to prioritise the development of pdl. However, based on the results of the SHLAA and SHMA, it is considered that the release of greenfield sites will be necessary in Woking in order to deliver the required levels of development.
- 7.2 The re-use of pdl is an important objective and such development brings about many positive benefits for an area. However, this needs to be balanced with the fact that not all pdl is best used for housing – for Woking to continue to grow sustainably, land is also required for economic development, for example. In addition, the re-use of pdl can bring about the risk of over-development, with the cramming of new housing and loss of open areas. There may also be constraints to such development arising from previous uses, for example, land contamination or from complex land ownership arrangements. Equally, the development of greenfield sites may be dependent on major new infrastructure provision requiring significant investment and long lead-in times prior to development.
- 7.3 These factors all affect the deliverability of housing which could be an issue for achieving the strategic objectives of the Plan. It is therefore essential that a realistic target is set in the Core Strategy for these of pdl.
- 7.4 The table below show the level of residential development completed on pdl between 2006 – 2010.

Year	Gross number of dwellings completed	Gross number on pdl	% Gross on pdl
2006/07	463	463	100%
2007/08	309	304	98.4%
2008/09	362	362	100%
2009/10	283	283	100%
	<b>1,417</b>	<b>1,412</b>	<b>99.6%</b>

- 7.5 In considering the level of development likely to be permitted on greenfield sites, it is important to note the recent change to the definition of pdl (i.e. the removal of residential back gardens from that definition) and the impact that this may have on the granting of planning permission.

## 8.0 Making efficient use of land

- 8.1 In 2000 the Government introduced a requirement for minimum densities to be set in order to make more efficient use of land. This requirement has now been removed (refer to paragraph 3.4) and local authorities are now required to set density targets locally based on local evidence.
- 8.2 The need to make efficient use of land remains, however. Factors such as the availability of suitable land, the need to reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change, current and future capacity of infrastructure, access to service and public transport, high design standards and the character of an area all need to be taken into account when considering density targets through the Core Strategy.
- 8.3 Since 2000, the Council has been enforcing the national policy minimum density of 30dph where possible. The graph below shows the density achieved for past completions by location.



- 8.4 The table below shows the density achieved for the current housing land supply (2010/11 – 2016/17), by location.

	Total Area (ha)	Total no. of dwellings	Density
Town Centre	2.0	500	247.8
District and Local Centres	4.3	273	63.8
Rest of Urban Area	28.6	1224	42.8
Urban Areas of Special Character	2.5	40	16.3
Green Belt	8.1	157	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>2194</b>	<b>48.2</b>

## 9.0 Supply and capacity of deliverable sites – family homes

- 9.1 As highlighted in previous sections of this paper, there is a substantial need for family homes in Woking Borough, including a particular need for affordable family homes. This section describes the specific sites that are deemed to be deliverable by 2016/17 and the extent to which they will meet the need to provide family homes.
- 9.2 Family homes are defined as those of 2+ bedrooms. These can be houses or flats. It should be noted when considering the figures presented below that not all ‘family’ homes will be occupied by a family (see Section 5 on under-occupancy) – currently around 30% of 2 bedroom properties in the Borough are occupied by single persons or childless couples, for example.
- 9.3 The Council’s Housing Land Supply Position Paper (July 2010) and SHLAA 2010 identify the sites that are deemed to be deliverable during the seven year period 2010/11 – 2016/17. The dwelling size data presented below is based on those schemes where the information is known to the Council (it is the case that some sites do not yet have detailed planning permission and so the dwelling type and size information is not yet known for certain). It should also be noted that, due to the way in which the Council records information on planning decisions, these figures are gross rather than net:
- 559 x 1 bed
  - 792 x 2 bed
  - 261 x 3 bed
  - 243 x 4+bed
- 9.4 It can therefore be seen that there is a deliverable supply of land to provide 1,296 dwellings that are capable of being occupied by families (70% of gross supply). This is roughly equivalent to the proportion of need as described in Section 5).
- 9.5 The remainder of this section provides details of the likely/ proposed dwelling mixes on the larger sites coming forward within the Borough.

### Moor Lane

- 9.6 The Moor Lane site, part of a PFI funding initiative, has outline permission for 447 homes. However, it is likely that in practice, the site will deliver less than this. Currently, only information about the expected size and tenure of the affordable units to be provided on this site is available and estimations have been made regarding likely future market provision.

	Affordable Flats	Affordable Houses	Total
1 bed	20	-	20
2 bed	16	50	66
3 bed	-	93	93
4 bed	-	11	11

Total	36	154	190
-------	----	-----	-----

- 9.7 Based on the above, it is likely that an additional 190 affordable family homes will be provided at Moor Lane and it is estimated that in the region of a further 150 market family homes will also be provided.

### **Brookwood Farm**

- 9.8 In 2006, the Council submitted a planning application for the residential development of not more than 43 dwellings per hectare and not less than 30 dwellings per hectare on a 5.82 hectare site, including a minimum 60 per cent affordable housing (Outline Application considering Siting and Means of Access only). This application was subsequently withdrawn. It should be noted that the proposal only related to the land in Council ownership and not to the land to the north of the site which is owned by CALA Homes.

- 9.9 The scheme was for a total of 251 dwellings, as detailed in the table below.

	Flats	Houses	Total
1 bed	35	40	75
2 bed	60	56	116
3 bed	-	16	16
4 bed	-	44	44
Total	95	156	251

- 9.10 It can therefore be estimated that the Council owned land at Brookwood Farm could deliver in the region of 176 family homes. If 60% of these dwellings were required to be affordable, this would deliver in the region of 105 new affordable family homes.

- 9.11 Land to the north of Brookwood Farm is owned by CALA homes. Again, there is currently no planning permission for that site. However, on the assumption that a similar scheme comes forward on the northern part of the site, the table below sets out the housing mix that could be achieved.

	Flats	Houses	Total
1 bed	11	14	25
2 bed	21	19	40
3 bed	-	5	5
4 bed	-	15	15

Total	32	53	85
-------	----	----	----

9.12 It can therefore be said that in total, the whole Brookwood Farm site could provide an additional 236 family homes.

9.13 With regard to the requirement for 60% affordable housing, it should be noted that the Council's Economic Viability Assessment (July 2010) found that a headline target of 50% could be supported on unfettered greenfield sites and those in public ownership.

### **Hoe Valley Scheme**

9.14 The Hoe Valley Scheme is a comprehensive development to reduce flood risk, improve highways, community facilities, open spaces. The scheme will also provide 154 homes, as detailed in the table below.

	Flats	Houses	Total
1 bed	14	-	14
2 bed	53	11	64
3 bed	5	71	76
Total	72	82	154

9.15 The scheme will therefore provide 140 new family homes. It should be noted that due to viability issues and the costs associated with the provision of new and improved infrastructure, the scheme will not provide any new affordable homes.

### **Land at Guildford Road and Bradfield Close**

9.16 The mixed used development at Guildford Road/ Bradfield Close will deliver a total of 445 new dwellings, 188 of which will be family homes. None of these new homes will be affordable.

	Flats	Houses	Total
1 bed	257	-	257
2 bed	182	-	182
3 bed	-	-	-
4 bed	-	6	6

Total	439	6	445
-------	-----	---	-----

### Supply of family homes against need

9.17 In summary, it can be estimated that:

- Subject to detailed planning consent, around an additional 1,300 (gross) new family homes could be provided in the Borough during the seven year period 2010/11 and 2016/17
- It is possible that, subject to detailed planning consent, 499 of these will be *affordable* family homes.
- Against an estimated need for an additional 2,445 affordable family homes over that period there is therefore a shortfall of 1,946 dwellings.

9.18 Again, caution needs to be had when considering the extent to which 2 bedroom properties, particularly flats, are occupied by families with children.

## 10.0 Viability

10.1 The Council commissioned consultants Adams Integra to undertake an Economic Viability Assessment (EVA) of the suitability of potential policy options in terms of likely impact on the viability of residential development. The report was published in July 2010<sup>9</sup>. The main focus of the study was the requirement (set out in PPS3: Housing) for councils to set affordable housing targets in their LDFs. Ensuring that schemes are financially viable is crucial for ensuring the release of sites and therefore a continued housing land supply.

10.2 Recently, the Council has been seeking secure 35% of new homes to be affordable on schemes of 15 or more dwellings. However, since the publication of the first PPS3 (November 2006) the Council has only been successful in delivering around 10% affordable units on site. It should be noted, however, that this calculation of 10% excludes sites where a financial contribution has been taken in lieu, schemes for 100% affordable (through a Housing Association) and the Moor Lane site.

10.3 Key findings of the EVA were:

- Support for a headline affordable housing target of 40% applicable to schemes of 15+ dwellings
- Support for a target proportion of 30% for schemes of 10 – 14 dwellings
- Support for a target proportion of 20% for schemes of 5 – 9 dwellings
- The possibility of seeking financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision for sites within the range of 1 – 14 dwellings
- Flexibility will be needed on the application of affordable housing targets in the short-term with respect to current market difficulties and especially if the collective costs burden on schemes is to rise significantly (e.g. Code for Sustainable Homes and wider planning obligations)
- The potential to require a higher proportion (50%) of affordable housing on uncomplicated greenfield sites and for developments on land in public ownership.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldfresearch>

**Appendix 1: List of developable housing sites 2017/18 – 2026/27**

Ref No	Planning App No	Address	WBLP Zone	Site Area (ha)	Density to be applied	Existing units on site	Potential Yield	Net Gain	Likely Time Scale
SHLAAGE003		46 - 58 Chertsey Road	Town Centre	0.25	270	0	67	67	11-16 years
SHLAAGE006		Trizancia House, Thomsen House & Woodstead House, Chertsey Road	Town Centre	0.23	315	0	72	72	6-10 years
SHLAAGE008	2007/0226	131-143, Goldsworth Road	Town Centre	0.28	250	0	70	70	6-10 years
SHLAAGE011		Albion House, High Street	Town Centre	0.2	500	0	100	100	11-16 years
SHLAAGE019a		Timber Yard, Horsell Moor, Woking	ROUA	0.9	75	0	67	67	6-10 years
SHLAAGE019b		Laundry, 73 Horsell Moor, Woking	ROUA	0.21	75	0	16	16	6-10 years
SHLAAGE029		2-24 Commercial Way &/13-28 High Street	Town Centre	0.44	488	15	215	200	6-10 years
SHLAAGE030		Market Square, Victoria Way, Fire Station + Bandstand, Church Street West, Woking	Town Centre	0.76	315	0	240	240	6-10 years
SHLAAGE031		1-12 High Street & 26-34 Commercial Way, Woking	Town Centre	0.38	400	1	150	149	11-16 years
SHLAAHEW004	2007/0818	Bridge House - Churchill House, Chobham Road	ROUA	0.12	240	0	29	27	6-10 years

Ref No	Planning App No	Address	WBLP Zone	Site Area (ha)	Density to be applied	Existing units on site	Potential Yield	Net Gain	Likely Time Scale
SHLAAKN025		Almond Villa, 31-33 Broadway, Knaphill	Village Centre	0.22	45	0	10	10	6-10 years
SHLAAKW002		1 & 2 Westfield Grove, Westfield	ROUA	0.15	40	2	6	4	6-10 years
SHLAAKW009a		Barnsbury Site 1, Barnsbury Farm Estate, Willow Way	ROUA	1.1	33	2	36	34	6-10 years
SHLAAKW009b	2006/0387	Barnsbury Site 2	ROUA	0.76	35	6	27	21	6-10 years
SHLAAKW010	2006/0388	Barnsbury Site 3, Back garden land of Ash Road & Laburnham Road, Barnsbury	ROUA	0.38	34	1	13	12	6-10 years
SHLAAKW036		Sherpa, Kingfield Road, Kingfield	Village Centre	0.5		0	10	10	6-10 years
SHLAAKW037		Westfield Club, Westfield Road, Woking	ROUA	0.21	57	0	12	12	6-10 years
SHLAAMHE014		Royal Mail Sorting Office, White Rose Lane, Woking	Town Centre	0.33	315	0	104	104	6-10 years
SHLAAMHW030	2005/0782	St Dunstons, White Rose Lane, Woking	Town Centre	0.21	476	0	100	100	6-10 years
SHLAAMHW031		Owen House, The Crescent, Heathside Crescent & White Rose Court, White Rose Lane, Woking	Town Centre	0.4	250	0	100	100	6-10 years

Ref No	Planning App No	Address	WBLP Zone	Site Area (ha)	Density to be applied	Existing units on site	Potential Yield	Net Gain	Likely Time Scale
SHLAAMS001	2003/1010	82 - 86 Walton Road	Village Centre	0.1	110	2	11	9	11-16 years
SHLAAMS006		83 - 86 Maybury Road	Village Centre	0.23	105	3	24	21	6-10 years
SHLAAMS010	2006/0473	Garages adj. To 28 & 30 Albert Drive	ROUA	0.2	30	0	6	6	6-10 years
SHLAASJHH011	Pre-app 07/0212	Corner Garage, 16 - 18 St John's Road	Village Centre	0.12	90	0	11	11	6-10 years
SHLAAWB050		Camphill Club & Scout Hut, Camphill Road, West Byfleet	ROUA	0.38	75	0	28	28	6-10 years

Ref No	Address	WBLP Zone	Current Land Use	Site Area (ha)	Density to be applied	Existing units on site	Potential Yield	Net Gain	Likely Time Scale
SHLAAGE026	The Cornerstone, The Broadway and Elizabeth House, Duke Street	Town Centre	Commercial	0.23	400	0	92	92	11-15 years
SHLAAMHE011	Car Park, Oriental Road	Town Centre	Car Park	1.2	250	0	300	300	11-15 years
SHLAAMHW029	1-15 Guildford Road / Southern House/Jubilee House/ Lynton House, Station Approach	Town Centre	Retail/Commercial	0.45	400	0	180	180	11-15 years
SHLAAMS007	Elliot Court, North Road and 95-105 , Maybury Road	Village Centre	Commercial	0.77	160	0	123	123	11-15 years
SHLAAMS031	33 - 35 Portugal Road, Works at Portugal Road, Marlborough Road	Village Centre	Mixed	0.19	90	0	17	17	11-15 years
SHLAAWB023	Land at Station Approach, West Byfleet	Village Centre	Retail, office	0.91	140	0	128	128	11-15 years

## **Appendix 2: A brief history of Woking's housing requirement**

Surrey Structure Plan 2004 required Woking Borough Council to provide for 3,340 new dwellings between 2001 and 2016 (222.6pa).

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (September) 2004. Requirement for RSS's and LDF's introduced.

Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Woking Housing Potential Study June 2005. Estimated that there was potential for 4,119 dwellings 2001–2016 (274.6pa) – i.e. Option 2 (rounded up) in Woking's Issues and Options consultation (below).

Woking Borough Council Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation July 2005 which was accompanied by an Initial Sustainability Report. I&O consultation and SA tested four levels of growth:

- Option 1 – 3,340 (222.6pa)
- Option 2 – 3,340 + 800 = 4,140 (276pa) (a 24% increase on SSP)
- Option 3 – 3,340 + 1,400 (Moor Lane) = 4,790 (319.3pa) (a 43% increase on SSP)
- Option 4 – 3,340 + 1,700 (Moor Lane & Brookwood Farm) = 5,040 (336pa) (a 50.8% increase on SSP)

(Note that these figures were 'adjusted' in the I&O paper to reflect the completions between 2001 and 2005).

Table C3 in Part 1 of the (early) Draft South East Plan July 2005 allocated 1,810 annually for the London Fringe sub-region. This was subject to consultation and further evidence from counties and districts.

Surrey Housing Potential Study – September 2005. This identified a potential supply of 4,666 in Woking between 2006 and 2026 (233.3pa).

SCC 'The future of housing in Surrey' consultation summer 2005. Consulted on options for delivery of 240pa (presumably 233.3 rounded up to 240pa).

Letter from David Munroe (SCC) 7 December 2005 to Surrey colleagues. Sets out that following consultation and in light of particular problems faced by Waverley, the figures had been adjusted. Woking's allocation increased from 240pa to 242pa as a result.

Woking Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation January 2006 (including consultation on a SA Report). A level of growth broadly in line with Option 2 from the I&O consultation, however, release of Moor Lane and Brookwood Farm included to secure long-term housing delivery. Preferred Option to plan for 'approximately 240pa' between 2006 and 2017 – expected level in the emerging Draft South East Plan.

Draft South East Plan was published in March 2006 (with accompanying SA). Woking requirement 4,840 (242pa).

Woking Borough Council supports the housing figure in the draft South East Plan – as backed up by evidence contained in the Surrey Housing Potential Study - Executive Report EXE06-106 (1 June 2006).

Woking Housing Potential Study Update October 2006. Estimated that there was potential for 5,021 dwellings 2001-2016 (334.7pa). If this quantity of identified 'supply' was to be calculated over 2006-2026 it would be an annual average of 166.5. (Note that the HPS did not include Brookwood Farm and Moor Lane in its supply. Adding these two sites would increase identified supply to 4,058 2006-2026 (202.9pa)) .

Woking Borough Council Core Strategy submitted to Government in October 2006 (with accompanying SA). Plans for 2006 – 2018 (12 years/ 10 years from adoption). Plans for 242pa as per Draft South East Plan.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing published in November 2006 (during consultation on Core Strategy submission document). Requirement to plan for 15 years from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy.

November 2006–March 2007 – South East Plan Examination in Public. January 2007 Woking Borough Council submitted evidence to the EiP – worth noting, including the statement that: “Technical work has been carried out jointly by Surrey County Council and Borough/District Council officers to assess the potential to accommodate housing in the urban areas. This has concluded that there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate this level of housing in the urban areas without releasing land from the Green Belt.”

Secretary of State directs Woking Borough Council withdraw from the Examination process July 2007.

South East Plan Panel Report issued August 2007. Comments not invited. Key points of Panel report:

- Recommends that the London Fringe housing figure is “significantly too low” as “demographic and economic factors have been given insufficient weight, while too much weight has been given to urban potential estimates and avoiding adjustments to the Green Belt”.
- Panel considers that there are sustainable solutions for accommodating higher housing levels, especially taking into account the increased transport accessibility of the regional hubs and potential for small scale Green Belt releases.
- Panel recommended a 10% increase across the London Fringe and specifically for Woking an increase of 1,000 units between 2006 and 2026, an additional 50pa = 5,840 (292pa).
- Panel states “The opportunities for sustainable growth at Woking should be maximised and, if required, this should entail the review of the MGB boundary”.

However, Executive Report EXE07-164 (1 November 2007) Council resolves to have concerns about the proposed levels of growth and writes to Humfrey Malins, SEERA and others.

Government's Proposed Changes to the South East Plan published October 2008 (subject to consultation). Woking to provide for 5,840 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026 (292pa) – as a *minimum*. Note – no specific mention of Woking requiring a Green Belt review.

Woking Borough Council object to housing requirement on the basis that it is expressed as a *minimum* – October 2008 Executive meeting.

SA Report and Appropriate Assessment of the Secretary of State's 'final revisions' published April 2009.

South East Plan published May 2009 and includes requirement for Woking to provide for 5,840 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026 (292pa).

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) May 2009. Identifies a need for an additional 499 new affordable homes every year and a total of 594 new homes every year (affordable + market demand).

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) July 2009. Identifies land for 5,530 new homes, a surplus of 566 on requirement for 5,840 (292pa). Important to note that nature of sites identified unlikely to meet the housing mix identified in the SHMA.

Woking Borough Council Issues and Options consultation October – November 2009. Tests options for provision for 5,840 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026 (292pa).

Coalition Government revoke the South East Plan 6 July 2010.

**Appendix 3: Housing options to test through WBC Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal**

	Description of option	2006-2026	2006-2027	2006 - 2028
<b>Option 1</b>	SEP 'Option 1' figure (based on Surrey Housing Potential Study 2005)	4,840 242pa	5,082 242pa	5,324 242pa
<b>Option 2</b>	SEP 2009 ('Option 1' plus 10%)	5,840 292pa	6,132 292pa	6,424 292pa
<b>Option 3</b>	Woking SHLAA 2010 update (note – the sites identified after 2022 are all only suitable for high density town centre flatted development).	n/a	TBC	TBC
<b>Option 4</b>	To plan to meet HALF of the affordable housing need as identified in SHMA 2009. To achieve 250 new affordable homes pa (assume 35% affordable housing requirement). Note – this would meet the need for 95 units of market housing 'demand' every year.	n/a	12,142 714.3pa	12,857 714.3pa
<b>Option 5</b>	To plan to meet affordable housing need as identified in SHMA 2009. To achieve 499 new affordable homes pa (assume 35% affordable housing requirement). Note – this would meet the need for 95 units of market housing 'demand' every year.	n/a	24,286 1,428.5pa	25,714.3 1,428.5pa

Note – the figures in the last column show what would happen if the Core Strategy is adopted after 31 March 2012. A delay in the timetable would mean that the Council would need to plan to 2028 and identify further land supply.

## **Justification of Woking's housing target**

### **1. The housing requirement for Woking**

- 1.1. It is considered that the housing requirement of an annual average of 292 new dwellings per annum, as set out in the now revoked South East Plan, is a reasonable target for Woking. It is important that the housing target is realistic and deliverable, and should not be an artificial number. It should be based on local evidence.
- 1.2. In the absence of national guidance on setting local housing targets, it is considered that the following should be taken in to consideration:
  - Current and future housing need and demand
  - The need to increase housing supply and improve affordability
  - Housing land supply
  - Household projections
  - Economic growth projections
  - Sustainability Appraisal
  - Infrastructure requirements.
- 1.3. Woking has a high level of housing need and demand, around double that of the South East Plan requirement. The Council could chose to adopt a higher housing target which would deliver a level of housing to meet evidenced need and demand.
- 1.4. However, there is also a significant level of environmental constraints present in the Borough. It is important that a sustainable balance is found to address these competing demands. For example, to enable the delivery of 499 additional affordable homes on the back of market housing (the primary delivery mechanism for affordable housing), would require around 1,500 new homes to be built every year. This is not a realistic or desirable figure. Local evidence contained in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) does not identify sufficient sites to be able to deliver this level of housing provision without serious implications for infrastructure, the character of the area and compromising sensitive sites of nature conservation importance.
- 1.5. The following sets out the key local evidence to support the level of housing growth proposed in the South East Plan.
  - As described, 292 dwellings per annum is achievable based on past completion rates.
  - As described, the Council is able to demonstrate that an annual average of 292 net additional dwellings is deliverable over the following seven year period, with a modest surplus of 36 units.
  - The South East Plan was published in May 2009 and is therefore a recent document, which was subject to a rigorous Examination and based on a significant amount of research and evidence which will be a key material consideration. The Council did not previously object to

the housing requirement through the South East Plan Examination process.

- The recent amendment to national policy (PPS3) which now means that back garden land is defined as greenfield, may mean increased pressure on housing land supply in future years, including a potential increased pressure on the Green Belt.
- The affordability of housing is a key issue in Woking. The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2009 identifies a need for an additional 499 additional affordable homes every year. In June 2010 there were 2,086 households on the Council's housing register. 849 of these (40.7%) were in Bands A-D and are therefore considered to be in genuine housing need.
- Taking into account demand for market housing, the total housing need and demand in Woking as evidenced in the SHMA is 594 new dwellings every year – around double the South East Plan requirement.
- Woking has a high level of environmental constraints. The Borough is 60% Green Belt. It is also home to a number of nature conservation designations such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) as well two Local Nature Reserves (LNR). In addition, significant parts of the Borough are subject to flood risk. These environmental constraints limit the supply of suitable land which is available for residential development.
- In line with national policy (PPS3), the Council has prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which identifies land that is deliverable and developable for residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. This identifies that, taking in to account environmental and other land use constraints; there is sufficient land available in the urban area to meet the current housing requirement over the first ten years of the Plan. However, it should be noted that the SHMA identifies a significant need for affordable family housing. Many of the sites identified in the SHLAA, particularly those that will come forward in the latter part of the Plan period, are in the town and district centres which will only be suitable for high density flatted development, which will mean that the Council will not be able to deliver a mix of housing types and tenures to meet local need.
- The majority of new affordable homes are provided through the planning system on the back of schemes for market housing. Currently, the Council require that schemes proposing 15 or more dwellings provide 40% (35% following revocation of the South East Plan) of those homes to be affordable. The draft Core Strategy includes a policy that will require all new housing schemes to make a contribution to affordable housing. A lower housing target will reduce our ability to maximise provision of affordable housing through the planning system.

- The latest household projections for Woking produced by the Office for National Statistics show that the Borough's population is set to increase from 91,100 in 2007 to 104,100 in 2027 – a 14% increase.
  - Economic growth forecasts show that the Borough's economically active population is also set to increase by just over 1,300 between 2006 and 2026. However, Woking is set to remain a net importer of workers, that is, more people will leave the Borough for work than come in to the Borough for employment.
- 1.6. Having a housing target is important. As described, PPS3 requires local authorities to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites to meet the housing requirement. PPS3 states that where local authorities cannot demonstrate a deliverable supply of sites, they should consider 'favourably' planning applications for housing. Following the revocation of the South East Plan and in the absence of a housing target in an adopted Core Strategy, a policy vacuum now exists, leaving the planning system open to exploitation by other parties and potentially leading to a situation of 'planning by appeal'.
  - 1.7. The Government's intended reforms to the planning system are not yet known in detail. What is known, is that under the localism agenda, it is likely that following the abolition of the RSSs, housing targets will be set locally in the future and any target will need to be backed up by local evidence and with the support of local people. It is therefore considered essential that the Council takes this opportunity, whilst consulting on the draft Core Strategy, to gain local support for the current housing requirement to provide an annual average of 292 new dwellings over the lifetime of the Core Strategy.
  - 1.8. In light of the revocation of RSSs, the Council is faced with the choice of whether or not to pursue the growth agenda set out in the draft Core Strategy which is based on the spatial context that was set out in the South East Plan. Specifically, this includes Woking's status as a hub of economic development with a significantly improved transport infrastructure, and the delivery of 5,840 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026.
  - 1.9. In making this choice, it is important the Council considers the aspirations of the whole community of Woking which includes residents, businesses, environmental and community groups as well as those with a development interest.
  - 1.10. Based on the above analysis, it is recommended that the Council should proceed with planning for the level of growth set out in the draft Core Strategy including the measures to protect the environment, regenerate our Priority Places and to secure adequate infrastructure to support the growth.
  - 1.11. The Council's own priorities are housing, the environment, health and well-being, and economic development. These are founded on the themes of the Community Strategy which reflects the long-term vision of the kind of place that the community wants Woking to be in the future.
  - 1.12. Sustainable growth is important to ensure the creation of a sustainable and balanced community in Woking. Supporting economic growth, maintaining the vitality and viability of the town centre, improvements to the transport infrastructure network, regeneration and providing much needed affordable

homes for key workers are all essential for achieving the communities' aspirations for the Borough.

- 1.13. In particular, it is considered that the housing requirement that was set out in the South East Plan represents a reasonable target given the need to support the local economy and the local evidence of need and demand for housing, particularly affordable housing, balanced with the level of environmental constraints within the Borough.
- 1.14. Given the current requirement set out in national policy for local authorities to plan for 15 years housing land supply from the date of adoption of the Core Strategy, it is recommended that the Council should plan for a total of 6,424 net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2028 (292 per annum).
- 1.15. As explained in previous sections, the new Government's proposed changes to the planning system are not yet known in detail. It is clear that under the localism agenda, planning policies will need to be based on local evidence, including evidence of the support of local people. It is therefore recommended that the public are given the opportunity to comment on the level of growth being proposed as a part of the forthcoming consultation on the draft Core Strategy.