

national motorway network, and a rail-air coach service. In addition, there are plans to link Woking directly to London Heathrow by rail and Woking has embraced sustainability through its cycling town status. On all levels, Woking benefits from excellent accessibility; this gives strong support to the notion of future growth.

- 9.16 Thirdly, the strategic housing proposals for Woking are likely to result in a rapidly expanding population during the plan period. The SEP requires the borough to accommodate 5,840 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 (or 292 per annum). Our assessment shows that in the core zones of 1a, 1b, 1c and 2 (which broadly accord to the borough boundary) population will increase by 3,229 between 2009 and 2026. Importantly, these are conservative projections since we understand the Surrey projections for these zones do not fully reflect the SEP projections. As the main town centre in the borough, Woking must be fit for purpose to accommodate this growth.
- 9.17 Fourthly, there is clear evidence of competition from other town centres which over time has the potential to erode the market share of Woking town centre. Specifically, we are aware of an extant permission in Guildford for some 25,000 sqm (gross) of additional retail floorspace, whilst in Kingston upon Thames there is policy commitment to a major new retail development in the town of up to 70,000 sqm (gross). Furthermore, Bracknell will undergo a major remodelling scheme which will improve its retail offer during the plan period and create an additional 56,000 sqm (gross) of retail floorspace. Although we appreciate the future of some of these schemes is not certain due to the current economic circumstances, there are plans in place and they represent a real risk to the future performance of Woking town centre.
- 9.18 In summary, there is a shared ambition at regional and local level to change the nature and function of Woking town centre. In our view a 'no action' option is not a realistic alternative. However, there are reasonable alternatives as to how this ambition can be met and these can be divided into two 'options', although we appreciate that there are various permutations to both options. A summary of the two main options is set out in Table 9.3 below.

**Table 9.3 Options for the Redevelopment of Woking**

Options	Key Characteristics
Option 1: Modest Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The layout of the town centre largely remains the same</li> <li>▪ Extensions to existing facilities are encouraged</li> <li>▪ High density development of key opportunity sites for a mix of uses</li> <li>▪ Improvements to the physical environment of the town centre</li> </ul>
Option 2: Major Remodelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Major remodelling of the town centre is undertaken</li> <li>▪ Significant redevelopments are encouraged with a mix of uses, including a critical mass of retail floorspace</li> <li>▪ There is improved integration between the different uses within the town centre.</li> </ul>

- 9.19 It is ultimately for the Council to decide the most appropriate approach through the LDF process. However, it is our view that Option 1 will not achieve the improvement in the