



Core Strategy Issues & Options Consultation- Summary Report

On Behalf of Woking Borough Council

Prepared by The Halo Works Ltd – December 2009

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Background & Methodology

This report includes the summary results from the Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation, which is part of the development process for writing Woking Borough Council's (WBC) Local Development Framework (LDF).

An extensive questionnaire was developed by the Policy Officers at Woking and this was made available and distributed online and as a postal survey to the stakeholder database held by WBC Planning Policy team and the Council's Citizens' Panel. The consultation period ran from 26th October to the 7th December 2009.

In addition to the questionnaire, a separate and supporting Issues and Options document was prepared by Officers, which was designed to provide additional information and be used by respondents whilst completing the survey.

All panellists were offered a freepost reply envelope (where appropriate) along with a free prize draw to encourage more survey responses. Overall, **401** responses were analysed. 268 were on line responses with 133 received as postal surveys. In addition to a number of profile questions, the survey also offered respondents an opportunity to join Woking's Citizens' Panel.

Of the 401 respondents they described themselves as follows:

- 353 were residents
- 35 work in Woking Borough
- 23 represent a group or organisation
- 8 were planning agents or developers
- 11 are people who visit Woking Borough

58% of respondents were male, 36% female. In terms of the age profile, 23% were aged under 45 years, 42% aged between 45 and 64 with 29% aged 65 or over.

The report highlights the key findings from the overall results along with any significant variations in the views of different groups of respondents within the overall respondent base. All results are based on unweighted data.

In most cases and unless otherwise stated, results have been given as a percentage of the total overall number of valid responses (all answering). Where percentage values do not add up to 100% this is likely to be due to computer rounding or the exclusion of "don't know/not stated" from the analysis. Where they exceed 100% this is likely where respondents are allowed to tick more than one answer.

As well as the statistical responses to these questions, the survey included a substantial number of additional open-ended questions. Any common themes arising from these comments are also highlighted within this report. The full listing of comments has been supplied in a separate document and can be obtained from Jane Robinson, WBC's Senior Policy Planning Officer.

Community Strategy

The survey asked respondents to rank each of the main themes in the Community Strategy in order of relative importance to each other. This ranged from a score of 1 to 6, where a score of 1 was the least important and 6 the most important.

The table below highlights, the order of importance in terms of mean or average scores.

	Mean Score	% Most Important
A clean, healthy and safe environment	5.2	52%
A strong community spirit with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility	4.3	21%
A transport system that is linked and accessible, recognising Woking’s potential as a transport hub	4.3	13%
A community which values personal health and well being	3.9	10%
Access to decent affordable housing for local people and key workers	3.8	15%
Provide opportunities and encourage people to participate in learning through their lives so they progress and reach their full potential	3.1	7%

The theme considered to be the most important out of the six outlined in the Community Strategy document was ‘a clean, healthy and safe environment. 52% of respondents rated this theme as being the most important out of the six listed in the survey.

Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) said that they believed that the key aims for the community were covered by the six themes. A number of other suggestions relevant to living and/or working in Woking could be included.

Many of these comments were wide and varied however a number of respondents said they would like the Community Strategy to refer to the local economy and the importance of attracting new businesses and retail opportunities into the areas and thus providing employment opportunities for local people.

Respondents also were looking at there being some recognition of the diverse ethnic population with Woking and support for encouraging strong links across all communities.

The Green Belt is very important to local people and they want to see reference to protecting this as part of the priorities for the Council.

Some people wanted reassurance that the Council saw these themes as being linked together so that these were not approached in isolation. Residents saw many of these themes as inter related with benefits potentially being delivered across a number of themes.

Developing the Spatial Vision and Objectives

69% of respondents said they agreed with the spatial vision outlined below:

'Woking is a sustainable, prosperous, attractive and inclusive community in an economically buoyant growing region. Woking will continue to grow as a result of its popularity as a place to live and work. The growth is managed, improves quality of life locally, and uses resources sustain ably'.

A number of people suggested ways in which the spatial vision should be changed. Some of the key themes from these comments are mentioned below.

A number of people did not think the statement was inspirational or a vision for Woking. For some local residents, the town has already become over developed and too congested and for them this is the reality they have to deal with. Their concern is that the benefits that attracted them to live in Woking in the first place are gradually being eroded and they don't feel this vision addresses these issues.

Another comment was that what does a spatial vision mean?

The questionnaire also listed the eleven objectives that have been set for the development and future growth of Woking. These objectives were:

1. Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area. A vibrant, high density, high quality environment in which to live, work, access major shops and services and enjoy leisure time.
2. Attractive local centres throughout the Borough providing convenient access to everyday shops and services, local community facilities, parks and open spaces.
3. Homes to suit all needs and pockets. Enough new homes are built to meet Government targets, in a range of sizes and types to meet different needs. New developments are built at densities that make the best use of land in the urban area - but respect the context of Woking's leafy character. A significant proportion of new homes, for sale or rent, are priced to suit young families and those on lower incomes.
4. A green Borough where the countryside is never far away. Open Green Belt land is not built on unless there is no other way to deliver key priorities. Green space and wooded areas are a feature of all parts of the Borough. Plenty of open space and countryside is accessible to the public and rich in wildlife. Biodiversity and the quality of the natural environment is protected and enhanced.
5. A busy, buoyant economy with good quality offices, business parks and industrial areas, which meet the needs of modern business. These are mainly in major business and industrial areas, Woking Town Centre and local centres.
6. A Borough, which leads the way on high quality, sustainable development and addresses climate change. Much more use is made of renewable energy. New buildings are more energy and water efficient. As a result, the use of non-renewable energy is reduced. Waste is dealt with in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way.
7. A high quality environment. The quality of air and water is maintained and improved. The impact of noise and light is managed effectively.
8. Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud. Attractive buildings, in a range of styles, with public spaces where people feel safe and want to spend time.
9. Provision of key services keeps pace as the Borough's population grows. This includes schools, healthcare, water supply, drainage and flood alleviation, leisure and community centres.
10. A transport system that enables people to get to jobs, services and other places they wish to visit safely, in a reasonable and consistent journey time. Walking and cycling to the town centre, district and local centres, schools and other facilities are safe and convenient. Most people who live further away from Woking Town Centre can get to it by good frequent public transport. Onward journeys to major destinations can be made by train. Using a car is a choice not a necessity.
11. A Borough where the whole community has the opportunity to share in the general prosperity and high quality of life. The Borough is made up of stable mixed communities with decent affordable housing. Everyone has good access to facilities, particularly the elderly, young people and those without access to a car.

The survey asked, whether there were any elements missing from these objectives and if so, what needs to be added. Common issues raised by respondents were:

Many residents were satisfied that the list of objectives was comprehensive. Some respondents would like to know how the Council is going to measure their success in achieving these objectives. Many people also commented on the existing limitations of the local road infrastructure in and around Woking and were concerned that planned improvements to these were not being included as part of the future plans.

Core Strategy Overall

The next section of the survey listed the key issues identified in the Core Strategy and asked whether there were other key issues that should be addressed through the Core Strategy.

Some of the other key issues highlighted by respondents included:

- Protection of the Green Belt and built environment
- Continuing development of roads and other transport infrastructure
- Provision of leisure facilities
- Social inequalities and health issues
- Safety and security in and around the Borough

Housing

The first section of questions on the Core Strategy focused on the key issue of Housing.

Housing: Location of New Housing

The survey highlighted three different options for allocating new homes in the future.

These options were:

Option A is based on past housing completion rates since the adoption of the Local Plan in 1999, and has been adjusted to take into account developments at Brookwood Farm and Moor Lane.

Option B is based on a higher proportion of development in the town, district and local centres. This is based on evidence from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and is also in line with the approach set out in the Council's first Core Strategy. This option would have implications on the levels of family housing provided.

Option C is based on the assumption that 10% of our housing allocation will be provided in the form of a small urban extension, which may be on one larger or several smaller sites. This option would enable us to secure more affordable family housing. A higher percentage of affordable housing would be secured on former Green Belt land.

46% of respondents preferred Option B with 27% favouring Option A and C.

The Option B was the preferred option amongst residents, planning agents or developers as well as those representing a group or organisation.

In terms of the reasons why respondents selected their favoured option, the separate document with the list of verbatim comments includes the reasons given for each preferred housing option. For those respondents that chose Option B, the most popular one selected, the main advantages of this were that it appeared to protect Green Belt land as well as more likely to deliver the type of housing growth and housing stock that the area requires.

The consultation also asked whether WBC should **consider any other options** for the location of new homes. Suggestions included building some housing on poorly designated Green Belt land, building on Ministry of Defence land and focusing on the right type of housing for the area. A number of people were concerned by the high number of new build

that focused on flats and apartments, many of which were unsold, rather than building more family homes nearer to the town centre. Respondents also wanted to see a more even distribution of new build across the Borough ensuring that this was focused on areas where there was lower density of housing rather than making higher density areas more crowded.

Housing: Size and Type of the Housing

The survey highlighted two options as to how WBC should plan to deliver an appropriate mix of new housing through the planning system.

A: Allow market forces to dictate the size and type of new homes delivered, but ensure that larger sites provide an appropriate mix.

B: Plan and provide for a mix of dwellings to meet local need and demand (19% 1 bed, 40% 2 bed, 27% 3 bed, 14% 4+ bed).

The overall results were **63% preferring Option B** with 37% preferring Option A

Housing: Density of Housing

The consultation asked how WBC should ensure that land is used efficiently. Two options were listed in the questionnaire.

83% said they favoured a policy where there were set targets for specified densities by location based on sustainability factors, Government targets and local character.

Housing: Affordable Housing

The first question in this section listed four options for the site size thresholds that should be set for the provision of affordable housing. One of these was the clear favoured choice.

58% of respondents agreed that the best option was to **set different thresholds** for different parts of the Borough, linked to economic viability and local need. All of the other three options were supported by between 13% to 15%.

68% said that the percentage of new housing that should be provided as affordable should be set by adopting a **range depending on location**, economic viability and local need. Of the other two options listed in the survey, 19% said that WBC should continue to seek 40% on qualifying sites in line with the regional target.

The consultation also asked what should the proportion between different types of affordable housing be on sites that meet the site size threshold. Four options were listed in the survey.

Two thirds of respondents (66%) favoured a policy where the split should be determined on a **case by case basis**, dependent on location linked to economic viability and local need.

The next highest option was 16% preferring to retain the current policy of 85:15 split between social rented and intermediate housing.

The final question in this section asked whether WBC should require **other forms of new development** to make a **contribution** towards the provision of affordable housing. Three options were listed in the consultation.

43% said that affordable housing should only be sought through **residential developments**. **This was the preferred option by a small margin as 36% supported the idea that**

developments for all **new commercial land** uses should be required to provide affordable housing. A further 21% said that developments for **additional office** and industrial floor space should be required to provide affordable housing.

Housing: Gypsies and Travellers

The consultation asked how WBC should plan for the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers. Two options were highlighted in the survey and the views were more or less equally split between these two options.

51% favoured the option suggesting that WBC **should identify** broad locations for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation through the Core Strategy and seek to allocate specific sites through the Site Allocations document. The Core Strategy will include a policy that would list the factors to be taken into consideration when allocating sites through the Site Allocations document or when a planning application is submitted.

49% supported the option where WBC **should not identify** broad locations for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation through the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will include a policy that would list the factors to be taken into consideration when allocating sites through the Site Allocations document or when a planning application is submitted.

Residents and planning agents/developers both supported these two options 50:50. Respondents representing groups/organisations were more likely to support the first option (Option A 61%, Option B 39%).

Housing: Older People and other Vulnerable Groups

The final question asked how WBC should plan for the specific needs of the elderly and other vulnerable groups and whether specific criteria should be set out in policy. Two alternative options were listed in the consultation.

59% of respondents supported the option where WBC **should identify broad locations** for sites / accommodation to meet the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. A policy should be included in the Core Strategy that would list the factors that will be used to identify locations for sites/ accommodation to meet the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups.

41% favoured the other option where WBC **should not identify** broad locations for sites/ accommodation to meet the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. A policy should be included in the Core Strategy that would list the factors that will be used to identify locations for sites/ accommodation to meet the needs of older people and other vulnerable groups.

The final **open-ended** question in this section asked whether people had any other comments to make regarding key housing issues.

A number of respondents wanted to ensure that the Council is consulting about any specific housing needs with the community groups identified in this section of the survey rather than relying on the views of the 'majority' to determine their needs. Some people said that the housing policy should be aiming at providing a mixed type of accommodation so that new developments cater for all community groups rather than just individual groups.

Green Infrastructure and the Environment

The second section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Green Infrastructure & the Environment: Green Belt Boundary

The first question in this section asked if a green Belt release is necessary, what should it look like? Two possible options were listed in the consultation.

By far the majority **73%**, preferred the option suggesting there were **several smaller Green Belt releases** should be allowed to meet housing need. 27% supported the option of a single release to meet housing need.

The views of respondents representing groups or organisations were very different from the overall views. 56% supported a single Green Belt release with 44% opting for several smaller Green Belt releases.

Green Infrastructure & the Environment: Biodiversity

The question asked to what extent people would agree or disagree with the following statements describing the approach to this issue in the Core Strategy.

- identify specific sites and corridors of acknowledged biodiversity importance
- and ensure that all development proposals, wherever they are identify positive measures to protect and enhance biodiversity.

This would also include an explicit objective of protecting and promoting specific features for biodiversity, which may be declining or threatened.

Overall, 79% agreed with this approach. Of these 46% agreed strongly. A further 15% did not express an opinion either way with 6% disagreeing. None of the respondents, who said they visit Woking Borough, represent a group or organisation or described themselves as either planning agents or developers disagreed with the approach.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to add a comment if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested. Only a few people disagreed overall (6%). Some people agreed with the first part of the approach but not the second. One comment mentioned was that there needs to be a rational balance between the needs of people and the desire to maintain biodiversity needs.

Green Infrastructure & the Environment: Open Space Provision

The question asked to what extent people would agree or disagree with the following statements describing the approaches to the provision of new and improved open spaces.

89% agreed (57% agreed strongly) that new development must provide open space on site or a financial contribution to improving existing open space elsewhere in the Borough in line with National Playing Field Association standards, where it is not practical to provide that open space as part of a new development. Only **5% disagreed** with this approach.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to add a comment if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested. Only a few people overall disagreed (5%).

Some people said they thought there was already sufficient open spaces in the Borough. Others commented that open space should be exactly that i.e. open space that is open access, which is often not the case at present.

63% agreed (16% agreed strongly) that WBC should take a more flexible approach to the loss of low quality and under-utilised open space where improvements to that open space are not practical (e.g. the land may be in private ownership) and where there is alternative open space provision within close proximity of the site. **19% disagreed** with this approach.

The final **open-ended** question in this section asked people to add a comment if they disagreed with the approach being suggested. Overall, 19% disagreed.

Respondents want to make sure that open spaces are not removed from areas where they can deliver real benefits to the community. The definition of 'low quality' or 'under utilised' could be challenging as the benefits to people and wildlife of these open spaces may be very intangible and difficult to quantify or measure. The feeling is that open spaces should be preserved even if they are surrounded by a built environment.

Green Infrastructure & the Environment: Areas at Risk of Flooding

The question asked to what extent people would agree or disagree with the proposed approach to addressing flood risk in the Core Strategy.

93% of respondents agreed (59% agreed strongly) with the proposed approach that the Core Strategy will include a policy which will specify the areas at risk of flooding across the Borough and will set out the approach to dealing with planning applications that have the potential to increase or be affected by flood risk, in accordance with an up to date SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment). Only **3% disagreed** with this approach.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to add a comment if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested. Only a very few disagreed (3%). The main comment made was that if land has been assessed as a flood risk it should not be built on.

The final **open-ended** question in this section asked whether people had any other comments to make regarding the key green infrastructure and environment issues. The full listing of comments is provided in the separate document.

The main issues highlighted were:

- Protect Green Belt land at all costs
- Do not build on land that is considered to be a 'flood risk'
- Provide land for allotments
- Ensure schools continue providing playing fields
- Maintain green spaces across the borough

Economy

The third section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Economy: Location of New Employment Floor space

The first question in this section asked where WBC should be looking to locate additional employment floor space. Two options were identified in the consultation.

64% said they preferred the option of focusing future office development within the town centre and encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated town centre office space to cater for future needs. **Encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated** office space in industrial estates to alternative employment uses, such as industrial and warehousing space.

36% supported the other option, which was to focus future office development within the town centre and encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated town centre office space to cater for future needs. **Retain existing office space** within the industrial estates and encourage redevelopment of outmoded and outdated office space here to cater for future needs

Economy: Loss of Employment Land to Other Uses

The next question asked respondents to select one of the three options that would best describe how they would like WBC to balance the needs of competing land uses.

The preferred options were:

59% selected the approach where outmoded and outdated employment premises in district and local centres and residential areas should be permitted to **change to alternative uses**, such as housing.

34% preferred the option of **considering** for release to alternative uses **a limited number of under-utilised employment sites**. Allow for the intensification of employment floorspace in existing industrial estates

7% favoured the other option of **retaining all** land currently in employment use

Economy: Supporting Small Businesses and Business Start Ups

The consultation asked how WBC should plan for the needs of small businesses in Woking.

70% of people supported one of the three options listed in the survey, which was to encourage redevelopment of sites within the **existing industrial areas** to provide start-up space and small business units. This was by far the most popular option.

26% favoured the approach of encouraging the provision of serviced office accommodation in the **town and district centres**. 5% supported the other option listed.

Economy: Status of Existing Unallocated Employment Sites within the Green Belt

The views of respondents were similar when it came to selecting the best approach to take to existing employment sites in the Green Belt

54% preferred the option of seeking redevelopment of existing employment sites in the Green Belt for alternative uses whereas **46% supported the other option** of considering the formal allocation (identification) of existing employment sites in the Green Belt for employment use.

Economy: Extent of the Town Centre Boundary

The next question asked whether people thought the town centre boundary should be revised. In order to help respondents, they were asked to refer to the map in the issues and options supporting document.

Over a half of respondents (54%) said they wanted to **retain** the existing town centre boundary set out in the Local Plan 1999 with the second most popular option being to **revise** the town centre boundary **outwards** to the east and/or west which will provide a larger area for town centre development. 37% supported this second option.

Economy: Extent of the Shopping Area Boundary

This time, the survey asked whether people thought the boundary of the shopping area should be revised. In order to help respondents with their decision, they were again asked to refer to the map in the issues and options supporting document.

Of the two options highlighted in the consultation, **71% selected** the approach of **implementing minor revisions** to the shopping area boundaries so that it includes the cinema and theatre complex and Woking Town Square.

The alternative option of **retaining the existing shopping area** boundary set out in the Local Plan 1999, but combining the Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas in line with national policy was supported by 29% of people.

Economy: The Level of Town Centre Redevelopment

The consultation asked how much new retail floor space should WBC plan for Woking Town Centre. Two possible options were provided. The views were mixed.

57% supported the option of a **modest expansion of the town centre (up to 38000 m sq.)**

The key details of this approach were described as:

- The layout of the town centre largely remains the same.
- Extensions to existing shopping centres are encouraged.
- High density development of key opportunity sites for a mix of uses.
- Improvements to the physical environment of the town centre.
- May not achieve the improvements in order for Woking to respond to competition

43% overall, supported the alternative **option of major growth and major remodelling of the town centre (up to 75000 m sq.)**

The key details of this would include:

- Major remodelling of the town centre.
- Significant redevelopments are encouraged with a mix of uses, including a mass of retail floorspace.
- There is an improved integration between the different uses within the town centre.

Although the number of respondents were relatively small both those respondents who were representing groups or organisation and planning agents and developers were far more likely to favour the option of major growth and remodelling of the town centre. Residents on the other hand were more likely to support a modest expansion of the town centre.

Economy: Hierarchy of Centres

81% of respondents agreed that WBC should implement the revised hierarchy of centres put forward by consultants, to keep West Byfleet as a District Centre and reclassify the other district centres to Local Centres? Former Local Centres will be reclassified to Neighbourhood Centres/Shopping Parades, with the exception of Kingfield.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to explain and add any revisions to the proposed hierarchy if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested.

Some of the themes raised included the view that down grading the status of the towns may have a detrimental effect on local communities if they feel they are less supported by the local agencies. Other respondents could not understand why there would be a need to change the structure of these towns in the first place. Other comments suggested that new developments should be directed away from the town centres.

Economy: Future Development in West Byfleet

The consultation asked how WBC should plan for future development in West Byfleet. Two possible options were outlined in the consultation.

61% supported **Redevelopment** in West Byfleet.

- Provision of further retail and leisure floorspace can encourage linked trips between the new uses and existing businesses
- New development could be used to fund improvements in local infrastructure and environmental improvements.
- New development could be used to reverse the decline in retail rankings and reinforce the centre's retail function as a District Centre, whilst building on its food and drink leisure strength

39% favoured the option of Plan for **no significant change** in West Byfleet.

- In the short-term, it is likely that the decline in retail rankings will continue and so will the vacancy rates.
- There is likely to be less shops and more non-retail uses such as banks, estate agents, cafes, restaurants and bars over time.
- The function of the centre will shift towards a 'small' District Centre, with a leisure and service offer rather than any retail offer.

Economy: The Role and Function of Local Centres

The final question in this section asked what level of growth should WBC plan for in the Local Centres. Two possible scenarios were given as options.

Over three quarters of respondents (77%) favoured an approach where modest growth should be allowed in the Local Centres, allowing a few additional shops and current shops to extend. 23% supported the other strategy where a **lower level** of growth should be allowed in the Local Centres.

Climate Change

The fourth section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Climate Change: Code for Sustainable Homes

This question asked whether or not WBC should push ahead of the national timetable in requiring all housing developments to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes.

61% supported the approach of WBC to lead other authorities and push ahead of the national timetable, for example we should require all homes to meet Code level 4 by 2012 and Code level 6 by 2014.

39% supported the other option provided of sticking to the national timetable in implementing the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Climate Change: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

The Council can place different requirements on developers in terms of energy efficiency and renewable energy. The next question asked to what extent people would agree or disagree with a proposed approach to this subject.

79% overall agreed (46% agreed strongly) that **large-scale** development must meet **higher levels** of energy efficiency and/ or produce **more** of their energy from low carbon sources than other development in the Borough. **7%** overall, disagreed with this approach.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to comment if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested. A few people overall (7%) disagreed.

The main comment raised was that people thought that these requirements should be shared by all developments no matter what their size. This would be more consistent and fairer.

A further question on the same issue asked to what extent people would agree or disagree with another proposed approach to this subject.

The statement read it is cheaper to build new development on land, which has not been previously developed. **If** housing targets cannot be met within the existing urban area, we **may** have to allow development on greenfield sites. **If** this happens, **69% of** respondents said 'yes', the Council should require development on these sites to **meet higher levels of energy efficiency** and or produce **more** of their energy from low carbon sources than other development in the Borough. 15% disagreed with this view and a further 16% were 'neutral'.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to explain their answer.

One of the comments raised was that if development was being allowed on land, which has not been previously developed on, the impact on the environment should be neutral. Residents would prefer any greenfield site, especially if it were Green Belt, not to be built on in the first place. If development has to go ahead on these types of site the environmental requirements should be stringent and the full environmental impact of the build assessed. Respondents also want to see any development to be as energy efficient as possible

Climate Change: Development of the CHP (Combined Heat and Power) Network

67% of respondents (27% agree strongly) agreed that the Council should require development, which is close to the combined Heat and Power Network to connect to it. 9% disagreed with this statement.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people to comment if they had disagreed with the approach being suggested. Only a relatively few people (9%) disagreed.

Some comments were raised about the competitiveness of the CHP network mentioning that the environmental and economic arguments for connecting to the CHP network should be persuasive enough. If connection was a requirement perhaps it was not competitive enough.

Climate Change: Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

The survey highlighted that in accordance with the South East Plan; the incorporation of SuDS will be required on new development. Respondents were asked what level of development should require this.

74% said this should apply to any developments involving one additional dwelling or greater with 67% suggesting that this should apply to commercial development exceeding 100 sqm. 65% said this should be enacted to commercial extensions and 64% to any commercial development over 500 sqm. 39% believed this should apply to domestic extensions.

Building and Public Spaces

The fifth section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Buildings and Public Spaces: Protection of Woking’s Heritage

The next series of questions asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about building and public spaces.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
We should place more emphasis on protecting those buildings and areas covered by existing designations and not attempt to protect those which fall outside the designations The Council will set out specific design principles for all development	21%	40%	24%	11%	4%

Overall, 61% said they agreed with the statement (21% agreed strongly) with 15% disagreeing.

The next **open-ended** question asked people to comment if they had disagreed with the statement. Overall, 15% disagreed. Not everyone is convinced that the Council have in the past done enough to protect the heritage of the town including the ‘historical’ buildings that existed previously and they are not confident that this approach would change in the future.

Residents would also like to see WBC acting as the guardian of all buildings and developments not just those afforded with special protection or designations.

Buildings and Public Spaces: Design and Quality of New Development

The next series of questions also asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about building and public spaces.

The overall results are highlighted below:

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
We should identify those areas of the Borough, which have a strong local distinctiveness and require new developments to significantly conform to the local style. Allow much more innovative and forward-looking design in all other areas.	35%	48%	11%	5%	2%
We should identify locations in the Borough, such as the town centre and key gateways/ corridors, where design would be required to be contemporary and innovative or have to	20%	51%	17%	9%	3%

satisfy specific design guidance.					
We should identify a network of key public spaces which could be prioritised for improvement, including possible pedestrianisation/ traffic restrictions	39%	48%	9%	1%	2%

87% of respondents said that WBC should identify a network of key public spaces that could be prioritised for improvement. This gained the highest level of support. Only 3% disagreed.

A further 83% agreed that areas of the Borough should be identified, which have a strong local distinctiveness and where new developments should be required to conform to the local style. 7% disagreed with this statement.

Buildings and Public Spaces: Woking’s Image

The next series of questions also asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about building and public spaces.

The overall results are highlighted below:

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Strong links between the core of the town centre, the canal and the heaths should be created.	30%	43%	21%	4%	2%
Development should be focussed towards the towns ‘gateway’ locations at Victoria Way, Lockfield Drive, Goldsworth Road, the station canopy area, the canal/Lightbox and at Victoria Arch. The scale and character of buildings at these locations would be noticeably different, defining boundaries and acting as arrival points	18%	44%	28%	8%	2%
Building upwards in the town centre should be considered	17%	39%	19%	19%	6%
Bold and innovative design should be encouraged in the town centre where it would not adversely affect features of historical and cultural importance	26%	42%	20%	8%	3%
Financial contributions should be sought from developers to finance improvements to the public realm, including public art and street furniture in the town centre	42%	40%	12%	3%	3%

The statement that was the least popular was whether ‘building upwards in the town centre should be considered’. 56% agreed with this view however 25% also disagreed.

The highest agreement level (82%) related to the number of people that supported financial contributions being sought from developers to finance improvements to the public realm.

Finally in this section, when considering residential character, 74% would prefer WBC taking the option of **prescribing the distribution** of higher density housing to specific locations in the Borough, and seeking to **retain** the character of existing residential areas.

Infrastructure and Services

The sixth section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Three options were given in the survey as to ways in which new infrastructure that is related to new development could be delivered and funded in the future.

Over half of respondents (52%) favoured the introduction of a **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL), as the Government is in favour of, to help fund new infrastructure requirements.

A further 28% said they would prefer to **continue to use planning obligations** but make more use of standard formulae, until such time as CIL becomes mandatory.

Finally 20% said they preferred the option of **continuing to use planning obligations** (s.106 agreements) in the same way as it is currently operated, with few standard charges, until such time as CIL becomes mandatory.

Traffic and Accessibility

The final section of questions focused on decisions around this issue.

Traffic and Accessibility: Traffic Congestion

The next series of questions also asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about traffic and accessibility.

The overall results are highlighted below:

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
New development should be focused in those areas that are most accessible by public transport	33%	46%	12%	7%	2%
The introduction of a park and ride scheme should be considered.	25%	36%	22%	10%	6%
A new bus station should be developed in Woking Town Centre	29%	37%	23%	6%	5%
Require all new major developments to provide a travel plan which sets out how the additional journeys generated by that development will be managed	44%	42%	8%	3%	2%
Options should be considered for addressing the causes of the north-south divide in the Town Centre, for example the construction of tunnels through Victoria Arch	28%	37%	25%	6%	3%

Whilst 61% of respondents supported the introduction of a park and ride scheme, 16% disagreed, the highest level of disagreement across all the different statements. 86% agreed that all new major developments should set out a travel plan, which sets out how the additional journeys generated would be managed.

The next **open-ended** question in this section asked people whether they thought there were other options available to the Council for addressing traffic congestion.

Some of the comments raised included:

- Look at ways in which the 'school run' can be managed better or even staggered
- Better management of the traffic lights on the ring road around Woking
- Better coordination between the different agencies when the roads are being dug up
- Develop local bus services including connection at public transport terminuses
- Better separation of cyclists and pedestrians from road traffic
- Increase capacity of the road at certain pinch points across the borough
- Restrict the developments in the town centre, which contribute to greater congestion

Traffic and Accessibility: Woking Station

The survey asked how far people agreed or disagreed with the following approach.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Major development in and around Woking station should be sought, including an improved transport interchange.	48%	36%	11%	4%	2%

84% of respondents that major development in and around Woking station should be sought.

Traffic and Accessibility: Walking and Cycling

The next series of questions also asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a number of other statements about walking and cycling.

The overall results are highlighted below:

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Require all new developments to provide cycle parking as part of the scheme	31%	45%	19%	4%	2%
Require developers to make a financial contribution to the improvements to the cycle network	26%	38%	24%	8%	4%
Seek to maximise opportunities through the design of new developments and, in particular, future redevelopment in the town centre, to improve cycle and pedestrian routes	36%	45%	14%	3%	3%

76% of respondents support the approach to require all new developments to provide cycle parking as part of the scheme. 81% also agree with the approach to improve cycle and pedestrian routes in the town centre as part of the development of the town centre.

Traffic and Accessibility: Parking

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
Plan for additional commuter and visitor parking in the Town Centre	24%	35%	20%	14%	7%
Plan for additional commuter parking at West Byfleet station	18%	35%	39%	6%	3%
Plan for additional commuter parking at Brookwood station	15%	35%	43%	4%	3%
Plan for additional commuter parking at Worplesdon station	15%	32%	45%	4%	3%

The higher number of neutral responses suggest that a significant number of respondents did not have an opinion on many of these statements or were unfamiliar with these locations. Further clarification may be required from the local population surrounding these local centres or service users of these stations.

59% supported the approach plan for additional commuter and visitor parking in the Town centre however, 21% disagreed with this statement.

Finally, the survey asked whether anyone had **any other comments** on the content of this issues and options consultation that have not been included in the document elsewhere.

A wide and varied listing of comments were made. These included:

- The need to develop Woking’s infrastructure in line with any new housing developments
- Ensure that the best and most efficient use is being made of the existing facilities and examine how a more imaginative approach could be achieved with little capital outlay
- Ensure that the needs of existing residents as well as those of any potential new residents are catered for in the strategy
- More emphasis in the strategy on meeting the housing and transport requirements of those residents with limited mobility or those with a disability
- Make the town centre more attractive
- Enhance the public transport provision
- Make the town centre a desirable place to visit at all times of the day
- Restrict the build of high rise buildings in the Woking town centre
- More emphasis on the protection of the Green Belt

Getting Involved

The survey asked which of the following ways people would like to be informed about future planning matters for the Borough. A number of suggestions were listed in the questionnaire.

The top five responses were:

Local newspapers	59%
The Woking Magazine	59%
Email	51%
Website	43%
Displays (e.g. libraries, shopping centres)	40%

The respondents that completed the postal version of the survey were also far more likely to be kept informed via the Local Development Framework Newsletter.

Respondents were happy to respond to proposals using either short postal or online surveys. Those that responded by post were far more likely to favour using short postal surveys whereas those that responded on line preferred short on line surveys.

When it came to receiving feedback about consultations they had responded to, their preferred channel tended to reflect their original choice or method of submitting their views. Consequently online respondents favoured receiving replies via email whereas postal survey respondents favoured responses by letter. This group of respondents were also more likely to prefer feedback via the Local Development Framework newsletter.