



# **Woking Local Development Framework**

## **Draft Core Strategy**

**November 2010**



## How to get involved and have your say

This Draft Core Strategy represents the Council's chosen strategy for the Borough having considered all reasonable alternatives and all other relevant matters.

It is important that you are involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy. If you have views on any part of this document, now is the time to tell us.

Accompanying this document is a **representation form** that we would like you to complete. This form is also available **online** at: [www.woking.gov.uk/woking2027](http://www.woking.gov.uk/woking2027)

Please send your representation forms or general comments to:

**Planning Policy Team,  
Woking Borough Council,  
Civic Offices,  
Gloucester Square,  
Woking,  
GU21 6YL**

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

Further copies of the forms are available from the Civic Offices, Borough libraries or on request from the Planning Policy team.

Telephone 01483 743871

Consultation runs for nine weeks from Friday 5 November 2010 and closes at **5pm on Friday 7 January 2011**. Comments received after this consultation period cannot be taken into account.

Please note that the Council cannot accept confidential or anonymous representations.

If you require this document to be transferred to another format such as Braille, a large text version, on audiotape or another language please contact the Planning Policy Team at the above address.

### **What happens next?**

At the end of the nine week consultation period in January, all of the responses will be analysed. The Council will then compile the results of the consultation in a report which will be made available on our website in the spring. All responses received will be taken in to account and used to prepare the Core Strategy for a final round of consultation in July to September 2011 prior to its submission to the Secretary of State in October 2011.

**Please note that document footnotes are on p134 at the very end of the document.**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare Local Development Framework (LDF) documents that will collectively replace the Woking Borough Local Plan (1999). The Core Strategy is a key document of the LDF because it will provide the local strategic planning policy context within which all the other LDF documents will be prepared.
- 1.2 The Core Strategy covers the period up to 2027 but also ensures that its implementation will not compromise on the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It has a geographical coverage of the whole of the Borough. Its policies and proposals are justified by robust and up-to-date evidence. There is a clear path for its implementation and an in-built mechanism for monitoring its performance.
- 1.3 The Core Strategy enhances the existing strengths and opportunities of the Borough to the benefit of everyone, but also addresses the weaknesses and threats that exist within it. For example, Woking Borough is nationally recognised for its work and commitment to environmental improvement and mitigation of the adverse impacts on climate change. It has made significant investment in an energy efficient infrastructure, which future development could be made to utilise and the Core Strategy includes policies to enable this to be achieved. Woking's community is relatively affluent. However, there are pockets of deprivation, which the Core Strategy seeks to address. In this regard, it sets out specific policies to deal with pockets of deprivation at Sheerwater, Maybury and Lakeview Estate in Goldsworth Park.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy contains an analysis of the current state of the Borough. It sets a clear vision of what the Borough will look like by 2027 and a clear sense of direction for how the vision will be achieved. It seeks to respond to the challenges facing local residents, workers and visitors and does so by taking into account national and international planning policies, Regulations and Directives. Public involvement has been integral to its preparation and the aspirations of the local community as expressed in the Sustainable Community Strategy have been a key objective.
- 1.5 The social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy have been assessed through a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and appropriate mitigation measures are incorporated to overcome any adverse impact. The Core Strategy therefore strikes a good balance between the three strands of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental. The Council is confident that its implementation will create a sustainable community in which people will choose to live, work and visit.



## **What is the Core Strategy and what will it mean to the people who live, work and visit Woking Borough?**

- 1.6 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a new system of plan making that was introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act). The Act sought to reform the planning system by making it simpler and speedier to prepare plans, and to put community involvement at the heart of plan making. Woking Borough Council has taken the reform aims of the Act into account in preparing this Core Strategy. In Woking Borough, the LDF will comprise a suite of easily updatable Local Development Documents (LDD). Together, they will replace the current adopted Woking Borough Local Plan. Of the Local Development Documents, the following will be Development Plan Documents (DPD):
- Core Strategy.
  - Site Allocations DPD.
  - Development Management Policies DPD.
- 1.7 The timetable for the preparation of these DPDs is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which can be found on the Council's website ([www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk)).
- 1.8 The Core Strategy is the key document of the Local Development Framework. It sets out the overall local strategic context for the preparation of the other Local Development Documents. It is visionary, proactive and based on robust evidence.
- 1.9 The Act makes the Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan Documents a statutory requirement. In this regard, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report has been prepared to support the Core Strategy. The SA is published as a separate document, but its findings have been used to inform the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy.
- 1.10 The Core Strategy will affect the lives of people who live, work and visit Woking Borough in a variety of ways.
- It sets out the overall approach to managing development and change in the Borough.
  - It identifies the broad location for new homes, jobs, community facilities and services and how they will be delivered.
  - It sets the framework for the provision of affordable housing in the Borough.
  - It sets out quality standards for design and sustainable construction that development has to meet to be acceptable in Woking Borough.
  - It sets out a framework for securing the necessary infrastructure to support development, including transport, education, health, utilities, community facilities, open spaces and green infrastructure and how this will be delivered.
  - It identifies Woking Borough's contribution towards minimising the adverse impacts of climate change and how it intends to meet its international and national obligations towards environmental improvement.
  - It provides specific policy guidance to protect the Borough's diverse habitats, biodiversity, geodiversity, heritage and important built features

such as listed buildings, historic landscapes, ancient monuments and Conservation Areas.

- Overall, it sets a framework for delivering the aspirations of the local community as set out in the Surrey and Woking Sustainable Community Strategies, and seeks to improve the well-being of the community.

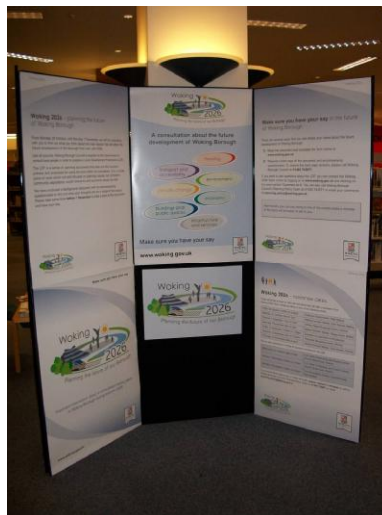
- 1.11 The Core Strategy has been prepared to be in general conformity with National Planning Policy. This is one of the legal requirements that the Core Strategy has to meet to be judged sound.

#### **How has the Core Strategy been prepared?**

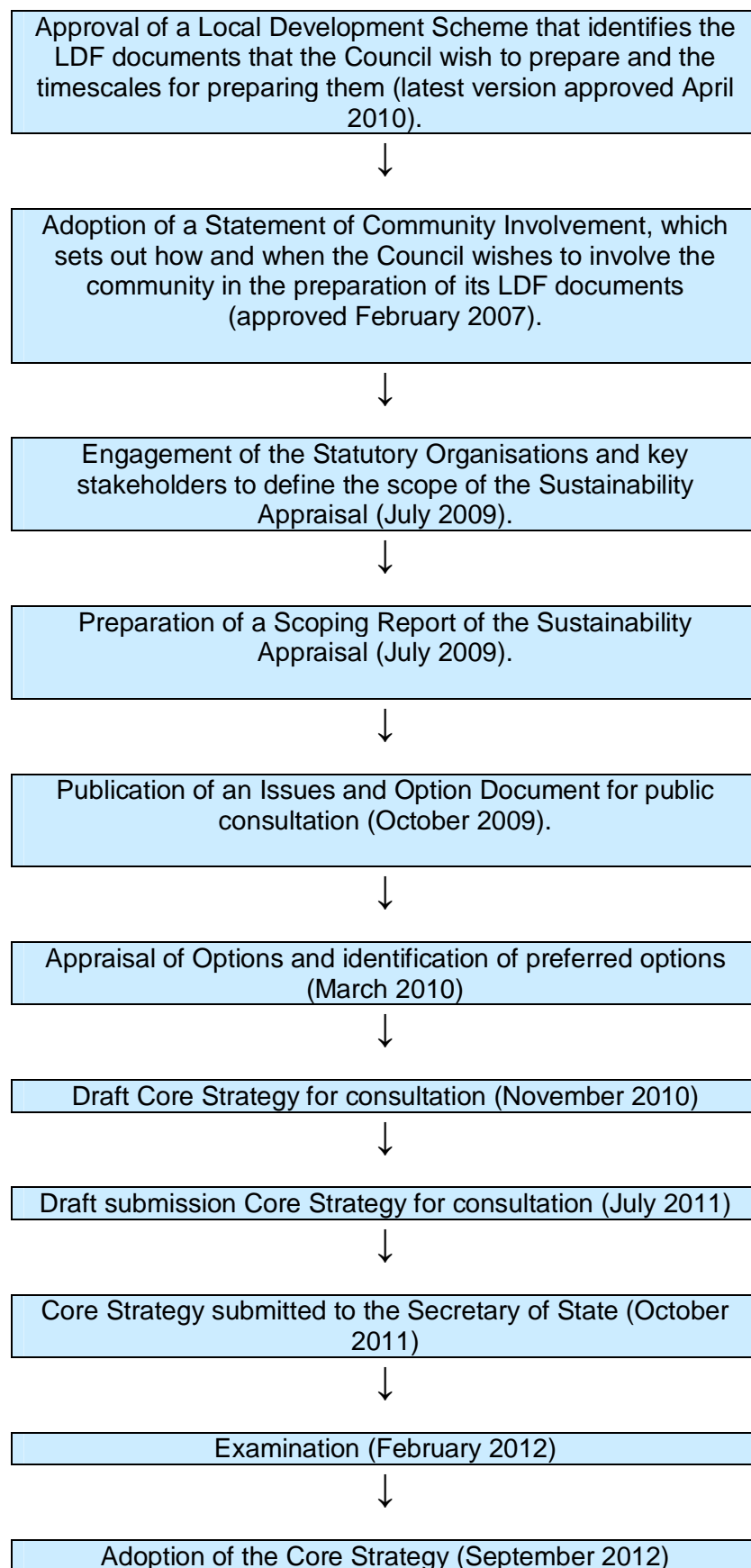
- 1.12 Five key principles underpin the preparation of the Core Strategy:

- Effective involvement of key stakeholders and the general public at all relevant stages of the process in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.
- Corporate approach to its preparation, hence the involvement of all service areas of Woking Borough Council.
- Robust, credible and up to date evidence to justify policies and proposals.
- Appropriate scrutiny and involvement of Councillors through relevant committees of the Council. In particular, a cross party Working Group has been established to oversee the preparation of the Core Strategy.
- Quick and efficient management of the process in accordance with the Local Development Scheme.

- 1.13 In the context of the above principles, a summary of the key stages for the production of the Core Strategy is set out in Table 1 overleaf.



**Table 1: Process for preparing the Core Strategy**



### **The evidence base to inform Core Strategy**

- 1.14 An up-to-date evidence base is necessary to ensure that the policies of the Core Strategy are justified and deliverable. A great deal of information from a variety of sources has been used to inform the Core Strategy. Appendix 1 of the SA Report includes a list of this information. Other documents included in the evidence base are included as Appendix 1. Reference to the evidence base has been made throughout the Core Strategy where relevant.

## **Context for the Core Strategy**

### **Emerging changes to the planning system**

- 1.15 Following the General Election in May 2010, 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 of this are yet to be published, but the central theme of the emerging system is 'localism'. The main elements of the Bill, which are of direct interest and relevant to the consideration of this Core Strategy are:

- The abolition of Regional Spatial 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.

- 1.16 The Government's changes to the planning system are being introduced at a fast pace. On Tuesday 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 no longer forms a part of the Development Plan for Woking, with immediate consequences for the determination of planning applications and appeals. The Council will monitor progress of the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and review the Core Strategy to take into account its implications as and when necessary.

- 1.17 Prior to the revocation of Regional Strategies, local authorities were required by national policy to prepare Local Development Framework (LDF) documents which were in conformity with Regional Strategies. It is important to note, 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 incentives will be available to those who deliver growth.

### **Key implications of the revocation of the South East Plan on the Draft Core Strategy**

- 1.18 The Draft Core Strategy had originally been prepared in the context of the South East Plan. Specifically, 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 environment and tackling climate change and safeguarding natural resources. The Council had contributed to providing the evidence to justify the requirements of the South East Plan. This evidence has been tested at an Examination in Public and proven to be reliable.

- 1.19 The Council therefore considers that the level of growth being planned for through the Core Strategy represents a reasonable and realistic target for the Borough. Furthermore, a great deal of the Policies of the Draft Core Strategy are justified by evidence collated at the local level.

- The South East Plan required Woking to provide for 5,840 net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026 (an annual average of 292 per annum). Based on local evidence of past completion rates and future housing land supply, as identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and future direction of growth, it is considered that this level of housing provision is deliverable. It should be noted that local evidence (Strategic Housing Market Assessment - SHMA) highlights a need for an additional 499 new affordable homes every year in the Borough and a total of 594 new homes every year when taking into account demand for market housing as well. This is around double the South East Plan requirement. Given the level of environmental constraints present in the Borough, it is considered that the provision of 292 dwellings per annum represents a reasonable level of housing growth for Woking.
- The South East Plan identified Woking as a Regional Hub due to its importance as a centre of economic activity and in recognition of its importance as a transport interchange. This means that Woking is a focus for improvements to the transport network and for major retail and employment development and infrastructure improvements. The evidence and justification for this designation as a Regional Hub still stand and it is considered that the Council, through the LDF, should continue to manage growth and emphasise the Borough's significance to the regional economy. In particular, it should also deliver sustainable development and achieve a sustainable and balanced community, for example, by reducing the need to travel through closer alignment of local labour supply and demand.
- Woking Town Centre is a Primary Retail Centre in the regional hierarchy and was identified as a Centre for Significant Change in the South East Plan. This means that was expected to evolve significantly in terms of the range of town centre uses. This reflects the Council's current direction in respect of Woking Town Centre, and the proposed level of retail and commercial floorspace growth which can be supported by local evidence contained in the Town, District and Local Centres Study and Employment Land Review.

#### **National planning policy**

- 1.20 The Core Strategy takes account of national planning policy. This is primarily contained in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Circulars and Regulations. It is not intended to list them or summarise their objectives. However, embedded in national planning policy is the overall goal of achieving sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy provides useful evidence of how the Core

Strategy contributes towards achieving this goal. In preparing the Core Strategy, care has been taken to ensure that it does not repeat national planning policy, because in itself, national planning policies are a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. The following is the link to the Department of Communities and Local Government website where the list of national planning policy documents can be found [www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/)

### **Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan (2010 - 2020)**

- 1.21 The Local Government Act 2000 requires Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy with its partners to demonstrate how they will work together to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the respective areas. The overarching Sustainable Community Strategy for Surrey is the Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan, which was published in April 2010. It covers the period up to 2020. The Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan includes a specific section that deals with a summary of the local priorities for Woking Borough. The Core Strategy seeks to provide a positive framework for delivering those aspects of the Community Strategy that have spatial implications.
- 1.22 Ten priorities are identified and are described in detail under the following themes:
  - Children and young people.
  - Safer and stronger communities.
  - Health and well-being.
  - Economic development.
  - Housing, infrastructure and environment.
- 1.23 It also identifies the following specific main aims for Woking Borough:
  - 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.

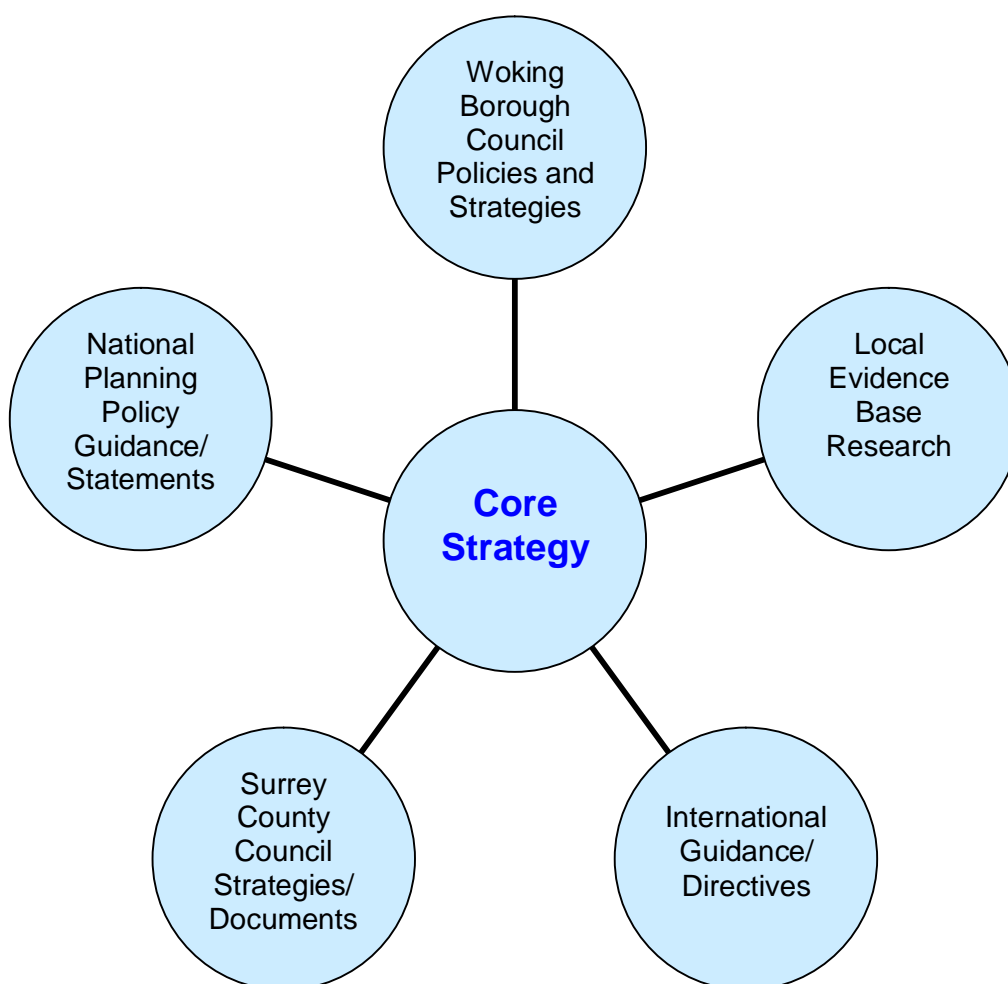
### **Woking Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.24 This strategy sets out six key aims, which define its vision for the Borough. These 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.



### Other plans and programmes

- 1.25 The Core Strategy is influenced by a significant number of other plans, strategies and programmes such as the Local Transport Plan produced by Surrey County Council. A review of these has assisted in identifying objectives, targets and indicators to monitor the performance of the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy. It will not be practical or necessary to list each of the documents here. Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report which supports the Core Strategy includes a list of these documents, the objectives and requirements that they seek to achieve and their relationship to the Core Strategy. A diagram showing the relationship between the key plans and the Core Strategy is set out in the figure below:



### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

- 1.26 It is a statutory requirement to carry out a SA of the Core Strategy to assess its impacts on social, economic and environmental objectives. The SA has been undertaken as an integral part of the Core Strategy process. It has been an iterative process where outcomes have been fed back to inform the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy. The process includes an appraisal of options to demonstrate that the preferred options chosen for the Core Strategy are the best when tested against reasonable alternatives. Furthermore, each policy has been appraised and appropriate mitigation measures incorporated within the Core Strategy to deal with any adverse impacts. The SA has been subject to public consultation and has been published as a separate evidence base to support the Core Strategy. Full details can be found at:  
[www.woking.gov.uk/council/planningservice/ldf#sustainability\\_appraisal](http://www.woking.gov.uk/council/planningservice/ldf#sustainability_appraisal)

### **Proposals Map**

- 1.27 It is a statutory requirement to prepare a Proposals Map which should:
- Identify areas of protection, including the Green Belt
  - Show areas at risk of flooding
  - Allocate sites for particular land uses and development proposals included in any adopted Development Plan Document and set out the areas to which specific policies apply.
- 1.28 The Council will publish a new Proposals Map alongside the final Core Strategy in July 2011. For the purpose of this consultation, the Draft Core Strategy includes a number of indicative maps highlighting the key policy designations and proposals.



## How to get involved and have your say

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## 2.0 Spatial portrait

- 2.1 The spatial portrait provides an overview of the current state of Borough and includes a description of the key characteristics of the area.

### Geography

- 2.2 The Borough of Woking is located in north-west Surrey, about 40 km (25 miles) from London, and is 6,400ha in area. Woking is the main town. The vast majority of the population lives in the main built-up part of the Borough which extends from Byfleet in the east, across the M25 to West Byfleet, Sheerwater, Woking itself, Horsell, Goldsworth Park, St. Johns and Knaphill in the west, and to Kingfield and Old Woking in the south. A few small villages, of which the largest are Brookwood and Mayford, lie just outside the main built-up area.
- 2.3 Outside this main urban area, the remaining 60% of the Borough is Green Belt. Relatively little of the Green Belt land is in active agricultural use. The main uses of Green Belt land are open spaces, playing pitches, golf courses, commercial nurseries and horse grazing. There is also a significant amount of low density residential property, and some industrial premises, in the Green Belt. This area also contains extensive heathland, of which the most significant areas, Horsell Common, Sheets Heath and Brookwood Heath, are designated as part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Two other heaths, Smarts Heath and Prey Heath, and the Basingstoke Canal are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2.4 The Borough lies on the north bank of the River Wey, with water meadows and flat relatively fertile land by the river, and gently undulating sandy ground to the north and west, which form attractive local features. However, the land alongside the Wey and Hoe Stream is liable to flood and currently, around 3,500 properties in the Borough are located within such areas. The Council has recently commenced work on the Hoe Valley Scheme, which is a comprehensive development proposal including a significant flood alleviation scheme for the area.

### Historic development

- 2.5 The development of Woking as a major town only started with the coming of the railway in 1838. Until that time, the area now occupied by Woking Town Centre was open heathland and much of the rest of the Borough was occupied by nurseries, the most significant one being Slockcock Nurseries. Woking Borough is mentioned in the Domesday Book and was originally a village on the River Wey, some two miles to the south of the current town centre. In Tudor times, it was the location for one of Henry VIII's royal palaces, remains of which can still be seen today in Old Woking.
- 2.6 Woking has developed into the large modern town we see today, over the last 150 years. Housing development, originally intended for wealthy London commuters, was built in areas such as The Hockering, Hook Heath, Pyrford and West Byfleet. Woking Town Centre grew into a Victorian commercial centre, with public buildings, shops and workers' housing. Large areas were used for horticulture to serve the London and local markets. In the 1950s, Sheerwater was developed as a London County Council housing and industrial estate, and many families relocated there from London. In the 1970s and 80s, Goldsworth Park was developed, as a major new community

of around 5,000 homes. The population of Woking Borough has grown from under 5,000 in 1851 to over 92,000 today.

- 2.7 Major industrial estates have existed in Byfleet and Sheerwater for more than 50 years, and over the last 40 years, Woking Town Centre has become a major employment centre, with substantial office and retail development. Today, Woking has nearly as many people commuting into the Borough to work as those who commute out.
- 2.8 Redevelopment in Woking Town Centre over the last forty years has resulted in the demolition of much of the original Victorian town centre. Christ Church is the only listed building of historic interest. Elsewhere in the Borough, the original villages still contain medieval churches and some historic buildings. One of the main legacies of Woking as a heathland and horticultural area is the extensive tree cover.

#### **Characteristics of the population**

- 2.9 The population of Woking in 2009 was 92,400. The 2001 Census showed that Woking had a slightly younger population than England as a whole, with 20.6% under 16, compared with 20.2% nationally, and 14.6% over 65 compared with 15.9% nationally. These are relatively small differences, and in general, Woking is close to the national average. In common with the nation as a whole, the forecast is for the proportion of older people to rise in the future. There is some spatial variation in the age profile. The youngest populations are found in the Goldsworth Park and Maybury and Sheerwater areas.
- 2.10 In 2001, the proportion of residents from a black or minority ethnic background was 8.7%. This was the highest proportion in Surrey, but slightly below the average for England as a whole of 9.1%. This population, largely Asian and Asian British, mainly lives in Maybury and Sheerwater, where over 30% of the population is from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group.
- 2.11 Woking has relatively low levels of deprivation. The Borough as a whole is within the top 10% of least deprived local authority areas in the country. However, high levels of affluence in the Borough mask pockets of relative and absolute deprivation, with the Dartmouth Avenue and Devonshire Avenue area of Sheerwater being identified as within the 14% most deprived areas nationally and the most deprived area in Surrey.

#### **Housing**

- 2.12 In 2007, around 80% of homes in Woking consisted of houses, and almost 20% were flats and maisonettes. The single largest component was detached houses, which made up almost 29% of homes, which is well above the national average of 23%. The proportion of flats is around the average for England of 19%, however, more than half of all flats are in and around Woking Town Centre. In the remainder of the Borough, almost 90% of accommodation is made up of houses.
- 2.13 In 2001, 77% of homes were owner-occupied, compared with 69% in England as a whole. All parts of the Borough are dominated by owner-occupied housing. Even those areas where many homes were originally built as local authority housing now have a majority of owner-occupied properties, reflecting the impact of council house sales. The lowest proportion of owner-occupied housing is in Maybury and Sheerwater at 57%.

- 2.14 Information from the Land Registry shows that the average house price in the Borough during 2008 was £334,060 which is consistently higher than the average of £267,573 for the South East and £217,192 nationally. House prices fell a little in 2009 following the economic downturn (average of £301,082 in the fourth quarter of 2009) but had recovered by early 2010 and the average price in Woking Borough was £328,972 (Jan-Mar 2010). The difficulty in accessing mortgage finance coupled with the requirement for larger deposits and long-term affordability pressures has led to an inability for many potential first time buyers to purchase properties. The average earnings in the Borough during 2008 were £24,570, this is 13.6 times higher than the average house price. The need for affordable housing for those who cannot afford to obtain housing on the open market is considerable. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment shows that there is a need for an additional 499 new affordable homes per annum. The majority of the unmet need is for family housing.

### **The economy**

- 2.15 Woking's economy is generally buoyant, and predominantly made up of the service sector. The unemployment rate in Woking in 2008/09 was 3.6% compared to 3.5% for Surrey, 5.7% for the South East and 7.6% for England (Office for National Statistics). Economic activity rates in Woking in 2008/09 were 86.3% compared to 82% for Surrey, 82.3% for the South East and 79% for England (ONS). Woking has a highly skilled resident workforce compared to national and regional averages and wage levels are also comparatively high.
- 2.16 There were 45,822 employees in Woking in 2007. The number of jobs in the Borough had been increasing steadily, but has levelled off since 1999, in common with much of the South East. The largest sector of Woking's economy is financial and business services (35%). This is more than double the national average of 15% and includes considerable representation from the IT and telecoms sectors, as well as financial services.
- 2.17 The representation of other sectors tends to be at or below the national average. The manufacturing sector, and the public administration, education and health sectors are particularly under-represented. In the case of manufacturing, this reflects the position in much of the South East. As far as public administration, education and health is concerned, this is due to the fact that Woking has no university education facility or major hospital within the Borough.
- 2.18 The biggest concentration of jobs is in Woking Town Centre, principally in retail and office jobs. The other main employment centres are in the business parks and industrial estates in Sheerwater and Byfleet. Unlike some other parts of Surrey, there are relatively few large modern out of town business parks and Woking Town Centre remains the single most important employment location. The vacancy rate for employment floorspace (including retail) in Woking in 2004/5 according to ODPM data was 10% which is around the average for the South East. However, local surveys of vacancy of employment uses identified a rate of around 23% in 2004/5 and 19% in 2009<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.19 Woking's major hotel, the Holiday Inn, is located in Woking Town Centre. There are also several smaller budget hotels. These hotels cater mainly for

business visitors. The main conference and meeting venue, H.G. Wells Conference and Events Centre, is also in Woking Town Centre.

### **Retailing**

- 2.20 Woking Town Centre is the focus of retail floorspace in the Borough. Woking has over 80,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace, making it the second largest shopping centre in Surrey after Guildford. It has two covered shopping centres, The Peacocks and Wolsey Place, which provide the majority of the floorspace. Woking Town Centre provides for the majority of shopping needs in the Borough, although local residents do shop further afield, particularly in Guildford. There is also an edge of town centre foodstore - Morrisons, which provides for the needs of residents in the locality. The second largest shopping centre in the Borough, West Byfleet, has around 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace.
- 2.21 Out of town retail parks are relatively limited in Woking. There are small retail parks at Byfleet, and Oriental Road Woking, and a larger retail park just outside the Borough at Brooklands. Supermarkets at West Byfleet, Goldsworth Park and Knaphill provide for local convenience shopping. Knaphill and West Byfleet also have a range of other shops. The remaining local centres, including Byfleet, Horsell, Kingfield, St. Johns and Sheerwater, provide for basic local needs. Vacancy rates in all the centres are low.

### **Leisure and community facilities**

- 2.22 Woking is generally well provided for in terms of open space provision. There is very good access to large areas of semi-natural green space from all parts of the Borough, with around 500ha of heath, woodland and canal and river banks with public access. Nowhere in Woking is more than 2km from a large accessible green space.
- 2.23 Provision of playing pitches and children's play areas is generally adequate, although there are some local shortages which need to be addressed. There are 11 golf courses, which are one of the main occupiers of land in Woking's Green Belt.
- 2.24 Woking Town Centre's New Victoria Theatre is one of the largest and most successful theatres in the South East region. This is part of the Ambassadors complex which also hosts a smaller community theatre and a multi-screen cinema. A new exhibition space, the Lightbox, has recently been completed in the town centre. The town centres evening economy has grown in recent years, but still provides for a mainly local catchment. In addition to the cinema and theatre, Woking has a number of leisure facilities. The Big Apple family entertainment complex includes ten pin bowling, laser quest, and children's soft play with a Gala Bingo on the upper floors.
- 2.25 Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park are within walking distance from Woking Town Centre and provide opportunities for indoor sports and swimming. There are a range of public and community halls serving most local areas, and some joint-use arrangements to enable public use of school sports facilities.
- 2.26 Generally, public satisfaction with leisure and community facilities is high at around 80%, and there are no major gaps in public provision. However, it is difficult for community and faith organisations to find sites for larger premises. Some local organisations have outgrown their existing facilities and are



actively looking to relocate. The price of land in the urban area makes this difficult to achieve.

### **Transport**

- 2.27 Woking has the second busiest railway station in Surrey, after Guildford, and has excellent connections to London Waterloo, in particular. The proposed Airtrack rail link would provide Woking Town Centre with good rail access to Heathrow too. Other stations serve the local areas at Byfleet and New Haw, West Byfleet, Brookwood and Worplesdon. The bus network is focussed on Woking Town Centre, but, with the exception of route 91 (Knaphill to Woking) which provides a very frequent service, buses tend to run at 30-minute intervals with limited evening and weekend services.
- 2.28 Public transport accessibility to Woking Town Centre based services is generally acceptable, however, accessibility to key facilities such as St Peters Hospital and further and higher education colleges is less good, and some parts of the Borough are beyond the Government's guideline travel time by public transport to these facilities.
- 2.29 The M25 motorway passes through the Borough but there is no junction. The nearest junctions (10 and 11) are both more than four miles from Woking Town Centre and more than three miles from the nearest major employment area at Byfleet. The A320 runs through the Borough and provides a good link with the M25, Guildford and Chertsey. There is peak hour traffic congestion, particularly in Woking Town Centre and in the Monument Road area.
- 2.30 Woking Town Centre is well served by car parks. There are around 9,000 non-residential parking spaces, around 5,000 of which are public pay car parks, the rest are private business spaces. Currently, all-day parking in Woking Town Centre costs £8, and short stay parking £2.20 for two hours. These rates are broadly comparable to other similar town centres in the area. Small car parks serve the local centres and employment areas. These are generally free of charge apart from in West Byfleet where a modest charge is made.
- 2.31 Car ownership in Woking is very high. Only 15% of households do not have a car, compared with 27% nationally. Only the ward of Maybury and Sheerwater has above the national average of households without a car, at 28%. In total, there are 1.4 cars for every household in Woking, compared with 1.1 nationally. Not surprisingly, the private car is the dominant means of transport in Woking. In 2001, almost 70% of people working in Woking drove to work. Forecasts from the Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study are that morning peak-hour traffic could increase by 15% over the next ten years if no investment in alternative modes of transport, or work on other measures such as travel plans, is carried out. This could worsen congestion in Woking Town Centre and Monument Road, particularly.

### 3.0 Key issues/challenges facing the Borough to 2027

- 3.1 The Council published an Issues and Options document for public consultation between October and December 2009. Full details of the Issues and Options document can be found at:  
[www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/cores/woxing2026/iandocd](http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/cores/woxing2026/iandocd)
- 3.2 The document identified seven broad categories of issues for the Core Strategy to address. This has been endorsed by the majority of the public and forms the basis for the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy. The challenges are:
- Housing
  - Green infrastructure and the environment
  - Economy
  - Climate Change
  - Building and public spaces
  - Infrastructure and services
  - Transport and accessibility.

Each one is analysed below.

#### Housing

- 3.3 Woking Borough comprises a compact urban area surrounded by Green Belt and other environmentally sensitive designations such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation. Whilst these designations contribute to the attractiveness of the Borough and provide opportunities for recreation and leisure, they restrict the amount of land that can be used to provide housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community. The need to identify sufficient land that is available and suitable in sustainable locations to meet all types of housing need is a significant challenge. A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been carried out to inform the housing land supply position.
- 3.4 Woking is a desirable place to live with good rail and road links to London, Heathrow and other neighbouring areas. Demand for housing has resulted in high property prices that are unaffordable to many people, particularly the young and other first time buyers.
- 3.5 There is significant unmet need for affordable housing. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment estimates the need to build an additional 499 dwellings per annum (July 2009). Woking Borough Council makes the provision of affordable housing one of its key priorities. The Core Strategy will have to strike a good balance between securing a proportion of housing development for affordable housing, whilst at the same time ensuring the economic viability of schemes.
- 3.6 Meeting the specific housing needs of the elderly, families and other groups is a key challenge. A significant proportion of the population of Woking is elderly. This trend is predicted to increase during the period of the Core Strategy. There is also evidence of need and demand for family homes. The functional needs of these groups are such that it may not be practical to accommodate all of them in high rise, high density accommodation at the key centres. The Core Strategy

sets a clear framework for their needs to be met. The same will apply to meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

- 3.7 The nature and type of housing need varies. Housing provisions should therefore reflect the type, nature and scale of need.

#### **Green infrastructure and the environment**

- 3.8 Woking is surrounded by the Green Belt. This serves a useful purpose by preventing urban sprawl and the merging together of settlements. It encourages the redevelopment of previously developed sites. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for informal and outdoor recreation. However, there is growing pressure for further development in the Borough that cannot all be accommodated within the urban area and/or on previously developed sites without compromising on the character and heritage of the area. The potential to release Green Belt land for development without undermining its purpose and integrity, has been identified as a long term means to meet housing need between years 11-15 of the lifetime of the Core Strategy.
- 3.9 The provision of open spaces and green infrastructure has positive impacts on the well being of the community. How to provide sufficient open spaces and green infrastructure to serve proposed development is a challenge for the Core Strategy to address. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been prepared to assess the scale, type and nature of need and how it will be delivered.
- 3.10 The environment of Woking is biodiversity-rich and contains habitats and species of European significance. The most sensitive habitats in the Borough are the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation. These are important assets of the Borough and the need to ensure that development is used to enhance them rather than adversely affect them is a challenge.

#### **Economy**

- 3.11 Woking is a regionally important centre of economic activity. Woking has many strengths, including being home to many leading national and international businesses such as Cap Gemini, Mouchel Consulting's management services, Skanska engineering, South African Breweries UK Headquarters and McLaren's Technology Centre. However, it faces competition at regional, national and international levels in all sectors of business. It is therefore fundamental that the Council provides a timely response to industrial restructuring, the changing economic climate and competition. The key economic challenges that the Core Strategy should respond to include:
- Ensuring that there is sufficient land at sustainable locations to meeting modern business needs.
  - How to control the loss of employment land to alternative uses.
  - How to deal with unallocated employment sites within the Green Belt without compromising on its openness.
  - How to define the boundaries of the town centre and its shopping area to reflect its functionality and focus of activities.
  - How to define the hierarchy of centres in the Borough to reflect their status and functionality.
  - How to set a positive framework to support business start ups and small businesses.
  - The Council's forthcoming Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan highlight the Council's commitment to the support of businesses in the Borough and its economic development.



### **Climate change**

- 3.12 The Council has long been committed to protecting the environment and is committed to tackling the adverse impacts of climate change. The Borough has one of the most extensive decentralised renewable and low carbon energy infrastructures in the UK. Its work on this is nationally recognised. Over the last two decades, the Council has been at the forefront of a radical programme of investment in LZC (low or zero carbon) energy for which it has received national and international acclaim including the Queens Award for Enterprise (2001) and Beacon authority awards for Sustainable Energy (2005/06) and Tackling Climate Change (2008/09). In 2009, the Council received Carbon Trust Standard certification for its carbon reduction programmes, and has also been the subject of numerous case studies and best practice examples, including the Carbon Trust, Audit Commission and environmental organisations.
- 3.13 The Council intends to build upon this success and continue its position as a leading authority on climate change. However, introducing some of these environmentally sustainable measures into development schemes could be expensive. The challenge is setting a framework that encourages renewable and low carbon energy generation and the delivery of high standards of sustainable construction of buildings, without compromising the viability of schemes. The Council has a network of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) stations which provide a very efficient way of producing electricity. The extent to which development is required to link to this CHP network where appropriate, is a matter to be addressed. The Council has set up Thamesway Limited, which is an independent company to help deliver its climate change objectives. A climate change study has been carried out to inform standards in the Core Strategy. An Economic Viability Assessment has been carried out to test the impact on the viability of schemes when standards are introduced.
- 3.14 The security of water as an important resource is a key issue. Balancing demand and supply in the long-term, to meet the community's need, would require management of the competing pressures of economic growth, risk of pollution, climate change and environmental protection. There is presently a high per capita daily consumption of water in the Borough that needs to be managed.
- 3.15 Planning to avoid development in a flood zone is an important consideration of the Core Strategy. There are some areas of the Borough that are liable to flooding. This situation should not be exacerbated by further growth identified in the Core Strategy.

### **Building and public spaces**

- 3.16 Woking is home to many buildings of architectural and historic significance, as well as a number of conservation areas. Scheduled ancient monuments, sites of archaeological significance, historic gardens and areas of historic landscape interest all form part of Woking's cultural heritage and deserve appropriate protection for future generations to enjoy. A Character Study, which also looks at the Conservation Areas, has been undertaken to provide evidence about how these assets could be protected. There is a need to balance the protection of the Borough's heritage with the creation of a modern built environment which meets the needs of businesses and residents in a sustainable manner. A framework to bring forward modern and creative developments without adverse impacts on the character of the area and the Borough's assets is a delicate balance to strike.

- 3.17 It has often been said that the quality of design of new development is not of a standard that makes a positive contribution to the built environment and the image of the Borough. Achieving a balance between the existing character of the area and the design of new development that incorporates high sustainable construction standards is another key challenge. This includes an approach dealing with tall buildings in the town centre and the general image of Woking.

#### **Infrastructure and services**

- 3.18 The Core Strategy demonstrates how development will be supported by appropriate and adequate infrastructure. The definition of infrastructure is wide ranging in this regard and it includes transport, education, health care, social and community facilities, parks and open spaces, green infrastructure, public services and utilities. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared to set out how and when the necessary infrastructure will be provided to support the growth identified in the Core Strategy. The mechanism for securing funding to deliver the infrastructure is a key issue. The Council will continue to consider appropriate delivery mechanisms taking in to account the latest Government advice.

#### **Transport and accessibility**

- 3.19 Woking is an important transport interchange and has high levels of accessibility. However, the amount of traffic continues to rise annually due to increases in car ownership and use. There are congestion spots in some parts of the Borough. This is likely to be exacerbated if developments that will be coming on stream are not planned in sustainable locations and/or adequate mitigation measures are not identified to address the adverse impacts of traffic arising from new development. The challenge is how to accommodate the proposed growth identified in the Core Strategy without significantly exacerbating the existing situation. In particular, how the Core Strategy will encourage a modal shift from car based travel to environmentally friendly alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport will be key to the implementation of the Core Strategy.
- 3.20 The Borough is well served by public transport. Woking's railway station has a fast and frequent service to London and railair coach provides a service connecting the station and Heathrow airport. There are capacity issues with consequent overcrowding on platforms during peak times. Future investment to increase capacity is needed and the Council will work in partnership with the rail companies to deliver that. There are issues with bus services as well. There is a need for an effective bus interchange facility that is well integrated with the railway station and the town centre. There is no doubt that travel patterns to and from the Borough to Heathrow are significant. That linkage also has significant economic benefits. Easy and fast access to Heathrow will have positive benefits in relieving traffic congestion, for the economy and the attractiveness of the Borough for business. The proposed Airtrack will assist significantly.
- 3.21 The County Council is the Highway Authority for this area. There are also other transport providers such as Network Rail, South West Trains, and bus operators who will play a significant role in delivering transport infrastructure and services in the Borough. A Partnership Group comprising of all the key stakeholders called Transport for Woking has been established to coordinate the effective and efficient delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the

Borough. The decisions of this group are fed into the wider Transport for Surrey Group.

- 3.22 The management of the demand, supply and location of parking has influence on car use and level of congestion. Striking a good balance between these elements without undermining economic activity is a difficult challenge. If necessary, the Council will review its parking standards to strike this balance.

### **Cross boundary issues**

- 3.23 Woking Borough Council will proactively work with its neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders to discuss and address common issues of cross boundary significance. It is difficult to predict all cross boundary issues that may emerge during the life of the Core Strategy. However, Woking Borough Council offers an in-principle support to work with its partners if any issues emerge. At this stage two key cross boundary issues are relevant to the implementation of the Core Strategy. These are as follows:

- **The strategic protection of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)** - The SPA in Woking Borough covers part of Horsell Common, Brookwood Heath and Sheets Heath. Together with the nearby Wealden Heaths SPA and the Ashdown Forest SPA, the Thames Basin Heaths form part of a complex of heathlands in Southern England that support important breeding bird populations. The need for the strategic protection of the SPA to conserve its integrity is an objective the Council shares. It proactively works with the other Surrey local authorities and Natural England to strategically monitor and mitigate any adverse impacts on the SPA. A Joint Strategic Partnership Board of which Woking Borough Council is a member, exists to coordinate actions to deal with SPA matters.
- **Mitigation of traffic movement** – At the moment, there are no major transport schemes of cross boundary significance to Woking Borough except the introduction of Airtrack to Heathrow Airport, which also goes through other authorities such as Guildford, Reading and Spelthorne. The Council will continue to work with all key stakeholders to achieve the delivery of the scheme because of its importance to transport provision in the Borough. The Council will also work with others to ensure that the transport impacts of development with cross boundary implications are fully assessed and mitigated. Transport for Woking and Transport for Surrey partnership groups have been established to coordinate transport matters across Woking and Surrey respectively.

### **Analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Borough**

- 3.24 Based on a review of the available evidence, including the spatial portrait and the key challenges facing the Borough, an analysis, known as a SWOT analysis, has been used to define the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that exist within the Borough. This is set out in Table 2 overleaf, and has been used to inform the objectives of the Core Strategy.

**Table 2: SWOT analysis of the Borough**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Excellent physical access links to nearby areas by rail and road, including to London, Gatwick, and Heathrow airports.</li> <li>· A successful, thriving local economy with a range of global businesses.</li> <li>· Residents are highly educated with higher than national average earnings.</li> <li>· Good quality open space within and around the Borough.</li> <li>· Strong labour market.</li> <li>· Low levels of unemployment.</li> <li>· Unique and important physical and natural assets such as listed buildings and European status habitats.</li> <li>· Well established local resident groups who are willing to participate in the decision making process.</li> <li>· Proactive and ambitious Council, which is willing to lead on innovation and work in partnership with others to deliver key projects.</li> <li>· Well established Local Strategic Partnership.</li> <li>· Good health enjoyed by residents.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Lack of affordable housing.</li> <li>· Pockets of congestion.</li> <li>· Increasing rate of elderly and dependant population.</li> <li>· Pockets of deprivation.</li> <li>· Borough is constrained by sensitive environmental designations.</li> <li>· Several areas are liable to flood.</li> <li>· Cultural dependency on car use.</li> <li>· Lack of dependable public transport services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Investment in efficient energy infrastructure.</li> <li>· A good local framework for mitigating the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>· Well established partnerships and partnership working.</li> <li>· Good relationship between transport and economic hubs.</li> <li>· Proximity to London.</li> <li>· Proximity to two international airports.</li> <li>· Enterprise and innovation culture.</li> <li>· Compact urban area where most places are easily accessible to the town centre by walking or cycling with opportunities to reduce car travel.</li> <li>· Woking is a Cycle Town with opportunities for investment in cycling.</li> <li>· Opportunities exist for efficient use of land, in particular, previously developed land.</li> <li>· Opportunities for high technology industries to complement existing ones such as McLaren.</li> <li>· The Council owns land that can be used to aid development, such as Wolsey Place.</li> <li>· The Council own Thameswey Limited, which is an independent company to facilitate good quality development and good practice.</li> <li>· Scope to improve infrastructure through the infrastructure delivery plan and developer contributions.</li> <li>· Scope to enhance biodiversity and important habitats through strategies to mitigate impacts on Special Protection Areas.</li> <li>· Scope to improve the railway station and its environs. A Transport for Woking Partnership Group, including Network Rail and South West Trains who are committed to station and service improvements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Development pressures on biodiversity and geodiversity are increasing.</li> <li>· Increasing levels of car use and its consequent implications on climate change.</li> <li>· House prices are higher than national average, which is a deterrent to first time buyers and job seekers.</li> <li>· Shortage of land for development.</li> <li>· Global economic circumstances and implications on public sector investment to create the necessary environment for local businesses to thrive.</li> <li>· Increasing threat of the impacts of climate change.</li> <li>· High levels of car use and the consequent threat of poor air quality.</li> <li>· Global competition.</li> <li>· New global knowledge economies.</li> <li>· Development land and pressures for housing development.</li> <li>· Staff recruitment and retention difficulties.</li> <li>· Continuous increase in carbon footprint and waste production.</li> <li>· Complacency of economic position.</li> </ul>

## 4.0 Spatial vision and objectives

- 4.1 The spatial vision of the Core Strategy paints a clear picture of where the community would like the Borough to be by 2027. It encapsulates the aspirations of the local community as expressed in the Surrey and Woking Sustainable Community Strategies. It is compatible with the visions set out in the Surrey and Woking Sustainable Community Strategies and is fully endorsed by the Woking Partnership, which is the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough. It provides a sense of focus and direction for the policies and proposals that form the path for delivering the Core Strategy. It enhances the strengths and opportunities that exist in the Borough and addresses its weaknesses and threats.
- 4.2 The preparation and delivery of the Core Strategy involved all service areas of the Council. The business managers and the Corporate Management Group have therefore signed up to the spatial vision and are committed to its delivery.

### Spatial vision

**Woking will be a Borough of high environmental quality and standards where people choose to live, work and visit, an exemplar in the achievement of sustainable growth.**

**Woking will be a regional focus of economic prosperity centred on a vibrant, enhanced town centre that provides a good range of quality shops, jobs, cultural facilities, services and infrastructure to cater for the Borough's needs, surrounded by distinct communities anchored by attractive district and local centres providing convenient access to everyday shops, services and local community facilities.**

**Woking is a sustainable community where the benefits of growth and prosperity are shared throughout the Borough without pockets of deprivation.**

**New housing in the Borough will be well designed to respect the character of the area and meet the needs of all sections of the community.**

**A green Borough where people will have easy access to good quality green spaces and infrastructure for recreation and leisure.**

**The Borough will have a balanced and sustainable multi modal transport system that links homes, jobs and key services and by doing so improves the overall health and well-being of all residents.**

4.3 To deliver the vision, the following clear and deliverable objectives are set in no particular priority order. These objectives will ensure that policies and proposals that flow from them are specific to the delivery of the overall vision. They also have a direct bearing in tackling the threats and weaknesses that exist in the Borough.

- 1) To provide a [diverse range of development](#) such as offices, housing, shops, leisure and cultural facilities in Woking Town Centre to enable its status as a centre of regional significance to be maintained. Development will be of high quality and high density to create an attractive environment for people to live, do business and visit.
- 2) To enable an [attractive and sustainable development](#) of the [district and local centres](#) to provide convenient access to everyday shops and local services, local community facilities, parks and open spaces.
- 3) To provide well [designed homes of different types, tenures and affordability](#) to meet the needs of all sections of the community. This will be at sustainable locations and at densities that maximise the efficient use of urban land without compromising the distinctive character of the local area.
- 4) To [protect the integrity of the Green Belt](#) and to harness its recreational benefits for the community.
- 5) To enable a [buoyant local economy](#) with good quality offices, business parks and industrial areas, which meet the needs of modern business. This will mainly be encouraged in major business and industrial areas, Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre.
- 6) To lead the way in [high quality sustainable development](#) that [minimises the adverse impacts of climate change](#). This will be achieved through maximising opportunities for implementing renewable energy technologies, maximising the efficient use of energy and water in buildings and managing waste effectively.
- 7) To [maintain and improve air and water quality](#) and manage effectively the impacts of noise and light pollution.
- 8) To encourage the [high quality design of buildings, neighbourhoods and the public realm](#) that creates a [sense of place](#) where people feel safe to spend time and interact without fear of crime.
- 9) To ensure that the [provision of community infrastructure](#), including key services and facilities, [keeps pace with growth](#) of the Borough. This will include schools, healthcare, water supply, drainage and flood alleviation, leisure, green infrastructure and community facilities.
- 10) To work in partnership with Surrey County Council and other stakeholders with an interest in transport provision [to deliver a transport system](#) that [enables people to access key services, facilities and jobs](#) by all relevant modes of travel. In particular, by encouraging the use of public transport and creating a safe environment for people to walk and cycle to the town, district and local centres.

- 11) To provide an [integrated and effective transport interchange](#) that has an improved Woking Railway Station as a focus.
- 12) To [preserve and enhance the cultural, historic, biodiversity and geodiversity](#) features of the Borough and make them accessible to the benefit of residents.
- 13) To [significantly reduce both absolute and relative deprivation](#) in Sheerwater, Maybury and the Lakeview Estate in Goldsworth Park.



## A spatial strategy for Woking

- 4.4 The challenge for the Core Strategy is to plan and distribute development in a sustainable manner and to ensure that each of its elements is well integrated functionally and physically to create a sustainable community for Woking. The vision for the Core Strategy sets out the kind of sustainable community that is envisaged by 2027. However, the path to achieve this vision rests with the strength of the underlying spatial strategy to deliver it. In this regard, the spatial strategy set out below provides a clear direction of how the vision for the Core Strategy will be delivered. It provides the context for the rest of the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy.

### **CS1: A spatial strategy for Woking**

The Core Strategy will make provision for the delivery of the following scale of uses between 2010 and 2027:

- 4,964 net additional dwellings, with an overall affordable housing provision target of 35%.
- 28,000m<sup>2</sup> of office floorspace and 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of warehousing floorspace within the same period.
- 93,900 m<sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace.

Most new development will be directed to previously developed land in the town, district and local centres, which offers the best access to a range of services and facilities. The scale of development that will be encouraged in these centres will reflect their respective functions and nature. A hierarchy of centres will be set to define the various categories of centres. The impacts of developments will be fully assessed to ensure that they do not adversely impact on sensitive environmental designations such as the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and the Green Belt and other important built and natural features such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Ancient Monuments. Development will be located to take full account of the relative risk of flooding in the Borough.

Woking Town Centre will be the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub with a flourishing, diverse and innovative economy and a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities. The town centre is designated as a centre to undergo significant change, and the provision of a range of shops, cultural facilities, jobs and housing to meet locally identified needs and the needs of modern businesses will be encouraged. Town centre uses as defined in PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth, will be acceptable in principle, subject to the requirements of the policies of the Core Strategy.

In the town centre, well designed, high density development that could include tall buildings and which enhances its image will be encouraged, but without compromising on its character and appearance and that of nearby areas.

Development located in the District, Local and Neighbourhood Centres to provide housing, jobs and convenient access to everyday shops, services and local community facilities will also be encouraged. This must be well designed to enhance their unique and distinctive characters and attractiveness. Uses that will provide convenient access to the everyday needs of the community, including jobs and housing will be encouraged at the District and Local Centres but at a



scale that will not compromise its character and/or functionality.

The Green Belt provides an important role in regulating the pattern of development in the Borough and its purpose and integrity will be protected. Development in the Green Belt will be resisted unless there is an exceptional over-riding reason to be determined through the application of the relevant tests set out in PPG2: Green Belts and in accordance with other policies of the Core Strategy.

Whilst the preference is for the location of most new development to be in the main centres, infill development and/or redevelopment of previously development land in the built-up area of the Borough will be acceptable in principle, subject to a full assessment of impacts where relevant and appropriate mitigation measures introduced to make the proposal acceptable. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provide the evidence of the existence of such sites.

Housing development should reflect the appropriate range, mix and type of housing need in the Borough as justified by local evidence in the SHMA and/or alternative evidence to be provided by a developer to be verified and agreed by the Council. To meet the overriding need for affordable housing and contribute towards a key priority of the Council, a significant proportion of all new residential development will be affordable housing unless a developer can justify through a viability assessment that the targets set out in the affordable housing policy of the Core Strategy cannot be achieved.

Major employment sites will be protected to maintain employment capacity and to meet predicted demand. Any change of use to alternative uses will be resisted unless it has been identified elsewhere in the Core Strategy and/or there is an overriding justification to do so. Details of how this can be managed are set out in the sustainable economic development policy.

Community facilities will be directed to complement the spatial distribution of development at the main centres to reflect the function that they perform to their locality and their catchment areas and the wider needs of the Borough.

The design of all new development must be inclusive and comprehensive, not only looking at aesthetic quality but also how the development incorporates high quality sustainable construction standards and ensure its functionality.

Design should also take into account how buildings relate to each other and the surrounding environment to reflect the distinctive character of its locality. It should address how development can be adapted to allow scope for changes to be made to meet the needs of occupiers, for example, how it can be adapted to meet the requirements of people with disability. Development must be accessible to its users and by a range of transport modes and service vehicles. It should be designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Development will be required to make a contribution towards the mitigation of the adverse impact on climate change where relevant. This may either be through a direct requirement to meet a high code for sustainable construction, supply of renewable energy, connection to the existing network of Combined, Heat and Power Stations, efficient management of water or waste or by making a contribution for alternative solutions elsewhere.

Development will be required to be supported by appropriate and adequate infrastructure, including green infrastructure where relevant. This may either be through direct provision of the infrastructure and/or making a contribution towards its provision. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared to establish the scale of infrastructure needed, how it will be provided, who by and when.

The Council will work proactively with its partners to seek the comprehensive delivery of all elements of the Core Strategy and the infrastructure requirements to support it.

#### **Reasoned justification**

- 4.5 At the heart of the spatial strategy for the Core Strategy is a key objective to achieve sustainable development, which will create a sustainable community in Woking where people will choose to live, work and visit. The delivery of this objective will require a clear strategy, which is not only about the quantity of development that is planned to meet housing and employment needs, but also about where the development is located, how they functionally relate with each other and the community facilities and infrastructure that supports it. Consequently, the need to concentrate most new development in sustainable locations where facilities and services are easily accessible by all relevant modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport is paramount. The town, district and local centres are the most sustainable location for new development in this context because they offer a range of services and facilities that will enable this objective to be achieved.
- 4.6 The strategy seeks to provide a good synergy between transport infrastructure and economic growth of the town centre.
- 4.7 Land is a limited and finite resource in Woking. Its efficient use is central to the strategy to deliver the vision for the Core Strategy. The strategy therefore seeks to maximise the efficient use of land by concentrating most new development on previously developed land at high densities. However, it recognises that there are limited types of uses and local needs, which by their nature can best be met on Greenfield land outside the main centres. Examples of this are housing for the elderly and the need for family homes. If Greenfield land is to be used for development outside the confines of the main centres, the strategy will require good integration of the development with the wider community.
- 4.8 The community will appreciate the benefits of development if it is well designed, is of a high standard and is seen in the context of the character, heritage and the built and natural assets of the locality. For example, the built-up area of the Borough is surrounded by the Green Belt and other unique habitats and species of European significance. There are also a number of listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Ancient Monuments and historic landscapes in the Borough. The spatial strategy ensures that development is sensitive to conserving and enhancing the assets and heritage of the Borough without stifling creativity and innovation. Furthermore, it seeks to ensure that development does not adversely impact on these assets.
- 4.9 There are a number of instances where infrastructure provision has lagged behind development. The need for development to be supported by the necessary infrastructure is a key objective of this strategy. The definition of

infrastructure is wide ranging, and includes education, health, green infrastructure, open spaces, community facilities, utilities and transport. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared with a detailed definition of infrastructure, what is needed and how and when it will be provided.

- 4.10 Climate change is a concern at local, regional, national and international levels and the way that development is distributed, constructed and managed should make a positive contribution towards minimising the adverse impacts of development on climate change. This will include efficient use of energy, renewable energy supply and efficient management of water and waste. The Core Strategy will include specific standards to be met. This will be justified by local evidence and an economic viability assessment.
- 4.11 Some areas of the Borough are liable to flooding. The flooding that occurred in 2000 is a clear reminder of its effects. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out to inform decisions about the location of development. Development will be directed away from areas liable to flood. The strategy will also ensure that development does not exacerbate incidents of flooding in the Borough.
- 4.12 Proposed developments in the Core Strategy will achieve their functional purpose if their end users are satisfied of their outcomes. The strategy will ensure that public involvement will be central to its delivery.
- 4.13 An implementation and monitoring plan is included in Section 7.
- 4.14 **Map 1** (on the following page) is a Key Diagram of the summary of the strategy for the distribution of development in the Borough.

#### **Hierarchy of centres**

- 4.15 Different centres in the Borough perform different functions in meeting the needs of the Borough as a whole and their immediate surroundings. To regulate the amount and manage the location of development and reflect the wider functions of centres in the Borough, the main centres will be categorised as set out in Table 3 below. A Town, District and Local Centres Study has been carried out to provide evidence and justification for this categorisation.

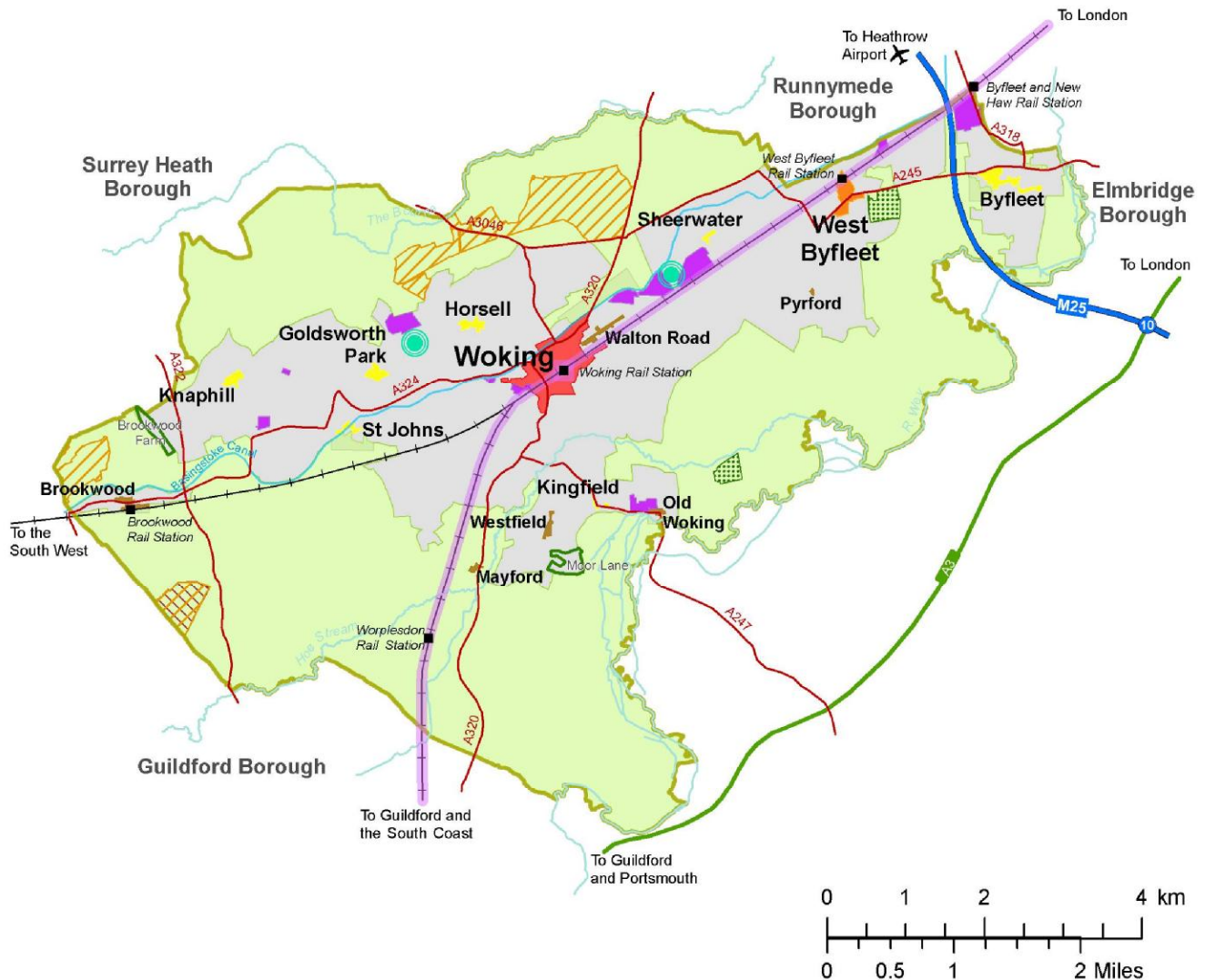
**Table 3: Hierarchy of centres**

<b>Hierarchy</b>	<b>Location</b>
Town Centre	Woking
District Centre	West Byfleet
Local Centres	Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Kingfield, Knaphill, Sheerwater, St. Johns
Neighbourhood Centres	Brookwood, Mayford, Old Woking, Pyrford, Walton Road, Westfield
Shopping Parades	Anchor Hill, Barnsbury, Blackbridge Road, East Hill, Gorsewood Road, Guildford Road, Hermitage Road, Maybury, Maybury Road, Oriental Road, Rydens Way, Wych Hill.

- 4.16 The role, function and specific proposals for these centres are set out in the Woking, West Byfleet, and Local and Neighbourhood Centres policies.



## Map 1: Key Diagram of Woking Borough



### Key

Borough Boundary

Urban Area

Town Centre

District Centre

Local Centres

Neighbourhood Centres

Employment Areas

Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

Safeguarded Sites

Railway

Proposed Airtrack route

Priority Places (Lakeview, Maybury and Sheerwater)

Green Belt

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas

Special Area of Conservation

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## 5.0 Planning for Places

### Woking Town Centre

- 5.1 Woking Town Centre is an important centre of economic activity and key interchange on the rail network. Woking is the largest centre in the Borough and a primary centre in the context of the south east region. It is expected to grow and evolve significantly over the plan period. Development of a dynamic and successful town centre is central to the achievement of sustainable development in the Borough.
- 5.2 The Peacocks Shopping Centre opened in 1992 and contains over 70 stores including anchor stores Debenhams, Next, TK Maxx and H&M. Work is currently underway to modernise and extend the front of the centre. This is part of a master plan to connect the centre with Wolsey Place, the original shopping centre, offering over 60 stores including Sainsburys and Boots. The Town, District and Local Centres study identified significant potential for additional retail floorspace in Woking Town Centre in the plan period, as set out in the policy overleaf.
- 5.3 Plans are also underway to redevelop part of the secondary shopping area in Woking Town Centre in a project known as Woking Gateway. The area is shown on Map 2 as a planned extension to the primary shopping area. An agreement between property development and investment company Carisbrooke and the Council was signed in June 2009, enabling Carisbrooke to establish proposals to transform the area. The proposed site runs from Albion House in the east to Cawsey Way in the west, encompassing High Street to the south and Commercial Way to the north. A planning application has yet to be submitted but is likely to comprise a mix of residential, leisure, office and retail space along with public transport facilities and public spaces.
- 5.4 Woking Town Centre provides a strong cultural and entertainment offer and is an ideal location for the development of further facilities to strengthen this offer. There is also potential to broaden the appeal of the evening economy, for example with more high quality restaurants. The Town, District and Local Centres Study identified that residents are likely to increase their expenditure on leisure by 26%, more than twice the national average, between 2009 and 2026. Increasing the cultural and entertainment offer is in line with the Council's Cultural Strategy and will benefit the quality of lives of residents as well as boosting the economy.
- 5.5 To capitalise on Woking's excellent transport links and motivated by the Government's wish to promote an integrated transport network, Woking Borough Council is working in partnership with key stakeholders from the transport industry and local organisations, to promote Woking rail station as a transport hub of regional significance. An improved and upgraded public transport system for the area, the potential new direct rail link to Heathrow Airport (AirTrack) and improved traffic flows to other parts of the region will further add to Woking Town Centre's reputation as a well-connected business centre.



**CS2: Woking Town Centre**

Woking Town Centre<sup>2</sup> is the preferred location for town centre uses (as defined in PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth) and high density residential development. Consequently, town centre uses will be accepted in principle, subject to the requirements of other policies in the Core Strategy. Mixed-use, high density development will be encouraged. New development proposals should deliver high quality, well designed public spaces and buildings, which make efficient use of land, contribute to the functionality of the centre and add to its attractiveness and competitiveness.

The Council will support the development of the town centre's role as the primary comparison shopping destination of the Borough and as a primary centre in the south east.

Shops (Use Class A1) are to be focused in the primary shopping area. In order to provide a balance of uses within the primary shopping area:

- Shops will be protected within the primary shopping frontages.
- Secondary frontages will offer greater opportunities for a range of A class uses, as long as the use does not have significant harmful effects on the frontage or the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The primary shopping area and primary and secondary frontages within it are indicated on Map 2 along with the planned extension to the primary frontage.

The Council will support improvements to the market to help ensure that it remains attractive and competitive, providing the community with wider consumer choice.

Residential and office development should be provided above ground floor level in order to retain active frontages, provide a diversity of uses, and make the best use of sites within the most sustainable locations.

The Council will support:

- Redevelopment or refurbishment of office floorspace in the town centre where development does not result in an overall loss of office floorspace.
- Intensification of office floorspace on existing sites where this would not conflict with other policies in the Core Strategy.
- Inclusion of office floorspace on other sites in the town centre where this would not conflict with other policies in the Core Strategy.

Woking Town Centre is the preferred location for hotels and other overnight accommodation, and cultural and entertainment facilities.

The town centre, as a focus for economic growth, is dependant on Woking's role as a transport hub. The Council will work with partners to continue to improve public transport and cycle facilities in the centre.

The following specific proposals are made to meet projected need and demand during the plan period.

<b>Development type and indicative amount</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>Housing</b> 2010-2027 = 2,500	Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Employment</b> Approximately 27,000m <sup>2</sup> of additional office floorspace to be provided in the town centre as part of mix-used developments <sup>3</sup>	Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Retail</b> 75,300m <sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace including 59,300m <sup>2</sup> of comparison and 6,900 m <sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace	<p>2010 – 2016 19,100m<sup>2</sup> Including 10,800m<sup>2</sup> of comparison and 6,700m<sup>2</sup> of convenience</p> <p>2016 – 2021 29,300m<sup>2</sup> Including 25,400m<sup>2</sup> of comparison 800m<sup>2</sup> of convenience</p> <p>2021 – 2027 26,900m<sup>2</sup> Including 23,100m<sup>2</sup> of comparison and 800m<sup>2</sup> of convenience</p>
<b>Social, community and transport infrastructure</b>	(TBC following completion of Infrastructure Delivery Plan)

### **Reasoned justification**

- 5.6 Woking Town Centre is an important centre for economic activity. Given its importance to the future prosperity of the Borough, an Area Action Plan will be developed which will identify a range of sites and premises capable of providing the additional floorspace requirements identified.
- 5.7 The boundary of the town centre (as shown on Map 2) has been revised inwards so that development and investment is focused in the heart of the town, maintaining its compact nature and making the best use of land closest to the station. Within the town centre boundary, acceptable uses will include town centre uses set out in PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth and high density residential development.
- 5.8 Mixed-use, high density development within town centres makes the best use of urban land in the most sustainable locations, and helps to reduce the use of private cars and create sustainable communities.
- 5.9 Woking Town Centre is the largest centre in the Borough and dominates shopping patterns and office employment. The town centre provides 70% of the Borough's office floorspace. However, 22% of this is currently vacant and there is a significant amount of outmoded accommodation within the centre which does not adequately cater for modern business needs. In order to protect and enhance the town's role as a service centre, outmoded stock needs to be redeveloped/refurbished and additional new stock provided. The Council will thus support the redevelopment/refurbishment of offices where this will not result in an overall loss of office floorspace and support the intensification of office floorspace on existing sites and the inclusion of office

floorspace on other sites in the town centre where this would not be contrary to other policies in the Core Strategy. The Council will also support the redevelopment of the Butts Road/Poole Road employment area, which straddles the town centre boundary, for mixed use development including office floorspace.

- 5.10 Woking Town Centre is the preferred location for hotels and other overnight accommodation to cater for business and other visitors to the Borough, because of its strong public transport links, concentration of businesses, and entertainment and cultural facilities. Applications for lower density overnight accommodation in locations elsewhere in the Borough with good access to sustainable forms of transport will be considered on their merits.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 5.11 As the town centre is expected to undergo significant change, the Council will prepare an Area Action Plan. The Council will work with Surrey County Council, Network Rail, South West Trains and other key stakeholders through Transport for Woking and Cycle Woking to deliver transport improvements.
- 5.12 The Council will also work with retail and business membership organisations such as the Woking Town Centre Partnership and Woking Chamber of Commerce, Surrey Chambers of Commerce and Business Link Surrey, to assist and encourage retailers and businesses.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- Number of net additional dwellings completed within the town centre boundary.
- Net change in total office floorspace within the town centre and the Poole Road/Butts Road employment area.
- Amount of permitted and completed A1 retail floorspace.
- Percentage of new A1 retail floorspace located in the primary and secondary shopping frontages.
- Net change in hotel bed spaces within Woking Town Centre and the rest of the Borough.

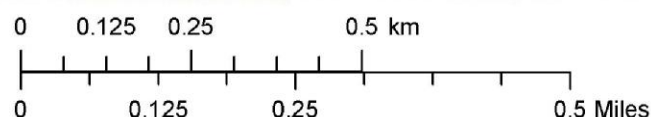
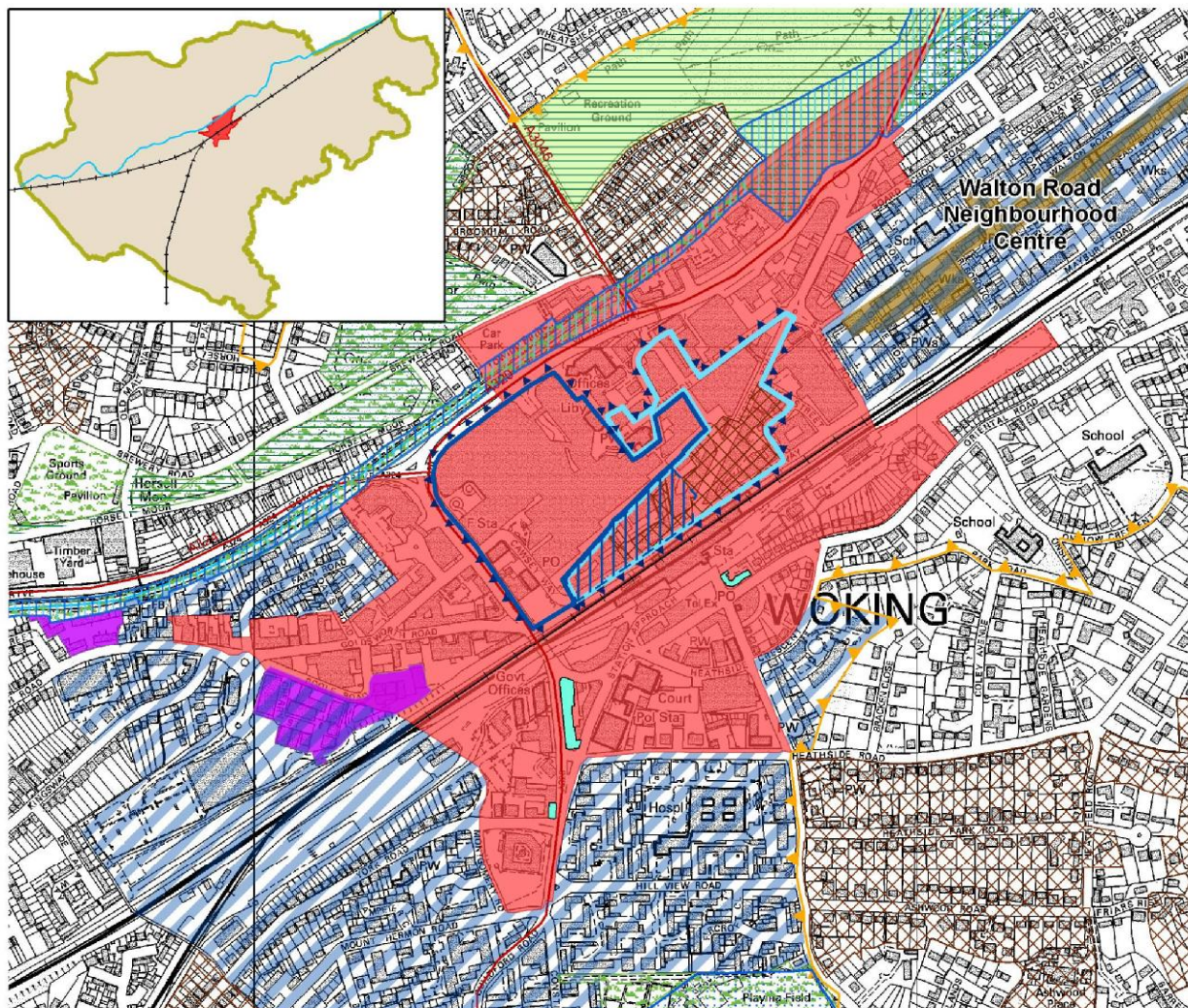
#### **Key evidence base**

- Town, District and Local Centres Study, September 2009, produced by Roger Tym and Partners.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010 update.
- Economic Viability Assessment 2010 produced by Adams Integra.
- Employment Land Review (incorporates Employment Position Paper (January 2010), and Market Appraisal (April 2010) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton.
- Surrey Hotel Futures, September 2004., produced by Tourism Solutions and ACK Tourism.





## Map 2: Woking Town Centre



### Key

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Town Centre  | Employment Areas                                 |
| Primary Shopping Area                              | Urban Areas of Special Residential Character     |
| Primary Shopping Frontage                          | Conservation Area                                |
| Planned Extension to the Primary Shopping Frontage | Basingstoke Canal Corridor and Conservation Area |
| Secondary Shopping Frontage                        | Urban Open Space                                 |
| Shopping Parades                                   | Green Belt                                       |
| HDRA   | River Corridors                                  |
| Neighbourhood Centre                               | Basingstoke Canal                                |
|  | Common Land                                      |

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## West Byfleet District Centre

- 5.13 West Byfleet is the second largest centre in the Borough. Due to its size, range of uses and accessibility it has been designated as the only District Centre in the Borough. It has good accessibility, benefiting from a mainline railway station on the London to Portsmouth line and frequent bus services into Woking Town Centre. There are a good range of services within the centre including a library, a modern health centre, four hairdressers, an optician, four banks, a travel agent, four estate agents and two chemists. West Byfleet has a reasonable retail offer including a medium-sized supermarket, two convenience stores, a butcher, a greengrocer and florist. West Byfleet benefits from a number of restaurants which are particularly popular in the evenings.
- 5.14 The retail ranking of the centre declined between 1998 and 2008 and it is suffering a relatively high vacancy level, especially since the prominent Woolworths store closed. The physical environment of part of the centre is outdated.
- 5.15 West Byfleet District Centre contains the second highest concentration of office floorspace in the Borough. However, in 2009 the vacancy rate for commercial office space was 25%, and over the last decade a number of planning permissions have been granted for the redevelopment of outmoded office units to residential, particularly along Pyrford Road.
- 5.16 Two areas of West Byfleet are defined as Conservation Areas, as indicated on Map 3. West Byfleet has a community feel which is enhanced by the centre having two primary schools and two churches. It also benefits from a large recreation ground, which includes children's playground, and multi-use games area.



**CS3: West Byfleet District Centre**

High density mixed-use development which respects the general character of the area will be encouraged within West Byfleet District Centre as indicated on Map 3. Suitable uses include town centre uses (as defined in PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth) and high density residential use.

All new development should be well designed and integrated, and enhance local character.

The Council will work in partnership with service providers, to ensure that access to and within the area is improved for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

As a District Centre, West Byfleet is considered appropriate for a certain level of additional office, leisure and retail use as set out in the table below.

<b>Development type and indicative amount</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>Housing</b> 2010-2027 = 170 units	Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Employment</b> 1,000 to 1,500m <sup>2</sup> of additional office floorspace to be provided as part of mix-used developments	Over the life of the Core Strategy (subject to the findings of subsequent Employment Land Reviews)
<b>Retail</b> 13,000m <sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace including 10,500m <sup>2</sup> of comparison and 2,000 m <sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace	Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Social, community and transport infrastructure</b>	(TBC following completion of Infrastructure Delivery Plan)

**Reasoned justification**

- 5.17 The Town, District and Local Centre's study did not consider that West Byfleet had the physical capacity or catchment to achieve anywhere near as much retail development as Woking Town Centre. Development of this scale would not be appropriate in a district centre. However, it is considered that there is the potential to considerably expand the current floorspace, as set out in the policy. Development of this scale would help the vitality and viability of the centre which is suffering from the effects of the economic downturn.
- 5.18 The level of additional office development identified is modest as the market appraisal of employment floorspace in the Borough found limited demand for office development within West Byfleet and recommended that the volume of

office stock should not increase significantly. In this regard, it is considered that only a small increase in floorspace may be achieved, mainly as part of any redevelopment of Sheer House and its immediate surroundings. This would improve the quality of office provision in the centre, and together with completion of the Broadoaks scheme, assist in improving the profile of the centre as a business location.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 5.19 This policy will be implemented through the development management process.
- 5.20 The Council will also work with business membership organisations such as Woking Chamber of Commerce and the West Byfleet Business Association to assist and encourage business.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- Number of net additional dwellings completed.
- Net change in total office floorspace within West Byfleet District Centre.
- Amount of permitted and completed A1 retail floorspace in West Byfleet Centre.

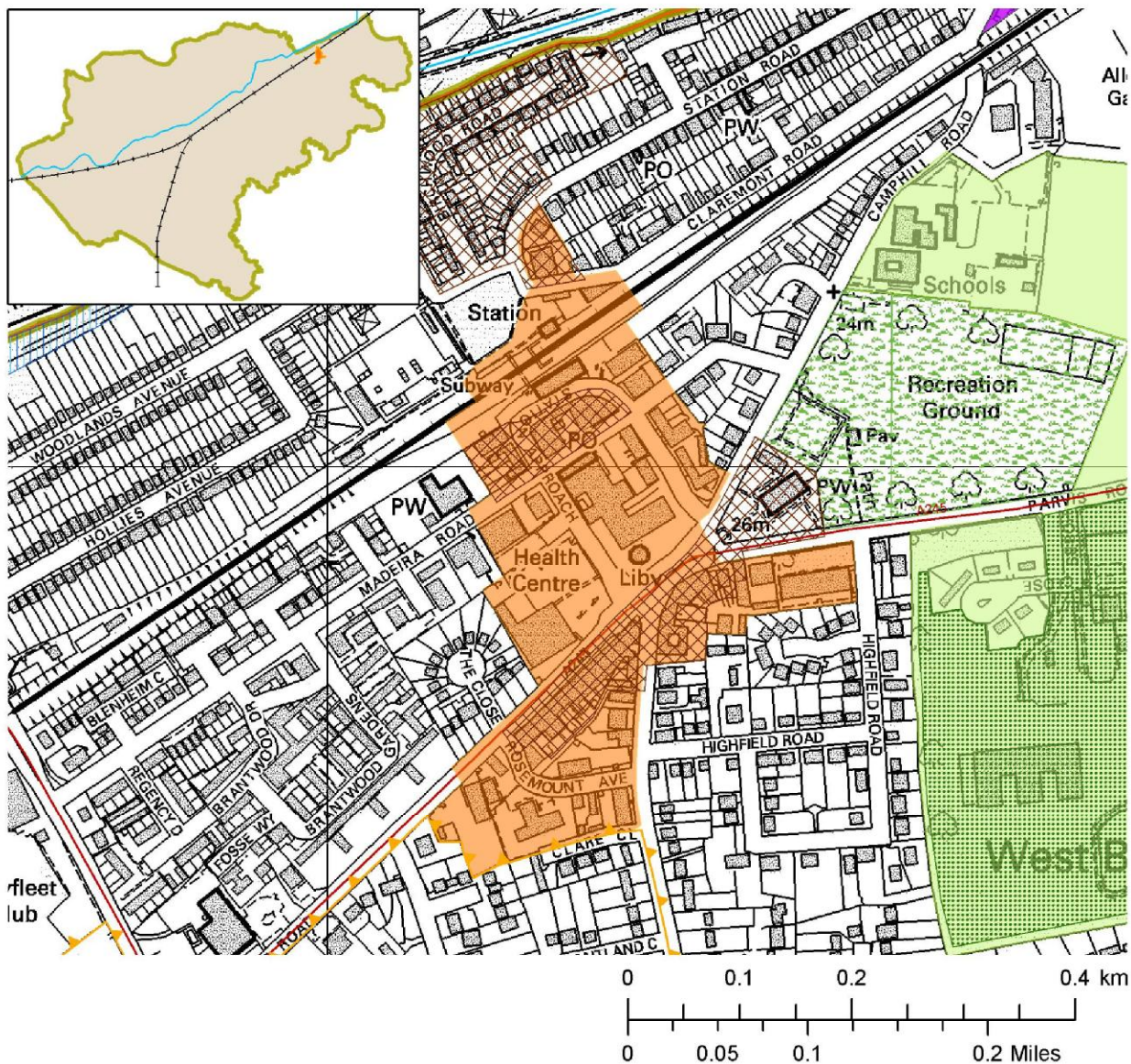
#### **Key evidence base**

- Town, District and Local Centres Study, 2009 produced by Roger Tym and Partners.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010 update.
- Employment Land Review (incorporates Employment Position Paper (January 2010), and Market Appraisal (April 2010) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton.





### Map 3: West Byfleet District Centre



#### Key

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| District Centre                              | Basingstoke Canal Corridor and Conservation Area |
| Borough Boundary                             | Green Belt                                       |
| Urban Areas of Special Residential Character | Urban Open Space                                 |
| Conservation Area                            | Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt          |
| Basingstoke Canal                            | Employment Areas                                 |

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## Local and neighbourhood centres and shopping parades

- 5.21 With the exception of Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre, Woking Borough is made up of a network of local and neighbourhood centres, known locally as the “villages”. The hierarchy of centres is set out in Table 3 (p31).
- 5.22 Local Centres all have primary schools and churches which give them a focus and sense of community. They vary in size from Byfleet and Knaphill (in the east and west of the Borough respectively) which are the largest, to Sheerwater and Goldsworth Park which are the most compact. There is a train station in Brookwood (a Neighbourhood Centre) but none of the local centres have a train station so private car, bus and cycling are the predominant means of transport to the town centre and the rest of the Borough. However, those living nearby often walk into the centres.
- 5.23 On the whole neighbourhood centres are smaller with a more limited retail offer but all have a church, primary school or public house providing a focal point. The neighbourhood centres and shopping parades provide a more limited range of functions and only basic services; however they can be essential to meeting everyday local needs.

### **CS4: Local and neighbourhood centres and shopping parades**

Local and neighbourhood centres and shopping parades, as indicated on Map 4, will retain retail, employment<sup>4</sup> and service uses wherever viable, in order to meet the day-to-day needs of the local community. Changes of use to other town centre uses will only be permitted where the floorspace is vacant, the retail unit is not considered to be an anchor unit, and the change of use is not considered harmful to the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

Mixed use development with a small amount of retail will be encouraged in local centres provided it accommodates local needs, it contributes to the vitality and viability of the centre and that the development is appropriate to the role and function of the centre in the hierarchy.

The Council will seek to protect and retain local shops, services and other small scale economic uses such as post offices, petrol stations and public houses, in local and neighbourhood centres and shopping parades because of the importance of these uses for meeting the everyday needs of those living locally.

Local centres are considered appropriate for a low level of retail growth in order to fulfil their function as local service centres, as set out in the table below. Knaphill is the largest of the local centres and is considered to have the potential to achieve a modest amount of development. The figures are set out separately for Knaphill but combined for the other local centres:



<b>Development type and indicative amount</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>Housing</b> 2010-2027 = 250 units	Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Retail</b> <b>Local Centres</b> 3,200m <sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace including 900m <sup>2</sup> of comparison and 1,700 m <sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace <b>Knaphill</b> 3,000m <sup>2</sup> of additional retail floorspace including 700m <sup>2</sup> of comparison and 1,700 m <sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace	<b>Local Centres</b> Over the life of the Core Strategy  <b>Knaphill</b> Over the life of the Core Strategy
<b>Social, community and transport infrastructure</b>	(TBC following completion of Infrastructure Delivery Plan)

No figures have been set out for the Neighbourhood Centres but they are considered appropriate for a small amount of retail growth in order to fulfil their function of meeting day-to-day needs.

Proposals for development in the Local or Neighbourhood Centres will be determined on individual merit, taking into account the requirements of PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth and specifically ensuring that the scale of any proposal relates to the role and function of the centre in the settlement hierarchy. Floorspace is expected to meet the needs of those living locally and not a wider catchment.

The role and function of the Local and Neighbourhood Centres will be protected by the Council and out of centre development that threatens the vitality and viability of Local Centres will be strongly resisted.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 5.24 The Council does not consider that the Local Centres have the physical capacity or catchment to achieve significant retail development but considers that there is some potential over the plan period for some modest growth as set out in the policy above. With the exception of Knaphill, it is not considered appropriate to plan for a specific amount of floorspace in any of the centres but that any application should be determined on individual merits taking into account how the proposals relates to the role and function of the centre in the wider hierarchy. Additional floorspace development is only expected to meet local needs and not that of the wider catchment. Allowing limited expansion of existing shops can be key to maintaining their viability.
- 5.25 National guidance in the form of PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth promotes town and other centres as important places for communities and the Government wants new economic growth and development for main

town centre uses to be focused in existing centres to ensure their vitality and viability.

- 5.26 Anchor units are those such as supermarkets, convenience stores and post offices. It is not appropriate to define a size in terms of square metres as this will vary depending on the size of the centre but they are likely to be the largest units in any centre.

### Delivery strategy

- 5.27 This policy will be implemented through the development management process.

### Monitoring and review

- Number of net additional dwellings completed by centre.
- Net loss/gain of A1 retail floorspace in local and neighbourhood Centres.
- Net loss/gain of other A class floorspace in local and neighbourhood centres.
- Net loss gain of A class floorspace in the shopping parades.

### Key evidence base

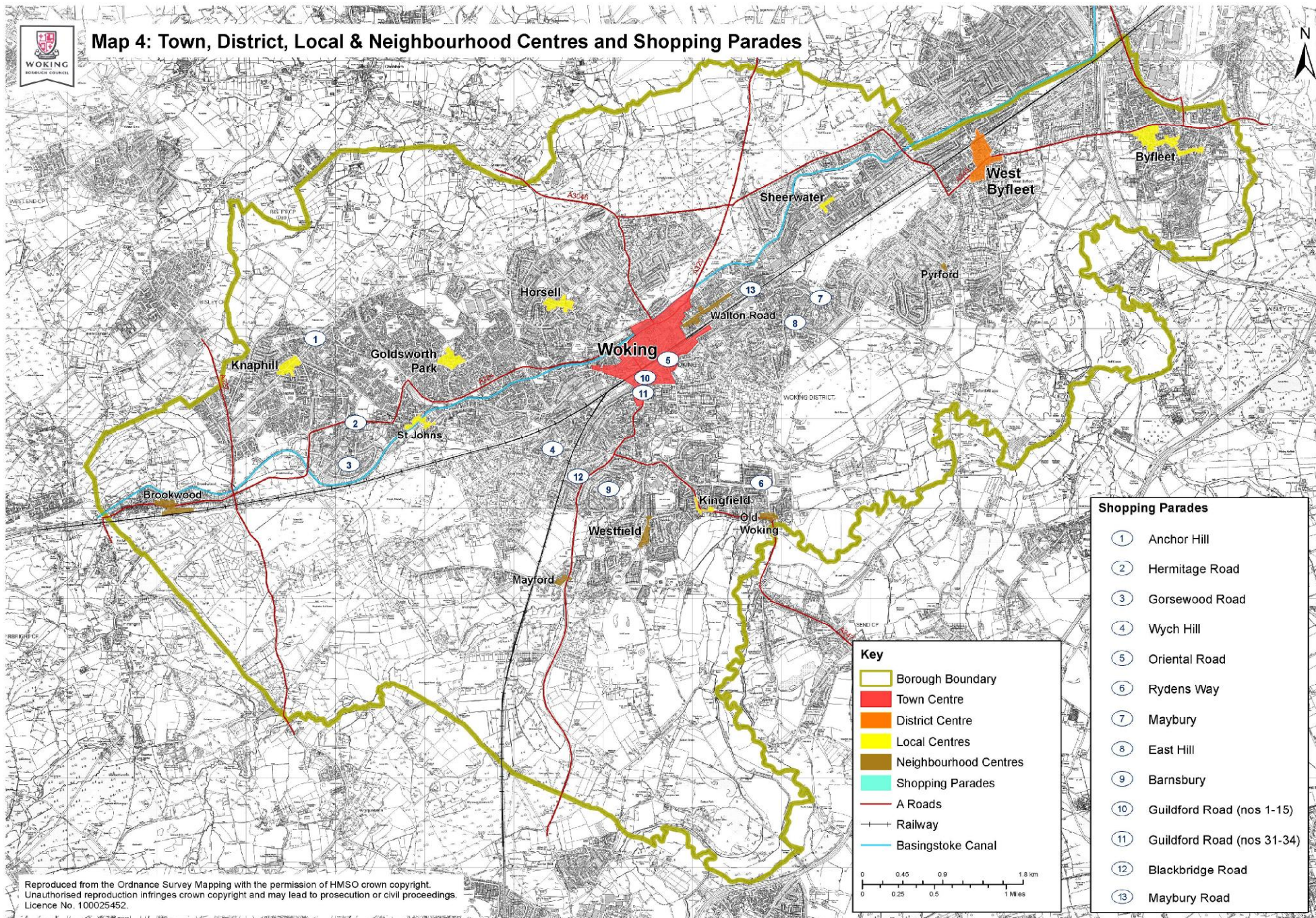
- Town, District and Local Centres Study, 2009 produced by Roger Tym and Partners.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010 update.
- Employment Land Review (incorporates Employment Position Paper (January 2010), and Market Appraisal (April 2010) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton.







## Map 4: Town, District, Local & Neighbourhood Centres and Shopping Parades



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## Priority Places

- 5.28 The Core Strategy seeks to achieve a sustainable community for Woking and improve upon the well-being of its people. It sees sustainable communities as places where people want to live, work and visit now and in the future. A place that meets the diverse needs of its residents, and that is sensitive to the environment. Sustainable communities are safe, inclusive and well planned places that offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.
- 5.29 Woking is a relatively prosperous Borough. However, small pockets of deprivation exist where disadvantaged communities, often home to the most vulnerable people in society, do not benefit from the surrounding affluence. The Council is committed to working with partners to ensure that resources are targeted in order to bring about positive changes in these areas.
- 5.30 The Surrey Strategic Partnership, of which Woking Borough Council is a member, has identified the ward of Maybury and Sheerwater as one of four 'Priority Places' in the county which will be subject to multiple interventions by county-wide and local partners in a coordinated manner in order to deliver its targets. The area has around 3,500 households. The need to address areas of deprivation is a key part of the spatial vision and objectives of the Core Strategy.
- 5.31 The ward of Maybury and Sheerwater is comprised of six sub areas (known as Super Output Areas), with the Devonshire Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue area of Sheerwater being identified as within the 14% most deprived areas nationally, and the most deprived area in the county<sup>5</sup>. It is ranked highest in the county for health deprivation and disability, income and employment, and ranked fourth in the county for education, skills and training levels. The underlying issues in Maybury and Sheerwater are complex, and vary between the different sub areas. There are a number of Council and Partnership papers that set out these issues in detail.
- 5.32 In addition to the identification of Maybury and Sheerwater as a Priority Place, at the local level, through the work of the Woking Partnership, the Lakeview Estate area of Goldsworth Park has also been identified as a Priority Place to which resources should be targeted. The Lakeview Estate is the second most deprived area in Woking Borough and falls within the 28% most deprived areas nationally. Although levels of deprivation are not as acute as in Maybury and Sheerwater, the Lakeview Estate experiences some specific socio-economic issues, particularly relating to having one of the highest concentrations of socially rented family accommodation in the Borough, and a high number of single parent households. The Lakeview Estate is a small geographical area, home to around 630 households in a relatively high density development. Therefore, the application of this policy has a wider reach than just the Lakeview Estate and extends to the Goldsworth Park area generally, where the local social and community infrastructure that serves Lakeview is located. See maps 5 and 6.

## **CS5: Priority Places**

The Council will work with partners to target resources to the Borough's Priority Places which are identified on the Key Diagram:

- The ward of Maybury and Sheerwater.
- The Lakeview Estate area of Goldsworth Park.

The objectives for these areas are set out in the Priority Places Action Plan. The Council will take a proactive approach to achieve these objectives by working with its partners to implement a number of schemes which will make a positive contribution towards addressing the challenges in these areas.

### **Maybury and Sheerwater**

#### **Housing**

The Council will provide for around an additional 250 new homes in Maybury and Sheerwater between 2010 and 2027. In Maybury, these homes will primarily be provided through the redevelopment of poor quality housing stock and outmoded and outdated employment floorspace<sup>6</sup>. In Sheerwater, these new homes will primarily be provided by bringing forward land in the Council's ownership for redevelopment.

The Council will seek to redress the current tenure imbalance in Maybury and Sheerwater by requiring new affordable dwellings in the area to be family homes (2+ bedrooms) and giving priority to the intermediate rent and shared ownership tenures.

#### **Employment**

The Council will retain existing employment where possible and encourage proposals that create new opportunities for local employment within the established industrial estates in Maybury and Sheerwater. In particular, the redevelopment from office accommodation to more flexible mixed B class uses of the western part of the Forsyth Road Industrial Estate indicated on Map 5, will be encouraged. This is recognised in policy CS14: Sustainable Economic Development.

The Council will promote local labour agreements with developers to enable local people in the Priority Places to secure employment and skills development.

#### **Retail**

The Council would like to increase the choice of retail offer in Sheerwater and will support in principle the development of a convenience retail outlet in Sheerwater, subject to an assessment of the full impacts of such a proposal on the vitality and viability of the existing shopping parade and other local convenience stores. It will work with partners to achieve this, making use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers if necessary.

The vitality of the shopping parade in Sheerwater will be protected and enhanced to ensure that the community has a genuine choice of shopping and services. The loss of existing retail units will be resisted in both Maybury and Sheerwater.

#### **Accessibility**

In order to improve accessibility into and out of the Maybury and Sheerwater area, the Council will work with Surrey County Council to bring forward proposals for a

new access road through Monument Way East and Monument Way West, as indicated on Map 5. This is expected to be delivered within the period of the Core Strategy.

The Council will work with Surrey County Council and public transport providers to:

- Seek improvements to bus services from Sheerwater.
- Improve the existing cycle network through Maybury and Sheerwater including the provision of secure cycle parking facilities in key locations.
- Assess the role of parking provision around the shopping parade in Sheerwater to increase trade and protect local businesses.
- Promote investment in a local community transport scheme to increase access to services e.g. doctor, dentist and community centre.

### **Infrastructure**

The Council will channel developer contributions to deliver infrastructure in Maybury and Sheerwater in line with policy CS15: Infrastructure delivery. Priority infrastructure items are listed in the infrastructure schedule.

### **Public realm and design**

The Council will seek to improve the image of Maybury and Sheerwater by promoting high quality design, the enhancement of open spaces and other public amenity areas. Development proposals will be expected to have built-in natural surveillance that designs out crime and fear of crime, creates direct, safe routes to neighbouring communities and nearby retail and commercial facilities, and provide a safe environment.

### **Lakeview**

No significant development is planned for the Lakeview Estate over the Plan period. The key partnership interventions in the area are based on skills, training and education provision and improving access to health services. The Council will therefore seek to assist in the delivery of the objectives for the area by channelling developer contributions to deliver infrastructure in the Lakeview Estate and its local vicinity in line with policy CS15: Infrastructure delivery. Priority infrastructure items are listed in the infrastructure schedule.

The Council will resist the loss of existing retail convenience stores in the vicinity.

Existing community facilities will be protected and the provision of additional social and community infrastructure will be encouraged.

Details of the interventions for both Priority Places are set out in the Priority Places Action Plan.

N.b. These will be shown in detail on a Proposals Map when submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 5.33 Spatial planning has a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities, and in this instance, the reduction of both relative and absolute deprivation in our Priority Places. However, this Core Strategy is just one element of a wide range of positive interventions by partner organisations required to deliver the objectives of our Priority Places. The Council is



committed to working with key partners and the local community to realise our aspirations.

### **Maybury and Sheerwater**

#### **Housing**

- 5.34 Housing issues in Maybury and Sheerwater are complex. There is a high level of one bedroom social rented accommodation in the Dartmouth Avenue and Devonshire Avenue area of Sheerwater. In Maybury, the issues are slightly different where there is an ageing housing stock and a large number of socially rented dwellings.
- 5.35 The Council's SHLAA has identified developable land to provide around an additional 250 new homes in the area by 2027. The Council will therefore seek to bring these sites forward in order to increase housing choice and also to redress the existing tenure imbalance. In Maybury, these homes will primarily be provided through the redevelopment of poor quality housing stock and outmoded and outdated employment floorspace outside of the designated Industrial Estates. In Sheerwater, these new homes will primarily be provided by bringing forward land in the Council's ownership for redevelopment.
- 5.36 The Council will seek to redress the existing tenure imbalance in Maybury and Sheerwater by requiring new affordable dwellings in the area to be family homes (2+ bedrooms) and secured in the intermediate rent and shared ownership tenures. In addition to this, the Council has recently reviewed its Housing Allocations policy.

#### **Employment**

- 5.37 A significant proportion of the population within Maybury and Sheerwater suffers from low skill levels and below average educational attainment as well as high levels of income and employment deprivation. The Priority Places Action Plan identifies a number of positive interventions to:
- Improve educational attainment of local school children.
  - Increase the numbers of children staying on at school after 16 and entering higher education.
  - Increase access to and uptake of adult education, particularly basic literacy, numeracy and ICT.
  - Reduce unemployment and numbers of people claiming long-term illness/disability.
- 5.38 Examples of planned/ongoing interventions include working with local schools to improve take up of higher education through the national Aim Higher programme; working with Connexions to promote and increase uptake of services for people not in employment, education or training; increase provision and take-up of English language courses, literacy and numeracy for adults; setting up a job/skills club in Sheerwater to help local people secure employment opportunities; and provision of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for vulnerable young people.
- 5.39 In order to address income and employment deprivation in these areas through spatial planning, the Council will seek to provide opportunities for local employment. In particular, the redevelopment from office accommodation to more flexible mixed B class uses will be encouraged. A

considerable amount of office development was constructed at the western end of the Forsyth Road Industrial Estate in the late 1980s/early 1990s. These developments have been suffering from high vacancy rates for some time with a rate of 61% recorded in 2009. The market appraisal of employment sites undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton identified a number of weaknesses in this area's suitability as an office location and recommended that consideration should be given to the re-use/redevelopment of these offices for more appropriate mixed B class uses. This would enable both the employment potential of the area to be maximised, as well as creating job opportunities more aligned to local skills.

- 5.40 The Council will work with its partners to promote local labour agreements with developers which enable local people in the Priority Places to secure employment and skills development. Agreements should link where possible to existing skills/employment initiatives already planned or in place in the area.

#### **Retail**

- 5.41 The Council acknowledges the limited retail choice in Sheerwater and Maybury and, in accordance with PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth, the Council recognises that additional weight should be given to meeting deficiencies in deprived areas. PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth encourages the provision of shopping, leisure and local services which provide a genuine choice to meet the needs of the whole community. Car ownership in this area is low and public transport is limited so not all members of the community can easily access the retail offer in the town centre and in West Byfleet, despite their relatively close proximity. An additional retail convenience store would enhance consumer choice for those living in Sheerwater and Maybury. However, the existing retail and service provision also needs to be protected.

#### **Accessibility**

- 5.42 With low level of car ownership and limited public transport, the Maybury and Sheerwater area suffers from poor access to a wide range of retail, employment, healthcare and community facilities. To address the issue of isolation, the Council will work with key stakeholders, through Transport for Woking, to improve accessibility in to and out of the area, using a variety of transport modes.
- 5.43 One of the main accessibility issues is the road access into Sheerwater. At present the one way system running east and west from Monument Road restricts access to and from Woking Town Centre and creates congestion, particularly at peak times. The proposed new access road through Monument Way East would be subject to a feasibility study and an assessment of the traffic impacts on the surrounding road network and signal points.
- 5.44 Maybury and Sheerwater are within easy cycling distance to the town centre if the necessary infrastructure is provided. The Cycle Woking programme will enable the Council to increase the connectivity of the Borough's cycle network by extending existing cycle routes and provide additional secure cycle parking facilities at key locations in Maybury and Sheerwater to encourage cycle use. This will offer an alternative and more sustainable mode of transport to the car and increase accessibility to key local services. The Council will also work with Surrey County Council and bus providers to improve bus services.

- 5.45 There is scope to increase parking provision around the shopping parade in Sheerwater to increase trade, protect local businesses and enhance the vitality of the parade. This will be investigated to assess the impact on highway safety and existing land uses, and highway orders will be reviewed to enable this to be achieved.
- 5.46 Improvements to transport infrastructure, in combination with new retail development and the creation of new employment opportunities at the Industrial Estate, will have the additional benefit of increasing passing trade to the Sheerwater Parade (and shops in Walton Road), leading to an increase in the vitality and viability of the area.

#### **Infrastructure**

- 5.47 The Council will channel developer contributions raised to deliver infrastructure in Maybury and Sheerwater in line with policy CS15: Infrastructure delivery. Priority infrastructure items are described in detail in the infrastructure schedule, and include in no priority order:
- New sports facilities (at Bishop David Brown and New Monument schools).
  - New youth facilities at the Sheerwater and Boundary Road recreation grounds.
  - New access road through Monument Way.
  - Improvements to the bus service.
  - Local community transport scheme for Sheerwater.
  - Cycle provision (route connectivity and secure cycle parking).
  - Improvements to the school buildings at Bishop David Brown.
  - Improvements to the youth club in Sheerwater.
  - An additional community facility in the Maybury area.
  - Street furniture and 'face lift' for public amenity areas, including lighting.
  - Increased library provision (more frequent mobile library service).
  - Development of a community health hub.
  - Affordable family housing.
  - Social enterprise initiatives.

#### **Public realm and design**

- 5.48 It is widely accepted that the quality of the environment in a neighbourhood affects the standard of living and the health and well-being of local people. The Council will therefore seek to improve the built environment in Maybury and Sheerwater by promoting high quality new development, with safe and attractive streets and public spaces. The quality of public open space in the area is generally poor, as spaces are unattractive, lack play facilities and feel unsafe due to limited opportunities for passing surveillance.
- 5.49 The Council will work with partners to seek to improve the built environment of Maybury and Sheerwater:
- Promoting the highest quality of design of new development and maximising the potential and setting of historic assets in Maybury.
  - Explore establishing a safe network of paths, parks and avenues to reduce barriers to movement, both real and perceived, to promote access to shopping parades.
  - Enhancement of public open space in each neighbourhood, continue to improve security and access through lighting, new planting, realigning footpaths, local policing and Neighbourhood Watch.

- Maximise the potential of green space. Continue to improve the facilities on offer through replacing play equipment, providing activities for teenagers and creating new facilities.
- New development proposals should strive to promote a sense of place and help transform the image and identity of Sheerwater and Maybury.
- Reducing barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement.
- Refurbishment of the shopping parade on Dartmouth Avenue.
- New developments should be designed so there is natural surveillance to reduce crime and fear of crime.

### **Lakeview**

#### **Infrastructure**

- 5.50 The Council will target developer contributions raised through CIL (or an alternative tariff approach) to deliver infrastructure in Lakeview in line with policy CS15: Infrastructure delivery. Priority infrastructure items are described in detail in the infrastructure schedule, and include in no priority order:
- Improvements and extensions to community facilities.
  - Doctors and dentist.
  - Secure cycle parking.
  - Skills based social enterprise scheme (cycle repair workshop) – facility required.
  - Provision of an additional allotment site in the local vicinity.
  - Improved access to formal sports provision.
  - Improved access to community facilities and services.
  - Additional youth play provision.
  - Community transport to provide cheap travel to the town centre and leisure centre.
  - Community garden.
  - Street furniture and ‘facelift’ for amenity areas, including lighting.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 5.51 The successful delivery of the above measures will depend on effective partnership working and strong governance arrangements. Woking Borough Council, the Woking Partnership and Surrey Strategic Partnership are all committed to providing the necessary support to deliver these priorities.
- 5.52 Overall governance for the delivery of the Priority Places Action Plan will be provided by the Priority Places sub group of the Woking Partnership, which in turn reports to the Surrey Strategic Partnership. In addition, the Delivery Management Group of the Surrey Strategic Partnership is responsible for ensuring that the resources of the key partners are aligned in order to achieve the objectives of the LAA.
- 5.53 The Council will ensure that, through the annual service planning process, the resources of the Council are aligned to enable the direction of resources to the Priority Places.
- 5.54 The Council will consider using its Compulsory Purchase powers if necessary to enable key projects to be delivered.

- 5.55 In accordance with the Implementation and Delivery Plan, the Council will use its CPO powers and other means to assist with site assembly where it is necessary to do so.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 5.56 The effectiveness of Policy CS5: Priority Places will be measured by the following indicators and targets.
- Achievement of targets set out in the Local Area Agreement.
  - Achievement of targets set out in the Woking Partnerships Priority Places Action Plan.
  - Periodic evaluations of infrastructure projects through the Annual Monitoring Report and the updating of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
  - Regular monitoring of corporate strategies, including the play strategy and housing strategy to monitor progress against wider corporate objectives.
  - The Council, with the Surrey Strategic Partnership and the Woking Partnership, will keep under review the outcomes of future publications of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation in order to ensure that the Borough's priority communities are identified.

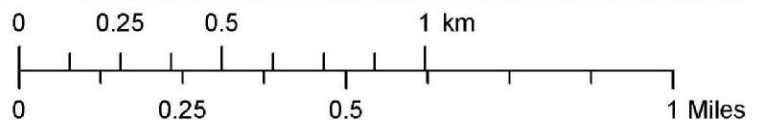
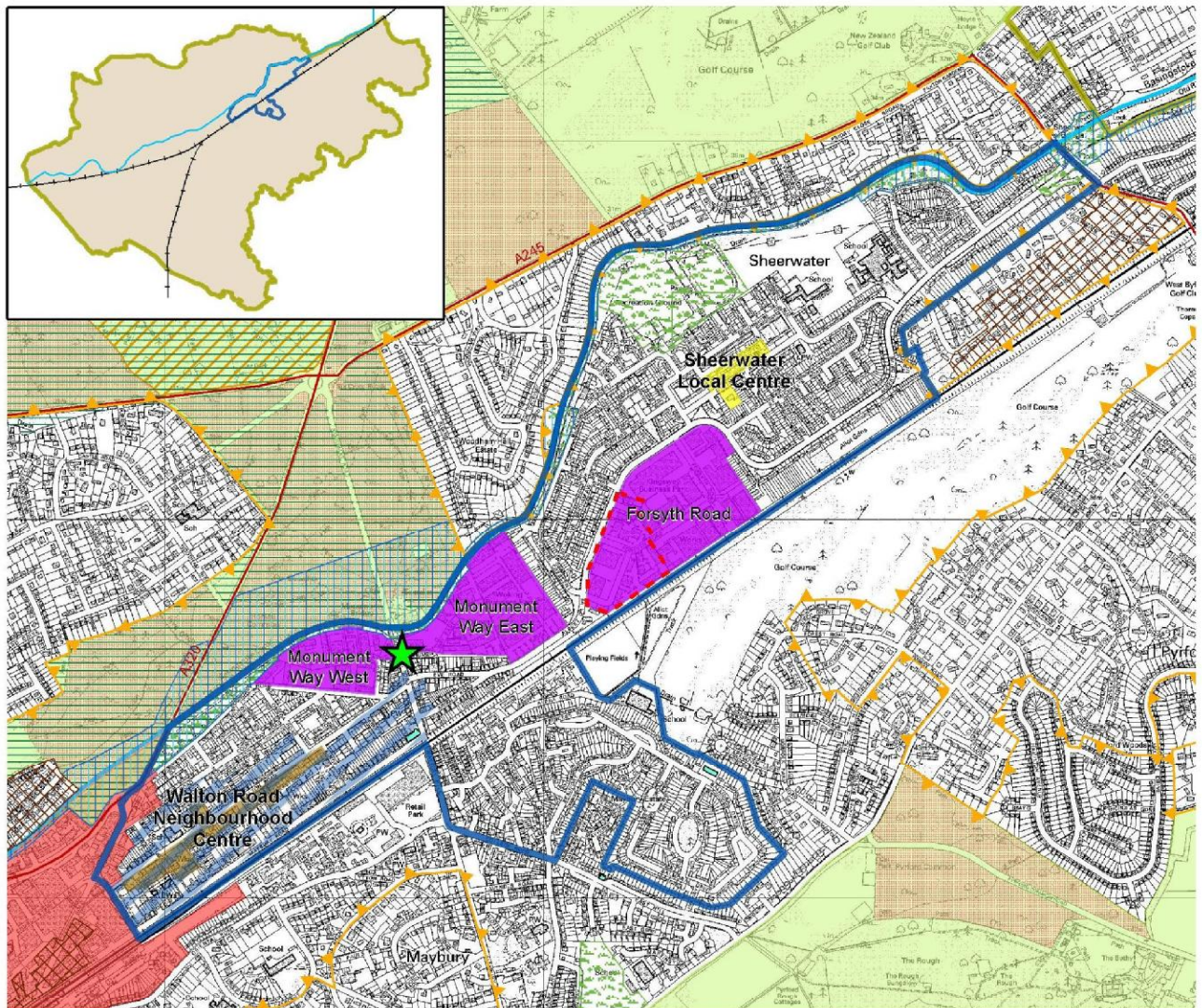
#### **Key evidence base**

- Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan, 2010.
- Woking Community Strategy, 2006.
- Priority Places Action Plan, 2010.
- Draft Maybury Local Community Action Plan, 2008.
- Sheerwater Local Community Action Plan, 2008.
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (CLG).





## Map 5: Priority Places - Maybury and Sheerwater



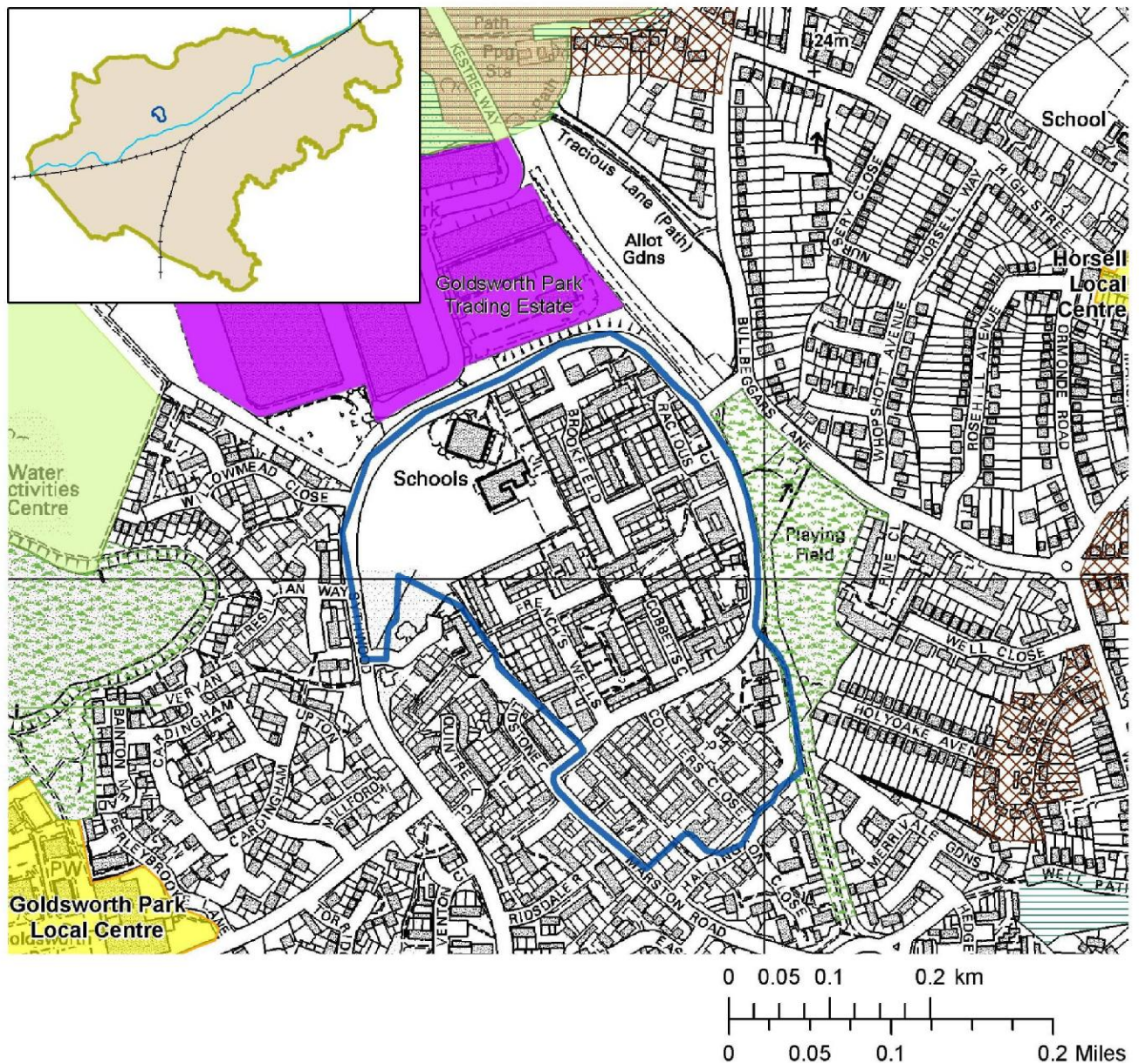
### Key

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  The ward of Maybury and Sheerwater |  Potential new access road                        |
|  Borough Boundary                   |  Conservation Area                                |
|  Employment Areas                   |  Basingstoke Canal Corridor and Conservation Area |
|  Forsyth Road Flexible Area         |  Urban Areas Special Residential Character        |
|  Town Centre                        |  Green Belt                                       |
|  Local Centres                      |  Sites of Nature Conservation Importance          |
|  Neighbourhood Centres              |  Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas     |
|  Shopping Parades                   |  Urban Open Space                                 |
|  High Density Residential Area      |  Common Land                                      |
|  |  Basingstoke Canal                                |

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## Map 6: Priority Places - Lakeview



### Key

	Lakeview		Urban Open Space
	Local Centres		Green Belt
	Employment Areas		Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
	Conservation Area		Common Land

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## 6.0 Borough wide policies

### Green Belt

- 6.1 The Metropolitan Green Belt covers approximately 60% of the area of the Borough. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Key Diagram (Map 1). Government policy emphasises that the fundamental objective of Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl, by keeping land open. It is a significant spatial issue in defining the extent of the built-up area and in constraining patterns of development in the Borough. The Green Belt plays a key role in providing recreational opportunity, securing the quality of the Borough's landscape setting, and in contributing to the special identity of the area.

#### **CS6: Green Belt**

To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, it will be protected from harmful development. Within its boundaries, strict control will continue to apply over inappropriate development, as defined by Government policy currently outlined in PPG2: Green Belts.

Two major developed sites in the Green Belt are proposed at Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet and the Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works, Carters Lane, Old Woking, as shown in Appendix 2.

The Green Belt has been identified as a potential future direction of growth to meet housing need, in particular, the need for family homes between 2022-2027. A Green Belt boundary review will be carried out in 2016/17 with the specific objective to identify land to meet the development requirements of the Core Strategy.

#### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.2 New development is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it is essential for:
- Agriculture.
  - Cemeteries.
  - Outdoor recreation.
  - Extensions to dwellings that would not result in disproportionate additions to the original building.
- 6.3 The relevant criteria are set out in PPG2: Green Belts. It is not intended to repeat the requirements of PPG2 because they are material considerations when determining planning applications.
- 6.4 Land at Moor Lane and Brookwood Farm has been safeguarded for long-term development needs in the Local Plan, although they have been excluded from the Green Belt for some 20 years. They are now needed to be used for housing development. They have been assessed as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and have been identified to contribute towards the five-year housing land supply to meet the requirements of the LDF. The development of the sites will take into account any biodiversity and/or geodiversity features on the site. The two safeguarded sites will be shown on the Proposals Map and are denoted in Appendix 2.

- 6.5 Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt are existing large developed sites within the Green Belt, where infilling and/or redevelopment may not be inappropriate development. Two sites are designated as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt at Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet and the Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works, Carters Lane, Old Woking. Both will be outlined on the Proposals Map. Both fulfil the criteria for a Major Developed Site as set out in PPG2: Green Belts.
- 6.6 Land at Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet was designated as a Major Developed Site in the current Local Plan, and it is intended that it will have the same status in the Core Strategy. The retention of this site for quality office premises is important to the employment strategy of the Core Strategy as no other similar sites are available within the Borough. Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works, Carters Lane, Old Woking is a new designation.
- 6.7 Whilst infilling and/or redevelopment is acceptable in principle at these sites, any such development must be contained within the defined boundaries and their impacts fully assessed in accordance with criteria in PPG2: Green Belts.
- 6.8 The Core Strategy identifies the Green Belt as potential future direction of growth to meet the development requirements of the Borough, in particular, the necessity to meet the need for affordable family homes. A review of the Green Belt will be carried out to identify specific sites for this purpose in 2016/17.
- Delivery strategy**
- 6.9 The policy will be delivered through development management decisions. The Core Strategy policy and national planning policy (PPS2: Green Belts) will provide the framework against which planning applications will be determined.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- Number and type of planning permissions granted consent in the Green Belt.
- Number of developments in the Green Belt demonstrating very special circumstances.
- Major Developed Sites – the percentage of development which has taken place within the defined boundaries and the percentage outside the defined boundaries.



## Biodiversity and nature conservation

- 6.10 For the purpose of the Core Strategy, biodiversity describes the entire living natural environment of plant and animal life. It encompasses the whole variety of habitats, species, and their ecosystems.
- 6.11 The Government's vision for conserving and enhancing biodiversity is set out in 'Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England.' It has a broad aim that planning, conservation, regeneration and development should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. The document sets out a number of key principles to be considered in development plan policies, including:
- Use of up-to-date information to underpin plan policies.
  - Plan policies should aim to maintain, restore and enhance or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interest.
  - Spatial distribution of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement, and restoration of biodiversity and geology.
  - Policies should promote a design approach that incorporates beneficial biodiversity and geological features within development.
  - Schemes where the principle objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological interest should be permitted.
  - Where opportunities arise designated sites should be linked to other open spaces as part of the green infrastructure for the area.
- 6.12 The Core Strategy will apply these principles in local planning decisions.
- 6.13 In Woking Borough, the following key environmental designations of either international, national, regional or local significance exist that need to be maintained, conserved and/or enhanced because of their biodiversity or geodiversity interest:
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA).
  - Ancient Woodlands.
  - Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
  - Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).
  - Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- 6.14 These designations will be shown on the Proposals Map, and are indicated on Map 7. The designated areas provide important habitats to a variety of important species. The habitats and the species within them, both flora and fauna comprise the biodiversity of the area.

### **CS7: Biodiversity and nature conservation**

The Council will require development to enhance and/or make a net gain in biodiversity and/or geodiversity. As a minimum, it will seek to conserve, retain, safeguard and protect existing designated sites. It will make provision, wherever possible, to secure the creation and management of new habitats and species, either on their own or as part of new development.

Any development which will have significant adverse impacts on a designated site or a protected species, where those impacts cannot be fully mitigated and where the benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm that would be caused will be refused.

Proposals that are likely to have an adverse impact on an SSSI will not be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the tests set out in PPS9: Biodiversity and geological conservation are met.

Development will not be permitted on sites within or affecting an SNCI, LNR or an area of ancient woodland unless it can be demonstrated that it would not directly harm the nature conservation value of the site. Exceptionally, where development is key to achieving the aims of the Core Strategy, or is proposed close to a designated site, some impact may be unavoidable. In this case, the developer would need to mitigate and/or compensate where the impacts are unavoidable.

The Council will ensure that no sites are allocated for residential development or granted planning consent for housing within 400 metres of the Thames Basin Heath SPA, because the impacts of such development on the SPA cannot be fully mitigated. Development beyond this threshold will be required to provide and/or contribute towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM.)

An Appropriate Assessment will be required of any proposal with potential impacts on a Special Area of Conservation and/or the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The Council has an Avoidance Strategy that sets out how contributions will be calculated.

### **Reasoned justification**

#### Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas

- 6.15 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area is a European Union designation and contributes significantly to Woking's landscape character and wildlife value. In considering whether or not a development is likely to have an adverse effect on the SPA, the Council will adopt the precautionary principle and assume harm will occur until it is demonstrated to be otherwise.
- 6.16 Residential developments having a significant adverse impact on the SPA will have to meet the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy (2010-15) (known as the Avoidance Strategy) or any subsequent local SPA planning strategy that replaces it. This document explains how avoidance may be achieved, the standards required and funding arrangements.

- 6.17 Specific sites known as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) will be designated across the Borough and formally allocated in the Site Allocations DPD. These SANGS will provide alternative open spaces for use by future occupants of development and existing residents to avoid the potential harm caused by more visitors to the SPA. In considering whether avoidance can be achieved, either through improvements to existing open space or provision of new open space, regard will be given to the PPG17: Open space, sport and recreation audit (2008) undertaken by Woking Borough Council.
- 6.18 The Avoidance Strategy is calculated on a net increase in residential development including flats and residential conversions (Use Class C3). Residential institution developments within Use Class C2 will be considered on a case-by-case basis and Natural England will advise whether an Appropriate Assessment as specified in the Habitats Regulations would be required. If required, the Avoidance Strategy and draft Delivery Framework standards will apply. The Avoidance Strategy does not cover commercial and industrial development and, in cases where it is considered that such proposals could impact on the SPA, advice will be sought from Natural England.

#### Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Areas of Conservation

- 6.19 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are also areas protected by the EU Habitats Directive. The designations provide increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to conserve the world's bio-diversity. The designation of SAC, and SPA, is part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species. These internationally important sites of nature conservation value are to be given the highest degree of protection. There will be a presumption against any new development that will damage a SAC.
- 6.20 Potential damage to the SAC arising from applications for development within the SAC or located outside the boundary but with the potential to affect features within it will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking account of local circumstances, including the nature and scale of the application. Issues to be considered include whether the development would:
- Cause changes to the coherence of the SAC such as presenting a barrier between isolated fragments.
  - Cause reduction in the area of the protected habitat.
  - Cause change to the physical quality of the environment or habitat.
  - Cause ongoing disturbance to qualifying species or habitat.
  - Alter species composition.
- 6.21 The effective avoidance and/or mitigation of any adverse effects must be demonstrated and secured prior to approval of the development.
- 6.22 Judgements will often be based on existing information. However, where this is unavailable or inadequate, further work will be necessary to confirm whether an application will have a significant impact.

#### National and Regional Designations

- 6.23 The majority of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are



within the Metropolitan Green Belt. There is no conflict between protecting them and implementing the Core Strategy, because they are not the preferred locations for development.

- 6.24 SSSIs, as will be shown on the Proposal Map, support distinctive flora and fauna creating a distinctive landscape of value in the Borough. SNCIs are of regional importance, LNRs are designated because of their local nature conservation and educational importance. There is a programme of reviewing SNCIs to provide up-to-date information on their current state.
- 6.25 It is important that the landscape of the Borough is conserved and enhanced, but this must be integrated with the need to accommodate change, to address social or economic objectives and meet the needs of the communities. Harm to these environmental designations should be minimised, and opportunities should be taken to bring about improvements where possible.

#### Biodiversity

- 6.26 The important habitats and species within the Borough form the biodiversity of the area. The aim of the Core Strategy is to enhance them and ensure their effective management.
- 6.27 Where development is proposed that would affect sites or features of nature conservation importance, appropriate mitigation and management measures will be taken to ensure that this is prevented or minimised. New biodiversity proposals should be appropriate to the local landscape character of the area and any creation, restoration or enhancement schemes are based upon existing habitats and landscape features. The Council will require prior assessment of the development site by the developer to provide information on species and features of the landscape important to Woking's biodiversity. The Council will apply a design approach that enhances biodiversity where it is possible to do so.
- 6.28 The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing green corridors, river valleys, waterways and open space networks because they provide important sources of habitat and biodiversity. Policy CS16 Open Space, Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation deals with this matter.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.29 This policy will be delivered by the Borough Council working with Natural England regarding SPA matters, and maintaining an up to date SPA Strategy.
- 6.30 The condition of SSSIs will be monitored to ensure they are not declining.
- 6.31 The Council will support the Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan which provides specific habitat and species targets and the Surrey Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs).
- 6.32 The Council will work with Surrey Wildlife Trust to carry out a rolling programme of SNCI surveys.

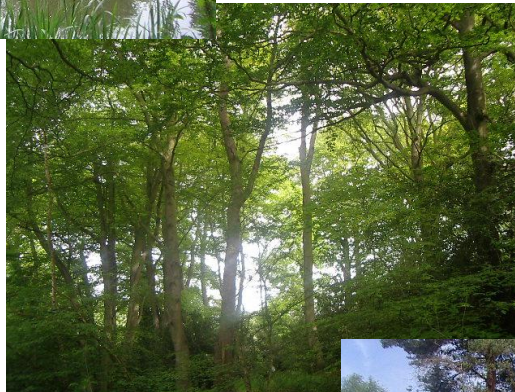
#### **Monitoring and review**

- Number, area and condition of regionally or locally designated wildlife sites.

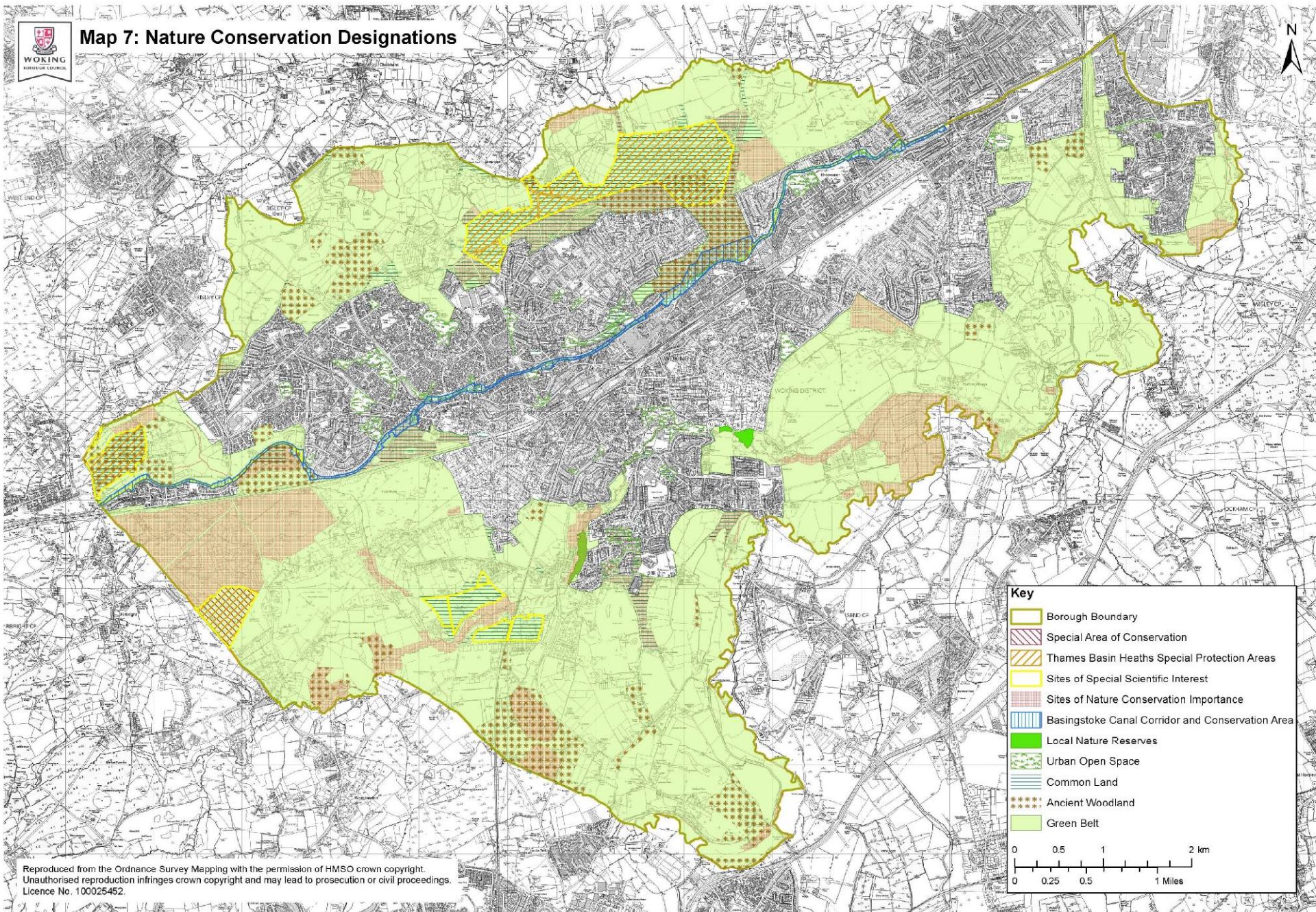
- No decrease in the total area designated as of international, national and regional importance, or a decline in their condition.
- Status of bird species in the SPA.
- The amount and type of SANG land available as set out in the Council's TBH SPA Avoidance Strategy.
- The enhancement and creation of Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat.
- The percentage of major applications incorporating measures to protect and enhance biodiversity.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy 2010-15.
- Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan, 1999.
- Appropriate Assessment, forthcoming.









## Flooding

- 6.33 Flooding has implications for Woking Borough, not only in terms of the constraint it places on the location of new development, but it is also an issue which relates to climate change. This threatens the livelihood of residents and local businesses, the floods of 2000 being a reminder of that.
- 6.34 Flooding within the Borough originates from a number of sources. The most serious are river and surface water flooding. With advice from the Environment Agency, the Council has undertaken a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA - available on the Council's website) in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the source and level of flood risk within the Borough and provide a basis against which to apply the PPS25: Development and flood risk sequential approach to development. This document will be used to inform the allocation of sites in a decreasing probability of flood risk. It has also been used to inform the preparation of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and contains advice for developers on undertaking Flood Risk Assessments. In addition, it takes on board other relevant plans and strategies relating to the management of flood risk.

### **CS8: Flooding**

The Council will determine planning applications in accordance with the guidance contained within PPS25: Development and flood risk. The SFRA will inform the application of the Sequential and Exceptional Test set out in Annex D of PPS25.

The Council expects development to be in Flood Zone 1 as defined in the SFRA. Applications or allocations within Flood Zone 2 will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable alternatives in areas at lower risk. The Council will not encourage development in Flood Zones 3a and 3b. However, it accepts that this is possible in exceptional circumstances. Development proposals in Flood Zones 3a and 3b will be required to be accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere or exacerbate the existing situation.

The Council will require new housing and commercial units to incorporate appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) as part of any development proposals. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required for sites within or adjacent to areas at risk of surface water flooding as identified in the SFRA. To further reduce the risk from surface water flooding, all new development should work towards mimicking greenfield run-off situations.

Applications which relate specifically to reducing the risk of flooding (e.g. defence/alleviation work) will be supported so long as they do not conflict with other objectives of the Core Strategy for example, those relating to landscape and townscape character.



### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.35 The Council has undertaken a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment in order to identify sufficient land with housing potential to meet its development requirements. The current assessment highlights that there is sufficient land outside of Flood Zone 3a or 3b to meet the Borough's housing requirements. In addition, and in accordance with the sequential approach, Flood Zone 2 will only be considered if sufficient housing land supply cannot be identified in Flood Zone 1 to meet the housing target and all suitable alternatives have been considered. It will not be necessary to permit development in Flood Zone 3a or 3b. However, applications for replacement properties in these locations will be considered providing that there is a similar or reduced built footprint and measures to reduce flood risk will be expected.
- 6.36 Applicants will be required to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment for development proposals within or adjacent to areas at risk from surface water run off. The SFRA identified areas of potential risk, although circumstantial evidence will be considered on a case-by-case basis. National policy (PPS25: Development and flood risk) also requires Flood Risk Assessments for all development proposals in Flood Zones 3a, 3b and 2 as well as all development proposals of one hectare or above in Flood Zone 1. Where there is potential for other sources of flooding, a Flood Risk Assessment should be considered to investigate the level and impact of the risk and propose mitigation measures in accordance with the advice in PPS25: Development and flood risk and the Council's SFRA. Applicants will be encouraged to recognise the benefits that undertaking a Flood Risk Assessment can bring to a development, even if not required.
- 6.37 In managing surface water run-off from development sites, applicants should work towards replicating greenfield run-off situations. In order to achieve this, priority should be given to prevention of surface water run-off (e.g. through minimising paved areas, keeping drains clear, general maintenance), followed by source control measures. On-site solutions such as infiltration devices, filter strips should then be sought and only if these will not satisfactorily deal with the run-off should off-site solutions be considered (such as discharge into water courses). These requirements are complemented by Building Regulations and considerable guidance is also available via CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association).

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.38 The policy will be delivered in the following ways:
- Working with the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council, and the water authorities to keep the SFRA updated, showing the latest known position on flooding and areas at risk.
  - The Council will continue to collect information on flooding incidents affecting properties, business premises and the transport network, which will be fed into updates of the SFRA.

### Monitoring and review

- The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.
- The number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency / Water Authority advice and for what reasons.
- The number of new properties in Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b.
- The number of new developments incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs).

### Key evidence base

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, 2009, produced by Capita Symonds



## Housing provision and distribution

- 6.39 Housing provision is integral to the creation of a sustainable community in Woking. To achieve this aim, the Council will ensure that there are sufficient homes built in sustainable locations that people can afford and which meet the needs of the community. The main urban areas will therefore be the focus for new housing development.
- 6.40 The Council will make provision for the delivery of 4,964 net additional dwellings in the Borough between 2010 and 2027 (an annual average of 292 per annum).
- 6.41 The Council has undertaken a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>7</sup> which identifies land that has potential for residential development in the Borough. The results of the SHLAA are used to demonstrate a rolling five-year housing land supply and to identify sites that are likely to come forward for residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy.



**CS9: Housing provision and distribution**

The Council will make provision for 4,964 net additional dwellings in the Borough between 2010 and 2027 in accordance with the following distribution:

	<b>Indicative number of dwellings*</b>	<b>Indicative density range**</b>
Woking Town Centre	2,500	In excess of 200dph
West Byfleet District Centre	170	50 – 100dph
Infill development in the Local Centres	250	30 – 60dph
Infill development in the rest of urban area	750	30 – 40dph
Moor Lane site, Westfield	440	30 – 50dph
Brookwood Farm, Brookwood	300	30 – 50dph
Green Belt (site(s) to be released after 2021/22)	550	30 – 50dph
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,964</b>	

\*rounded

\*\*densities are pro rata where part of a mixed use scheme.

The density ranges set out are indicative and will depend on the nature of the site. Density levels will be influenced by design with the aim to achieve the maximum level consistent with the design in order to make the most efficient use of land. Wherever possible, density should exceed 40 dwellings per hectare and will not be justified at less than 30 dwellings per hectare, unless there are significant constraints on the site or where higher densities cannot be integrated in to the existing urban form. Higher densities than these guidelines will be permitted in principle where they can be justified in terms of the sustainability of the location and where the character of an area would not be compromised.

Limited infill development will be permitted in the village of Mayford, as defined on the Proposals Map, in line with national policy set out in PPG2: Green Belts.

**Reasoned justification**

- 6.42 Through the SHLAA, the Council has been able to identify sufficient specific deliverable and developable sites in the urban area to meet the housing target for around the first 13 years of the Plan. In this regard, the Council can demonstrate that it can satisfy the Government's requirement to identify specific deliverable sites to meet 10 years housing supply and also provide some degree of certainty in the delivery of the housing requirement against any risk of certain sites not coming forward as expected in the first 10 years of the plan period. However, the Council is required to identify 15 years housing supply. It is considered that there is additional housing potential in Woking Town Centre that will arise in the latter part of the Plan period from sites that have not yet been specifically identified. This can contribute to the housing land supply in the last 5 years of the plan period. Woking Town Centre is therefore identified as one of the broad locations for long-term



residential development. This will be in accordance with the overall spatial approach. It will also help minimise the impact on important biodiversity and landscape features and offers the greatest scope to reduce the need to travel by private vehicle because of the proximity to existing services, jobs and public transport. Furthermore, it will help minimise the amount of land that may be needed to be released from the Green Belt to meet housing need.

- 6.43 In addition to the sites that will come forward in the Town Centre, there will still be the need to identify further sites in the Green Belt to meet both the national requirement for housing land supply and the nature of housing that is needed. The nature of the sites that are considered to be developable in the medium - long term are primarily in town centre locations that are likely only to be suitable for high density flatted developments. The implication of this is that the Council would not be able to achieve an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to meet local need and demand. To satisfy the above requirements, the Green Belt is also identified as a broad location for long term residential development. The specific location(s) of this release will be determined through the Site Allocations DPD. The future monitoring of housing supply will help determining how much land will be needed.
- 6.44 The locations and proportions of new dwellings listed in the policy are intended to be broad proportions that can be varied in relation to the availability of suitable land for development, so long as the basic relationships in the settlement hierarchy are not undermined.
- 6.45 New residential development within the urban area will be provided through redevelopment, change of use, conversion and refurbishment of existing properties or through infilling.
- 6.46 For the purpose of this policy 'infill' development is defined as the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage, or the small scale redevelopment of existing properties within such a frontage. Infill development will be permitted providing that the proposed development is at an appropriate scale in relation to the character of the surrounding area.
- 6.47 National policy states that there is no presumption that land which is previously developed is necessarily suitable for residential development, and defines back garden land as 'greenfield'. In making decisions on the appropriateness of development on back garden land, the Council will be mindful of this advice and will permit development where it meets the requirements of other policies in the Local Development Framework and the saved policies of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999.
- 6.48 Development proposals in the High Density Residential Areas as defined on the Proposals Map and as extended on Map 2, will be permitted at densities generally in excess of 70dph in order to make the most efficient use of land.
- 6.49 In accordance with the housing and previously developed land trajectory, as evidenced through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, the Council will expect that between 2010 and 2027 70% of new residential development will be on previously developed land.
- 6.50 In order to make efficient use of land for housing, the Council will encourage new residential development to be at appropriate densities. The density

ranges set out in the policy are not intended to be prescriptive, but a guide to inform development proposals.

- 6.51 Over recent years, the density of new residential development has significantly increased in Woking Borough. Whilst this has helped to make efficient use of land, it has led to growth in some types of housing, particularly apartments. It is therefore important to ensure that a balance is achieved between making efficient use of land and delivering the right type of housing to meet the needs of the whole community. The design of new housing is therefore of great importance to the delivery of housing. It is important that the densities sought do not affect the quality and character of an area and the general well-being of residents.
- 6.52 The Borough's Local and Neighbourhood Centres offer community facilities and local services and are within a reasonable distance of the town and district centres via public transport. Infill and other forms of residential development within these centres will be permitted within the boundaries as indicated on maps 1 and 4. These boundaries may be reviewed as part of the Site Allocations DPD.
- 6.53 Land at Brookwood Farm, Knaphill has been reserved for meeting the long-term housing needs of the Borough since the adoption of the previous Woking Borough Local Plan in 1993. Local evidence in the SHMA, SHLAA and housing trajectory now highlight the need to bring this site forward, particularly to meet the need for affordable housing. Land at Brookwood Farm is allocated for residential development in this Core Strategy. The site will deliver around 300 new dwellings in total, 50% of which will be affordable family housing. The site boundary is defined on the Proposals Map and indicated on Map 1 and in Appendix 2. A Development Brief will be prepared which will set out the detailed development requirements for the site.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.54 This policy will be delivered through working in partnership with developers and landowners through decisions on planning applications, bringing forward land allocations (designated in a Site Allocations DPD), supporting changes of use, redeveloping unsuitable employment sites and permitting taller buildings in appropriate locations.
- 6.55 The Council will monitor the supply of housing land to ensure that a five year supply of deliverable sites is maintained. Annual monitoring and updating of the SHLAA, housing and previously developed land trajectory through the Annual Monitoring Report will enable the Council to keep under review the supply of housing, and provide an early opportunity to consider options to ensure delivery, which may include the allocation of additional land for development or the use of Compulsory Purchase powers.
- 6.56 Supplementary guidance on density and design will be set out in the Design Standards SPD.

#### **Monitoring and review**

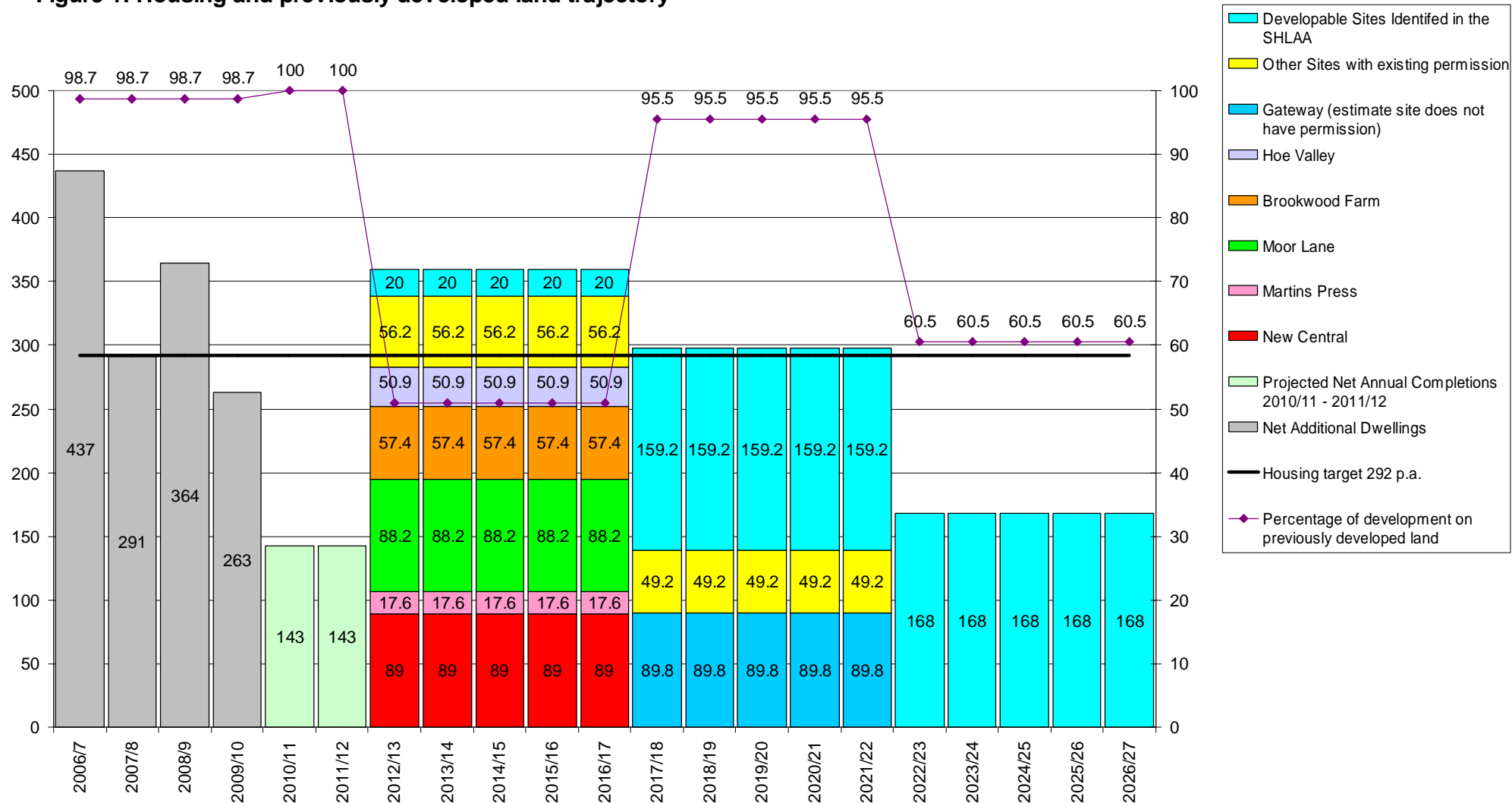
- 6.57 The policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR.
- The delivery of an annual average of 292 net additional dwellings every year to 2027.

- The supply of specific deliverable sites to ensure a rolling five year supply of housing land is maintained.
- 70% of net additional dwellings to be provided on previously developed land.
- Average densities achieved on site by location.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010 update.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2009 produced by Fordhams Research.
- Economic Viability Assessment 2010, produced by Adams Integra.
- Figure 1: Housing and previously developed land trajectory.

**Figure 1: Housing and previously developed land trajectory**





## Housing mix

- 6.58 Different households require different types and sizes of housing. It is important that the Council provide an appropriate choice and mix of housing across the Borough in order to create balanced and sustainable communities. 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. The Council will therefore plan for a mix of housing that will be appropriate to the needs of the community, providing a range of types, sizes and tenures including housing for the elderly, lifetime homes and other specialist housing needs.

### **CS10: Housing mix**

All residential proposals will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and to create sustainable and balanced communities.

On large sites (greater than 0.5ha), the Council will expect the following mix of dwelling sizes to be achieved, in line with local evidence contained in the SHMA:

- . 19% 1 bed
- . 28% 2 bed
- . 39% 3 bed
- . 14% 4+ bed.

The appropriate percentage of different housing types and sizes for each site will depend upon the established character and density of the neighbourhood and the viability of the scheme.

The Council will not permit the loss of family homes on sites capable of accommodating a mix of residential units unless there are overriding policy considerations justifying this loss.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.59 Research (SHMA, May 2009) has found that the overall need and demand for new homes in the Borough is as set out in the policy.
- 6.60 Lower proportions of family accommodation (2+ bedroomed units which may be houses or flats) will be acceptable in locations in the Borough such as the town and district centres that are suitable for higher density developments. Equally, lower proportions of smaller units will be acceptable in areas of existing low residential density where the character of the area will not be compromised.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.61 The Council will work with developers to ensure that an appropriate mix of units is delivered on sites through the planning application process.

- 6.62 The Council will also prepare a Site Allocations DPD that will specify the mix of dwellings that will be expected to be provided on specific sites.
- 6.63 Through the Annual Monitoring Report, the Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policy with reference to any changes in need as evidenced through updates to the SHMA. The Council will consider reviewing the mix set out in this policy should the monitoring process highlight any issues concerning delivery or any changes in local evidence.
- 6.64 The Council will provide more details on the application of this policy on housing mix in the Design Standards SPD.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.65 The policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR to enable the Council to effectively manage the mix of new residential developments:
- Size and type of new dwellings delivered by type and location.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2009 produced by Fordhams Research.
- Economic Viability Assessment 2010, produced by Adams Integra.

## Affordable Housing

- 6.66 Woking is a relatively affluent Borough and is placed within the top 20% of wealthiest local authorities nationally. However, affordability – or the ability for people to get on the property ladder - is a key issue. High average incomes and high employment rates conceal inequalities in the distribution of wealth within the Borough. There are small pockets of relative deprivation with Maybury and Sheerwater being the most deprived ward in Surrey and Goldsworth East recorded as the fifth most deprived area in Surrey.
- 6.67 Affordability is a measure of whether housing can be afforded by certain groups of households and is defined by the relationship between local incomes and the local general housing market. Therefore, the ability of a household to satisfy its own housing requirement is fundamentally a factor of the relationship between local house prices and household income. The high cost of home ownership in Woking has always presented an issue of affordability for many of the Borough's residents and leaves many people unable to afford market housing. This increases the demand for the provision of affordable housing. Indeed, the current SHMA shows that there is a need for an additional 499 new affordable homes in the Borough every year and in November 2009 there were 2,491 households with active applications on the Council's housing register.

### **CS11: Affordable housing**

Between 2010 and 2027 the overall target for affordable housing is 35% of all new homes, equivalent to 1,737 new affordable homes. If the overall housing provision target increases, the affordable target will increase proportionately.

All new residential development on previously developed (brownfield) land will be expected to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing in accordance with the following criteria.

- On sites providing 15 or more dwellings, or on sites of over 0.5ha (irrespective of the number of dwellings proposed), the Council will require 40% of dwellings to be affordable.
- On sites providing between 10 and 14 new dwellings, the Council will require 30% of dwellings to be affordable.
- On sites providing between five and nine new dwellings, the Council will require 20% of dwellings to be affordable or a financial contribution equivalent to the cost to the developer of providing 20% of the dwellings to be affordable on site, which will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- On sites providing fewer than five new dwellings, the Council will require a financial contribution equivalent to the cost to the developer of providing 10% of the dwellings to be affordable on site.

The mechanisms for calculating financial contributions in lieu of on site provision will be set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD.

The affordable housing threshold and targets will apply to all new homes that are being proposed.

All new residential development on greenfield land will be required to provide 50% of dwellings to be affordable, irrespective of the site size or number of dwellings proposed.

All new residential development on land in public ownership will be required to provide 50% of dwellings to be affordable, irrespective of the site size or number of dwellings proposed, subject to an assessment of the financial viability of the development of the site. Generally, the Council's preference will be to provide all the 50% affordable housing in-situ as part of the development. However, one of its over-riding objectives is to ensure an effective distribution of affordable housing across the Borough. In this regard, it is prepared to negotiate for a percentage of the 50% target to be provided off-site if that will ensure a more effective distribution of affordable housing across the Borough. The actual level of off-site provision will be determined on the merits of individual schemes that will come forward. As a guide, the Council will seek to ensure that 40% of the provision is secured in-situ.

Non residential developments which generate a need for housing will be required to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of new affordable housing which will be appropriate to the scale and kind of the development and subject to an assessment of financial viability.

The proportion of affordable housing to be provided by a particular site will take into account the following factors.

- The need to provide an appropriate tenure mix, as evidenced by the SHMA, of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate affordable housing.
- The requirement for significant provision of new affordable family homes.
- Constraints on the development of the site imposed by other planning objectives.
- The need to achieve a successful housing development in terms of the location and mix of affordable homes.
- The costs relating to the development; in particular the financial viability of developing the site (using an approved viability model).

The delivery of affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the following order of priority.

- On-site as part of the development and distributed across the development as much as is reasonable and practical to create a sustainable, balanced community.
- On an alternative site, only if provision would result in a more effective use of available resources or would meet an identified housing need, such as providing a better social mix and wider housing choice.
- A financial payment to be utilised in providing affordable housing on an alternative site.

Planning conditions and/or obligations will be used to ensure that the affordable housing will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled to alternative affordable housing provision.

Full details of how this policy will be implemented will be set out in an Affordable Housing Delivery SPD.



### Reasoned justification

- 6.68 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has found that 81% of households are likely to require market housing and 19% are likely to require affordable housing over the Plan period. The table below shows the likely profile of households requiring market and affordable housing over the Plan period.

**Table 4: Likely profile of households requiring market and affordable housing**

	Market housing	Affordable housing
Multi-person households (including families with children)	55%	25%
Couples	30%	26%
Single persons	15%	49%

- 6.69 New affordable homes in Woking Borough will be provided through the following mechanisms:
- A target of 1,737 units from new developments (equivalent to a headline target of 35% of all new homes to be affordable)
  - The activities of Woking Borough Homes which seeks to deliver around 50 affordable units every year available at intermediate rent through new build development on Council owned land and the purchase of existing properties. This provision is in addition to new affordable homes that are delivered through new developments.
- 6.70 The Council recognises that the level of provision set out above is insufficient in the context of local need which is estimated at around 499 new affordable homes a year, however, this is what can realistically be achieved without constraining the overall delivery of housing in the Borough.
- 6.71 This policy applies to all sites where new residential development is proposed, including mixed use schemes and proposals for sheltered and extra care accommodation where there is a net increase in the number of units on the site.

### Hierarchy of provision – alternative sites

- 6.72 The Council will expect new affordable housing to be provided on site in the first instance. If, in accordance with the policy, a case is advanced justifying provision on an alternative site, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to identify a suitable alternative site. To ensure no overall loss of affordable units, the alternative site will be expected to deliver those units foregone on the original site plus any affordable units that would be required should the alternative site in itself also trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing. In such circumstances the Council will require an amount of affordable housing commensurate with that which could have been secured had the site come forward in its own right in addition to the quantum of affordable housing to be provided to secure compliance with obligations for the original site.

### Contributions from non-residential developments

- 6.73 Commercial development can put added pressure on the housing market as new employees move to the Borough for work who may otherwise not have done so. Many commercial developments employ a wide range of employees and inevitably some of these will be on low incomes and in

housing need. The Council will require proposals for non-residential development which generates needs for additional housing to make an appropriate contribution to affordable provision, where market pressures are especially strong and the need for affordable housing is acute. Over the Plan period, there will be significant new commercial development in the Borough, particularly in the town centre, which will put added pressure on the local housing market and the need for affordable housing. Where a need for affordable housing is directly related to a commercial development, the Council will seek a financial or other contribution appropriate to the scale and kind of the development. Full details will be set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD.

#### Tenure split

- 6.74 The SHMA identifies that there is a need for 70% of new affordable dwellings to be in social rented tenure and 30% at intermediate level (including shared ownership). The Council will therefore expect that new affordable dwellings should be delivered in accordance with this tenure split. Woking Borough Homes currently provides around 50 new affordable dwellings per annum, primarily through the purchase of street properties, which are at an intermediate rent. These dwellings are provided in addition to the affordable dwellings secured through the planning system. The provision of additional intermediate level units through Woking Borough Homes will, however, have an effect on local needs and the Council will keep under regular review the impact of the activities of Woking Borough Homes.

#### Affordable housing mix

- 6.75 Policy CS10: Housing mix seeks to secure a sustainable range of dwellings in order to create balanced communities in the Borough. The dwelling mix required by the policy is based on the evidence provided by the current SHMA for all new housing. The SHMA also identifies, however, that there is a significant need for new affordable family (2+ bedroom) homes (92% of need is for 2+ bedroomed social rented units and 54% of need is for 2+ bedroomed intermediate units). The Council will therefore require that a higher proportion of new affordable homes should be family homes.

#### Viability

- 6.76 In exceptional circumstances, where the provision of affordable housing in accordance with this policy is not economically viable, the Council will expect the submission of financial appraisal information alongside the planning application. Applicants will be expected to pay for an independent review of the information submitted. If the Council is satisfied that affordable housing cannot be provided in accordance with this policy, it will seek to negotiate alternative provision. Further details on this matter will be set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD.

#### Exceptional circumstances

- 6.77 On the basis of the results of the SHMA and the SHLAA, it is clear that the Council will not be able to deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet the level of identified need. The Council will therefore explore opportunities to deliver affordable housing from other sources of sites. On a limited number of occasions, the Council has approved applications for residential development which are exceptions to the adopted policies. On any future exception sites the Council will expect a substantially higher percentage of affordable housing as the primary benefit to balance the policy objection. The details will be determined on a site-by-site basis through negotiation. The

proportion of affordable housing should not prejudice the provision of other planning elements necessary and reasonably related to the scheme. This will not override the objective of achieving sustainable development in the Borough.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.78 This policy will be delivered through working in partnership with developers, landowners, Registered Social Landlords and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to bring sites forward to ensure maximum affordable housing provision.
- 6.79 Through the Annual Monitoring Report the Council will keep under review the affordable housing trajectory, and monitor delivery against target provision. Monitoring provision in this way will enable the Council to react at an early stage to any problems with delivery and the consideration of actions which may include the allocation of additional land to meet affordable housing needs or the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers, in accordance with the Implementation and Delivery Plan.
- 6.80 Financial contributions collected by the Council in lieu of on site provision will be used to fund new affordable homes through the following mechanisms:
- Woking Borough Homes.
  - The provision of grant funding to Registered Social Landlords.
  - The provision of grant funding directly to a developer.
- 6.81 The Council will prepare and keep under review an Affordable Housing Delivery SPD which will provide detailed information regarding the implementation and delivery of this policy. Specifically, the SPD will include:
- A formula for calculating financial contributions in lieu of on site provision.
  - Details of the size and type of units that the Council will expect to be delivered on site.
  - Details of the distribution of affordable housing across developments (e.g. approach to 'pepper potting' and 'clustering').
  - The Council's approach to rounding.
  - Details of any exceptional circumstances.
  - Advice on the open book approach to viability assessments.
  - Details on the requirement for affordable units to be secured in affordable tenure in perpetuity through the use of section 106 agreements.
  - Details of the Council's preferred RSL partners.
  - Details of design standards for new affordable homes.
- 6.82 The Council will keep under review the SHMA to ensure that provision meets local needs. Should local evidence of need and demand through the SHMA change, the Council will consider the review of this policy and/ or the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD as appropriate.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.83 The policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR to enable the Council to effectively manage affordable housing delivery:
- Number of net additional affordable dwellings provided.
  - Size, type and tenure of net additional affordable dwellings provided.
  - Level of commuted payments collected by the Council.

**Key evidence base**

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2009 produced by Fordhams Research.
- Economic Viability Assessment 2010, produced by Adams Integra.



## Older people and vulnerable groups

- 6.84 National policy requires local authorities to meet the specific accommodation needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. Following the national trend, the Borough is forecast to see growth in the proportion of older people and older person households (around 5,000 more people aged 65+ are forecast to live in Woking Borough by 2026). It is important that the Council provides increased housing choices in terms of specialist accommodation, and appropriate dwellings that are suitably located close to public transport and other key local services. In addition, offering attractive alternative housing choices for older people and other vulnerable groups will assist the Council in freeing-up family sized homes that are currently under occupied.
- 6.85 The 'Supporting People' programme is a Government scheme that aims to support people in their own homes so that they can lead more independent lives. In terms of vulnerable groups, the programme covers a number of groups including people who are older, ex-offenders, at risk from domestic violence, homeless, mentally and physically disabled, have alcohol and drug problems, or are young people at risk. The main objective of this programme is to give people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence. This includes providing high quality, cost effective, accessible housing and related support services that meet identified need. This is likely to result in the need to develop specific types of accommodation, and address the requirements of wheelchair users, for example.

### **CS12: Older people and vulnerable groups**

The Council will support the development of specialist accommodation for older people and vulnerable groups in suitable locations. The level of need will be that reflected in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This will include the provision of new schemes and remodelling of older, poorer quality sheltered housing which is no longer fit for purpose.

Existing specialist accommodation will be protected unless it can be demonstrated that there is insufficient need/ demand for that type of accommodation.

New specialist accommodation should be of high quality design, including generous space standards and generous amenity space. At least 50% of schemes should have two bedrooms. Bed-sit development will be discouraged.

New specialist accommodation should incorporate "Lifetime Homes" standards and be capable of being readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly. A percentage of new specialist accommodation will be required to be fully wheelchair accessible.

The Council will work with partners in consultation with the community to ensure access to key local services such as public transport and community facilities.

The Council will work with partners to seek to provide the necessary infrastructure to support specialist accommodation, including homes for the elderly. The Council will seek to develop the role of the community centres and where feasible seek to provide new schemes such as community hubs which provide leisure, recreation, and education and community activities for older people and vulnerable groups.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.86 There are certain types of residential accommodation which cater for sectors of the community with specific needs. These are often related to the more vulnerable members of society, or those who would benefit from a higher level of on-site support. This need can be divided in to two broad groupings - the growing elderly population, and those who may need specialist social support. The isolation of such groups is not conducive to social inclusion, balanced communities and sustainable development. It is therefore important for these types of development to be located in accessible areas, close to main facilities and public transport routes to best cater for residents, staff and visitors, and promote social inclusion. The Council acknowledges that land values within the urban area can make securing sites for such developments difficult in terms of viability and availability. The Council will therefore allocate specific sites through the Site Allocations DPD to assist in bringing suitable sites forward to meet need.
- 6.87 Evidence from the SHMA shows that over three-quarters of older person only households are owner-occupiers and just over 70% of these households do not have a mortgage. This evidence suggests that there is significant potential for equity release schemes or leasehold accommodation that would meet the needs of older people and would free up larger units for younger families.
- 6.88 A proportion of two bedroomed units for older people will be required as this takes in to account residents' future needs. By ensuring there are a number of larger properties it will take into account the ongoing needs of older people who may require an additional bedroom for a live-in carer or for a family member to stay. This will ensure that older people are able to remain living independently for longer with additional support as a positive alternative to residential care. In providing two bedroomed units, it will also provide an additional incentive to encourage older people who are under-occupying family sized social housing units.
- 6.89 These specialist types of accommodation have specific design requirements, and must for example include generous amenity and space standards. The Council will therefore encourage all new homes to be designed to ensure that they can be easily modified to meet future housing needs, and will require applicants to demonstrate in their design and access statements how design has taken these considerations in to account. The Council will therefore encourage new developments to incorporate the principles of "Lifetime Homes". Further guidance on design which takes in to account "Lifetime Homes" standards and wheelchair accessibility standards will be set out in the Quality Design Standards SPD. The Council has demonstrated through a real example at Brookwood Farm that high standards of sustainable construction can be achieved.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.90 This policy will be delivered through partnership working, particularly through the Woking Partnership and with Registered Social Landlords, to consider options to address the needs of the elderly population and other vulnerable groups. This will include consideration of the potential allocation of sites in the Site Allocations DPD and exploring opportunities for shared facilities, such as community hubs.

- 6.91 The needs of the elderly population and vulnerable groups will be kept under review through updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Extra Care Strategy.
- 6.92 Should the monitoring indicators (below) identify that demand outstrips supply; the Council may review the policy and seek to allocate additional sites to meet need.
- 6.93 Details of design considerations for specialist accommodation will be set out in the Quality Design Standards SPD.

**Monitoring and review**

- 6.94 This policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR to enable the Council to effectively manage the availability of sites in order to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply.
- The number of nursing home bed spaces against need.
  - The amount of private sheltered housing for sale against need.
  - The amount of affordable sheltered housing for social rent against need.
  - The number of extra care housing spaces against need.

**Key evidence base**

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), 2009 produced by Fordhams Research.

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 6.95 The Council is committed to providing appropriate housing to meet the needs of the whole community. This includes the provision of sufficient suitable sites for the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community which is at an affordable price.
- 6.96 Woking currently has one publicly owned Gypsy and Traveller site at the Hatchington, Worplesdon which has 16 pitches. There are also two privately owned sites in the Borough (Five Acres, Brookwood – 10 pitches and Ten Acre Farm, Mayford – three pitches). There are currently no pitches for Travelling Showpeople in the Borough.
- 6.97 The North Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identified that there is a need to provide an additional 10 pitches in the Borough between 2006 and 2016. By September 2010, seven of these pitches had already been provided through an extension of the Brookwood site, and there is a recent unimplemented permission for an additional three pitches on that site, meaning that the Council has been successful in meeting the short-term need for additional pitches in the Borough.
- 6.98 In addition, there is a need for one pitch to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople over the Plan period.

### **CS13: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

The Council will make provision for three additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough between 2010 and 2016\* and provision for an additional 10 pitches between 2017 and 2027.

Provision will also be made for one pitch suitable for the needs of Travelling Showpeople by 2027.

Sites to meet this need will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD. A sequential approach will be taken in identifying suitable sites for allocation, with sites in the urban area being considered before those in the Green Belt. Where no sites are available in the urban area, priority will be given to sites on the edge of the urban area that benefit from good access to jobs, shops and other services. A demonstrated lack of any deliverable sites in the urban area would provide very special circumstances necessary to allocate sites in the Green Belt. Any site considered for allocation must be deliverable (including affordable to its intended occupiers) so as to ensure that needs are met.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining the allocation of land for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and any planning applications for non allocated sites.

- The site should have safe vehicular access from the highway and have adequate parking provision and turning areas.
- The site should have adequate amenity for its intended occupiers, including space for related business activities.
- The site should not adversely impact the visual amenity and character of the area or on the amenities of neighbouring land uses.
- The site should have adequate infrastructure and on-site utilities to service the number of pitches proposed.



- The site should have safe and convenient access to schools and other local facilities.

Existing authorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers will be safeguarded from development that would preclude the continued occupation by these groups, unless the site is no longer required to meet identified need.

\*Note that there is an existing unimplemented permission for 3 pitches. The Council will monitor whether this permission is implemented.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.99 In accordance with PPG2: Green Belts and Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007, the Council will take a sequential approach to the identification of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the Site Allocations DPD and when assessing individual planning applications. Sites within the urban area will therefore be explored before sites within the Green Belt are considered. Where no sites within the urban area can be identified, priority will be given to sites located on the edge of the urban area where there is good accessibility to key local services. Whilst the Council recognises that Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should be provided first within settlements, it recognises that in reality this is very difficult to achieve. There are unlikely to be appropriate sites within the built-up areas, and individuals and groups will not normally be able to compete in the market for sites where residential development would be acceptable. As such, an exceptions approach to provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is adopted, both for considering planning applications and for any necessary site allocations. The policy approach applies to transit sites, permanent sites and sites for Travelling Showpeople.
- 6.100 Based on evidence contained in the GTAA, the Council will make provision for 3 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2016. The Council will make the assumption that, based on the GTAA, the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation over the period 2017 – 2027 will be of a similar quantity and will therefore make provision for an additional 10 pitches in the Borough during that period. The GTAA will be updated in 2011 and the Council will review this policy pending the outcome of the updated assessment.
- 6.101 Due to the nature of their work, pitches for Travelling Showpeople are likely to include some land for the storage and maintenance of equipment. The Council will consider imposing conditions limiting the proportion of a pitch which may be covered by equipment or the hours during which equipment may be tested.
- 6.102 The layout of proposed Gypsy and Travellers sites/ pitches should comply with the design principles set out by Government practice guidance which is currently in the form of 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller sites' (May 2008). The layout of sites for Travelling Showpeople should comply with the latest Government Guidance available, and also take into consideration the design recommendations from the Showmen's Guild.
- 6.103 The tenure of sites (i.e. whether they will be private or public sites) will be considered through the Site Allocations DPD, taking into consideration the

information within the North Surrey GTAA and any future updates to that study, the wishes expressed by the Travelling community within the Borough, and the sources of finance available.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.104 This policy will be delivered through working in partnership with the Travelling community to allocate sites in the Site Allocations DPD, to progress applications through the planning system and to explore available Government grants to assist in the delivery of sites.
- 6.105 The needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community will be kept under review through a refresh of the GTAA.
- 6.106 Should the monitoring indicators (below) indicate that demand outstrips supply; the Council may review the policy and seek to allocate additional sites to meet need.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.107 This policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR to enable the Council to effectively manage the availability of sites in order to ensure that demand does not significantly outstrip supply:
- The delivery of three additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation between 2010 and 2016.
  - The delivery of 10 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation between 2017 and 2027.
  - The delivery of one pitch for Travelling Showpeople by 2027.
  - The level of need identified in the GTAA measured against supply.
  - The number of unauthorised or illegal encampments or developments and enforcement actions carried out.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010 update.
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), 2006, produced by Anglia Ruskin University.

## Sustainable economic development

- 6.108 It is important to ensure that there is an appropriate quantity and range of employment land in the Borough to enable the local economy to function efficiently and contribute to the region's long-term competitiveness.
- 6.109 PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth requires councils to plan positively to support the needs of businesses and encourage a flexible approach to economic development capable of accommodating growth in new sectors and changes in economic circumstances.
- 6.110 The majority of existing employment floorspace in the Borough is provided in Woking Town Centre, West Byfleet District Centre and the employment areas<sup>8</sup>. Smaller scale office and industrial space is provided in the local centres, and a number of employment sites exist within the Green Belt, mainly catering for industrial uses including a number of bad neighbour uses<sup>9</sup>. In addition to these sites, there are a scattering of small employment sites located within the urban area.



**CS14: Sustainable economic development**

To accommodate the predicted future growth in employment floorspace<sup>10</sup> required for Woking's economy to grow, ensure sustainable employment development patterns and allow for flexibility to cater for the changing needs of the economy the Council will take the following steps:

- Safeguard existing employment floorspace within Woking Town Centre<sup>11</sup>, West Byfleet District Centre and the employment areas and support redevelopment of sites to cater for modern business needs.
- Safeguard existing employment floorspace within the local centres<sup>12</sup> except where it can be demonstrated that there is no demand for B class usage of the site.
- Retain the Broadoaks site in West Byfleet as a high quality business park.
- Support additional office development as part of mixed use schemes within Woking Town Centre to enhance its role as a regionally important service centre.
- Encourage the redevelopment of the Butts Rd/Poole Rd employment area for mixed use development including office space.
- Encourage the redevelopment of offices within the Forsyth Road employment area for mixed B use.
- Support small and medium sized enterprise (SME) formation and development by encouraging a range of types and sizes of premises including provision for incubator units, managed workspace and serviced office accommodation.

The redevelopment of employment sites elsewhere for alternative uses will be permitted where the existing use of the site causes harm to amenity, or it can be demonstrated that the location is unsuitable for the needs of modern business.

In order to promote smart growth and business competitiveness, the Council will encourage the provision of:

- Improved ICT infrastructure in refurbished and redeveloped sites.
- Workspace and ICT infrastructure as an integral part of residential development, where appropriate to support home working.
- Childcare facilities close to places of employment.

**Reasoned justification**

6.111 The Employment Land Review<sup>13</sup> (ELR) assessed the likely demand for employment floorspace over the plan period. The study predicts that the growth in Woking's economy will result in an additional requirement for approximately 67,000sq.m of offices and 34,000sq.m of warehousing space, with a slight decline in demand for industrial space (-5,000sq.m). However, after adjustments to account for vacancy, the development pipeline and the release of unsuitable sites, the ELR recommends a residual requirement of approximately 28,000sq.m of offices and 20,000sq.m of warehousing with a loss of 31,000sq.m of industrial space. A five-yearly review of the ELR will enable any unforeseen changes in the local economy to be monitored so that policies can be reviewed where absolutely necessary to reflect changing circumstances.

6.112 The need for further employment floorspace will not necessitate the allocation of additional Greenfield land for employment use, as future office



development can be accommodated within Woking Town Centre and to a limited degree West Byfleet District Centre. Office floorspace will also be encouraged in the Butts Road/Poole Road employment area as part of higher density mixed use development, as the area straddles the town centre boundary. The existing employment areas are capable of accommodating future requirements for industrial/warehousing space, and sufficient land exists to accommodate potential growth in high technology manufacturing which may result from the development of the McLaren Production Centre and activities of other high tech manufacturing companies in the Borough.

- 6.113 The need to renew and refurbish employment floorspace, especially office space in Woking Town Centre, is imperative if the Borough is to retain existing occupiers and compete effectively for new occupiers looking to locate in the area. The overall vacancy rate of employment floorspace recorded in the Borough in 2009 was 19%. However, this figure masks variations in vacancy between different employment uses and locations. Vacancy rates are highest for office accommodation and particularly high in a number of office developments located in certain employment areas. The ELR identified part of the Forsyth Road employment area, currently occupied by offices, as suitable for redevelopment to alternative employment uses including industrial/warehousing or mixed<sup>14</sup> employment uses.
- 6.114 The local centres listed below provide varying quantities of employment floor space which collectively serve a useful purpose in the context of the local micro economies and assist in creating a mix of uses within the centres. To prevent the loss of such employment floorspace, applications for the change of use of employment premises will only be permitted where they are currently vacant, detailed evidence is provided to show that the premises have been actively marketed for a period of at least 12 months without success, and the proposed use accords with other policies in the Core Strategy. For employment uses occupying self contained ground floor premises a change of use to town centre uses (as defined in PPS4: Planning for sustainable economic growth) will be permitted where the premises is currently vacant and the proposed use accords with the other policies in the Core Strategy. Where applications are put forward for the redevelopment of employment sites to alternative uses, evidence will be required to show that there is a lack of demand in the local centre for employment use.
- 6.115 Local centres addressed by this policy:
- . Byfleet.
  - . Goldsworth Park.<sup>15</sup>
  - . Horsell.
  - . Knaphill.
  - . Sheerwater.
  - . St Johns.
- 6.116 The Broadoaks site in West Byfleet is identified as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. The site has planning permission as a high quality office park set within landscaped grounds. The retention of this site for quality office premises is important as no other similar sites are available within the Borough. However, the use of the site for high tech research and development facilities may also be appropriate where this would not impact on the amenity of office occupiers.

6.117 The employment areas include the following:

- . Byfleet Industrial Estate<sup>16</sup>.
- . Camphill Industrial Estate.
- . Forsyth Road Industrial Estate.
- . Goldsworth Road Industrial Estate.
- . Goldsworth Park Trading Estate.
- . Monument Way East Industrial Estate (includes Woking Business Park).
- . Monument Way West Industrial Estate.
- . Old Woking Industrial Estate.
- . Poole Road/Butts Road.
- . Robin Hood Works.<sup>17</sup>
- . The Lansbury Estate.

The above have been indicated on Map 1 and will be illustrated on the Proposals Map.

#### **Delivery strategy**

6.118 The Council will work with its Partners/Local Business Organisations to support sustainable economic growth in the Borough. Implementation of this policy will be via the development management process. Provision of office space in Woking Town Centre will be guided by the Area Action Plan.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- . Amount and location of permitted, under construction and completed B1 (a, b ,c), B2 and B8 floorspace in the Borough.
- . Net change in employment floorspace in the Borough.
- . Amount of employment floorspace lost to non-employment uses (permitted, under construction and completed).

#### **Key evidence base**

- . Employment Land Review (incorporates Employment Position Paper (January 2010), and Market Appraisal (April 2010) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton.

## Infrastructure delivery

- 6.119 Fundamental to delivering the spatial strategy is ensuring that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure is put in place to support the level of growth proposed and to serve the changes in the Borough's demographic make-up that is expected to take place over the Plan period.
- 6.120 The definition of infrastructure is wide and includes a range of services and facilities provided by both public and private bodies. For the purpose of the Core Strategy, the definition of infrastructure is that set out in the box below.

### Definition of infrastructure

**Transport** airports, ports, road network, cycling and walking infrastructure, rail network

**Housing** affordable housing

**Education** further and higher education, secondary and primary education, nursery schools

**Health** acute care and general hospitals, mental hospitals, health centres/primary care trusts, ambulance services

**Social Infrastructure** supported accommodation, social and community facilities, sports centres, open spaces, parks and play space

**Public Services** waste management and disposal, libraries, cemeteries, emergency services (police, fire, ambulance), places of worship, prisons, drug treatment centres

**Utility Services** gas supply, electricity supply, heat supply, water supply, waste water treatment, telecommunications infrastructure

**Flood Defences**

**Green Infrastructure** parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural urban, green corridors, outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace, provision for children and teenagers, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas, river and canal corridors, green roofs and walls.



**CS15: Infrastructure delivery**

The Council will work in partnership with infrastructure service providers and developers to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support development is provided in a timely manner to meet the needs of the community.

The Council will:

- Continue to work in partnership with the Infrastructure Sub Group of the Woking Partnership to monitor and co-ordinate infrastructure provision.
- Annually review the infrastructure schedule which forms part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will be reported to the Woking Partnership.
- Collect financial contributions from developers to support improvements to infrastructure services and facilities that are required as a result of development.
- Ensure that new developments provide the necessary infrastructure on site required for the development to be acceptable.

In order to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the collection of developer contributions, the Council will introduce a tariff system. The Council will take into account current government guidance and the views of the public when developing the tariff.

Prior to the adoption of a tariff based system and subject to viability, the Council will expect development to contribute to infrastructure provision, which will be assessed on a case by case basis through planning obligations. All major development proposals will be expected to be accompanied by a financial viability assessment in order to inform the level of infrastructure contribution that a development can sustain.

The Council will resist the loss of existing infrastructure services and facilities unless a suitable alternative is provided for or it can be demonstrated that they are no longer needed to meet the needs of the community. This will require the developer to provide evidence that consultation with an appropriate range of service providers and the community has taken place.

The Council will safeguard land for future infrastructure provision through the Site Allocations DPD if necessary.

**Reasoned justification**

- 6.121 Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning and aims to create sustainable communities by ensuring that development policies are integrated with other policies and programmes that influence the nature and function of places. The provision of infrastructure is therefore central to supporting the spatial vision and spatial strategy set out in this document. Spatial planning is not limited to the activities of the Council. Fundamental to the delivery of the spatial strategy is the Council's ability to work with partners to deliver the spatial vision and in particular, to secure infrastructure provision. To assist this, the Council has established an Infrastructure Sub Group (ISG) which reports regularly to the Woking Partnership. The ISG is tasked with a role of oversight of the infrastructure planning process, and specifically for preparing and monitoring the progress of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 6.122 The Core Strategy will be supported by an IDP that sets out the capacity of existing infrastructure, the impact of development on that infrastructure, and the likely funding sources available to meet future needs. The IDP will also



give an indication of where opportunities may be available to co-ordinate provision through co-location of services, for example. The IDP will include a schedule of infrastructure that is considered necessary to support the spatial strategy.

- 6.123 The IDP will form the evidence base for a new local tariff based system which will ensure that all new development contributes to the provision of new infrastructure.
- 6.124 The Council's strategy is to optimise use of existing infrastructure, to reduce demand (for example, by managing down travel demand) and to seek new infrastructure where required. The loss of existing facilities will therefore be resisted and land will be safeguarded for the provision of future infrastructure requirements. The Council will ensure a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure management and investment through partnership working with the Woking Partnership and key infrastructure service providers.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.125 The Council will work with partners and key infrastructure service providers to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure provision in the Borough. Specifically, the Council will continue to play a central role in the activities of the ISG and the Surrey wide Key Infrastructure Service Providers Group.
- 6.126 The Council views the IDP as a 'living' document that will be updated bi-annually to ensure that it is as robust and up to date as possible, taking in to account changes in need, capacity and the availability of funding sources in order that the Council and partners can respond to any changes to priorities in a timely and co-ordinated manner.
- 6.127 It is the Council's intention to introduce a tariff based system in order to secure contributions from new development to pay for essential infrastructure. The Council will monitor any changes in national policy and legislation and will review its options for securing developer contributions in consultation with key partners, and in particular the Infrastructure Sub Group of the Woking Partnership when necessary.
- 6.128 The Council is mindful that development proposals need to be economically viable. The Council will therefore negotiate with applicants who state that viability is the reason for non-compliance with the requirements for developer contributions. Where this is the case, financial evidence must be submitted with the planning application.
- 6.129 In order to ensure that land is available for the provision of additional infrastructure, the Council may consider safeguarding land through the Site Allocations DPD. In addition, the Council may consider using its Compulsory Purchase Order powers as set out in the Implementation and Delivery Plan.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.130 Progress towards achieving the strategic objective through Policy CS15 will be measured against the following indicators and targets:
- . Level of developer contributions collected and spent.
  - . Delivery of infrastructure items listed in the infrastructure schedule.

### Infrastructure schedule

- 6.131 The Council is currently preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will set out the key infrastructure items that will be necessary to support the level of development proposed in this Plan. When the Core Strategy is submitted to the Government for Examination, it will include a schedule of this infrastructure with details regarding its delivery.

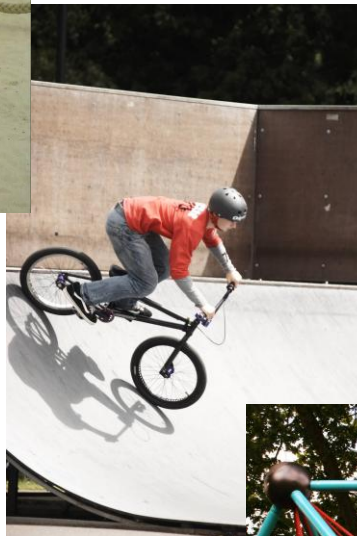
#### Key evidence base

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2009 and 2010
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2010 (forthcoming)
- Surrey Infrastructure Capacity Study, 2009



## Open space, green infrastructure, sport and recreation

- 6.132 Open space, green infrastructure, sports and recreation areas are highly valued by local people and play a key role in the Borough's landscape setting and local identity, whilst also providing habitats for wildlife, and land for agriculture and forestry.
- 6.133 Green infrastructure relates to the active planning and management of sub-regional networks of multi-functional open space. The following can form part of green infrastructure networks:
- Parks and gardens
  - Natural and semi-natural greenspaces
  - Green corridors
  - Outdoor sports facilities
  - Amenity greenspace
  - Provision for children and teenagers
  - Allotments, community gardens and urban farms
  - Cemeteries and churchyards
  - Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
  - River and canal corridors
  - Green roofs and walls.



**CS16: Open space, green infrastructure, sport and recreation**

All proposals for new residential developments (other than replacement dwellings) will be required to contribute towards the provision of the following:

- Children's play areas and outdoor recreational facilities for teenagers.
- Outdoor sports facilities.

For sites less than 10 units, a contribution will be sought through the application of a tariff per unit. For sites of 10 units or more the requirements will be provided either on site or through the application of a tariff per unit or both methods.

Development involving the loss of public open space will not be permitted unless: Alternative and equivalent provision is made available in the vicinity, or the development is directly related to the enhancement of the open space.

There will be a presumption against any development that involves the loss of a sport, recreation or play facility except where it can be demonstrated that there is currently an excess of provision, or where alternative facilities of equal or better quality will be provided as part of the development.

Development involving the loss of open space to which the general public do not have a right of access, such as school playing fields or allotments, will only be permitted if it passes the tests in PPG17: Open space, sport and recreation (or any guidance that supersedes this).

Planning applications for development that would create additional pressures on the green infrastructure network should incorporate proposals to improve the network sufficient to address these pressures.

Development will not normally be permitted which would have a detrimental impact upon the landscape quality, ecological value or water quality of the following corridors. The Environment Agency require an undeveloped buffer zones alongside watercourses to help protect them (8 metres for main rivers and 5 metres for ordinary watercourses). These include the:

- Valley of the Wey and Wey Navigation
- Hoe Valley
- Basingstoke Canal
- Bourne Stream.

New residential units within five km of an SPA will be required to provide or contribute to the provision and improvement of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) which is a component of Green Infrastructure. This land will be used to mitigate the impact and effect of residential development on the SPA, by providing informal recreation land across Woking Borough.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.134 In line with the requirements of PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, an audit of open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough has been carried out and updated in 2008. The study found there is a deficit of these facilities in the Borough. Therefore, it is appropriate to require new residential development, which results in a net increase in units to contribute to the provision of children's play areas, outdoor recreational facilities for teenagers and outdoor sport facilities.
- 6.135 Improved play provision for children and young people will be made to serve local areas where there is an identified shortfall, or to meet increased demands as a result of new development.
- 6.136 Outdoor sports facilities will be provided to meet identified demands and shortfall as highlighted in the Open Spaces, Sport and Recreational Facilities Audit.
- 6.137 Where provision is provided on site, the current National Playing Field Association standards should be applied.
- 6.138 The Council's current priorities for addressing shortfalls in children's play areas are parts of:
- Barnsbury.
  - Brookwood.
  - Byfleet (north of Parvis Road).
  - Goldsworth Park (St John's Road area).
  - Maybury (area around Windsor Way).
  - Pyrford Village.
- 6.139 A need for additional multi-use games areas suitable for teenagers has been identified in many parts of the Borough. The Green Spaces Development Plan proposes at least one additional skateboard/BMX park.
- 6.140 The Council recognises that river and canal corridors are of great importance for water resources, water quality, nature conservation, recreation and landscape value. Rivers and canals are also an important source of open space, and form valuable links between habitats.
- 6.141 Natural England has demonstrated that the new population arising from housing developments at a distance of up to 5km away from the SPA can cause significant disturbance to the breeding success of rare bird populations. This is because of the impacts recreational activities of residents, particularly walking, and walking with dogs. As a result, all housing developments within 5km of the SPA will now be subject to stringent tests and impact assessments. SANGS attracts informal recreation users, such as dog walkers, and walkers away from Special Protection Areas. SANGS can be new open space or the improvement of existing open space to increase its capacity for informal recreation, at a minimum standard of 8 hectares per 1,000 population. SANGS land is to be provided and maintained in perpetuity in line with the quality and quantity standards advocated by Natural England – the Government's advisor on these matters. Full information about the Boroughs Special Protection Areas and the SANGS is set out in the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy 2010-15.



### Delivery strategy

- 6.142 Through the protection of existing facilities to meet current and future need and demand.
- 6.143 This will be achieved through the Development Management process and where appropriate developer contributions.
- 6.144 By working in partnership with local community groups, partner organisations and providers of open space, sports facilities and green infrastructure in the Borough and in areas adjoining the Borough.
- 6.145 Regarding green infrastructure, quantitative improvements will be achieved through the incorporation in development proposals of extensions to the network. Qualitative improvements could include financial contributions to attain enhanced management. If this is not possible, there may be circumstances where such development may be acceptable if it includes full compensatory measures.
- 6.146 SANGS will be delivered by the implementation of policy CS7: Biodiversity, International, National, Regional and Local Nature Designations and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy 2010 – 2015.

### Monitoring and review

- 6.147 Net change (positive or negative) in the amount of green infrastructure, public open space and built sports facilities.

#### Key evidence base

- Green Spaces Development Plan, 2005
- Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities Audit, updated 2008
- Playing Pitch Strategy, 2006
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy 2010-15



## Transport and accessibility

- 6.148 A well connected and integrated transport network supports the sustainable functioning and development of the Borough. Woking Rail Station is a key hub for the South East, providing direct rail access to London, the South East, the South West and possibly Heathrow Airport<sup>18</sup>. Woking Rail Station currently has a direct Railair coach service to Heathrow Airport running every 30 minutes. Investment in cycling has significantly increased since Woking's designation as a Cycle Town in 2008, providing attractive alternatives to the car. There is significant scope to influence a shift in the mode of travel from car-based journeys to public transport and cycling.
- 6.149 Surrey County Council is the Transportation Authority for the Borough. Woking Borough Council will work in partnership with Surrey County Council to achieve the aims and objectives of the Surrey Local Transport Plan (LTP) which sets out the transport strategy for Surrey. The current LTP objectives tackle congestion, accessibility, safety, the environment and the condition of the transport network.
- 6.150 The majority of trips taken in the Borough are by car, resulting in congestion, particularly at peak times. PPG13: Transport requires the Council to promote sustainable transport choices, manage the location of development and provide an integrated transport network to influence a shift to non-car modes.
- 6.151 Key to the achievement of the spatial vision is an integrated transport system that provides easy access to jobs, community facilities and recreation, by all modes; in particular sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. A successful transport system offers an effective interchange between modes and local, regional and national destinations and complements the economic role of the Borough as a regional focus for infrastructure, in particular the regeneration of the town centre. Woking Rail Station plays a pivotal role in this.



**CS17: Transport and accessibility**

The Council is committed to developing a well integrated community connected by a sustainable transport system which connects people to jobs, services and community facilities, this will be achieved by taking the following steps:

- Joint working with key stakeholders through the Transport for Woking Partnership to ensure that the principle objectives and overall strategy of the Surrey Local Transport Plan is met.
- Locating most new development in the main urban areas, served by a range of sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling to minimise the need to and distance travelled.
- Ensuring development proposals provide appropriate infrastructure measures to mitigate the adverse effects of development traffic and other environmental and safety impacts (direct or cumulative). Transport Assessments will be required for development proposals, where relevant, to fully assess the impacts of development and identify appropriate mitigation measures. Developer contributions<sup>19</sup> will be secured to implement transport mitigation schemes.
- Requiring development proposals that generate significant traffic to be accompanied by a travel plan, clearly setting out how the travel needs of occupiers and visitors will be managed in a sustainable manner.
- Supporting proposals that deliver improvements and increased accessibility to cycle, pedestrian and public transport networks and interchange facilities. In particular, proposals to improve easy access between Woking Rail Station and the town centre will be encouraged.
- Implementing maximum car parking standards for all types of non-residential development, including consideration of zero parking in Woking Town Centre, providing it does not create new or exacerbate existing on-street car parking problems. Minimum standards will be set for residential development. However, in applying these standards, the Council will seek to ensure that this will not undermine the overall sustainable objectives of the Core Strategy, including the effects on highway safety. If necessary, the Council will consider managing the demand and supply of parking in order to control congestion.
- Working with key stakeholders to support the delivery of the Heathrow Airtrack scheme to provide direct rail access to Heathrow Airport from Woking rail station.

**Reasoned justification**

- 6.152 The main urban centres offer a wide range of retail, employment and community services. It is in these areas where public transport interchanges and walking and cycling networks are readily available. By concentrating development in the main urban centres, the amount and length of journeys can be minimised, particularly by private car, as the needs of the population can be met by the services and facilities around them and use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. This will lead to a reduction in energy consumption, efficient use of public transport, lower transport impacts and an overall improvement in the well being of the population due to the health benefits of walking and cycling and increased social inclusion.
- 6.153 New developments can create significant transport, environmental and safety implications and it is important that these are taken into account when determining planning permission. The Council will work in partnership with Surrey County Council to ensure developments, where appropriate, make

suitable provision for service vehicles, do not reduce highway safety and do not lead to an increase in heavy goods vehicle movements along unsuitable roads. Necessary mitigation measures will be assessed on a site-by-site basis to enable mitigation to be tailored to address specific issues. Land required for major highways and transportations schemes, including any schemes that will be developed in a future funding bid, will be safeguarded as part of the Site Allocations DPD and will be reflected on the Proposals Map.

- 6.154 Transport Assessments set out the transport issues related to development proposals and identify measures to reduce impacts and improve accessibility. Transport Assessments will be expected for development proposals with significant transport implications, where transport impacts are anticipated to be small development proposals may be required to submit a Transport Statement, in line with DfT Guidance on Transport Assessments.
- 6.155 New developments that lead to an increase in the number of people travelling to a site can put pressure on the road network, particularly as car ownership in the Borough is higher than the national average. A Travel Plan can be utilised to manage the travel demands of occupiers and visitors, employing measures to control the number of private vehicle trips to a site and influence a shift to sustainable transport choices for site users. The Council will require a Travel Plan from development proposals that generate significant traffic and a Travel Statement from smaller scale developments, in accordance with good practice guidance<sup>20</sup>.
- 6.156 Facilitating the movement of people between sustainable modes of transport is a key factor in the use of such travel modes. Since 2008, Woking has had significant investment in cycle infrastructure through the Cycle Woking partnership between Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council. This programme has upgraded and extended the cycle network, encouraged school children into cycling with a new mountain bike course at Goldsworth Primary School and increased the number of cycle parking facilities across the Borough. Planned cycle infrastructure improvements include a one thousand space 'Bike Parking building' at Woking Rail Station, a new pedestrian/cycle bridge, a second mountain bike course, three cycle crossings and more cycle signs and parking facilities across the Borough.
- 6.157 Maximum car parking standards is a means of restricting the number of cars on the road and influencing a shift in behaviour towards other transport modes, particularly in urban centres with high accessibility. The Council produced a Parking SPD in 2006 which sets appropriate car parking and cycle parking standards for all forms of development. This includes residential car parking standards that have regard for highway safety issues resulting from off-street parking and maximum car parking standards for non-residential developments. The SPD will be reviewed after the adoption of the Core Strategy and at regular intervals to ensure the standards set are the most appropriate.
- 6.158 The Heathrow Airtrack scheme is an opportunity for Woking to have a fast and direct rail link to Heathrow Airport, supporting the economic development of the Borough and providing a viable alternative to travelling on the western section of the M25. The current proposal<sup>21</sup> identifies Woking Rail Station as a stop on the Guildford line, with one train per hour in each direction at peak times and two trains per hour at other times. Should this proposal be



approved, Heathrow Airtrack services are timetabled to be operating by early 2016.

### Delivery strategy

- 6.159 This policy will be implemented through the development management (WBC) and transportation development control (SCC) process and in partnership with key stakeholders through Transport for Woking.

### Monitoring and review

- Number of new developments located within 30 minutes travel by public transport to local services (including health, education and retail).
- Number of major developments submitted with Transport Assessments.
- Number of major developments with travel plans, assessed in accordance with Surrey County Council's Travel Plans Good Practice Guide, 2009.
- Amount of transport infrastructure improvements secured with developments.
- Annual patronage of Borough rail stations.
- Average journey time per mile during the morning peak on major routes in the authority (Current National Indicator 167).

### Key evidence base

- The Surrey Local Transport Plan Second Edition (2006/07 to 2010/11), produced by Surrey County Council.
- Transport Assessment, 2010, produced by Surrey County Council
- Transport Topic Paper (forthcoming)





## Social and community infrastructure

- 6.160 The Core Strategy seeks to achieve a sustainable community for Woking and improve upon the well-being of its people. This requires an effective balance between the provision of housing and employment and providing the necessary infrastructure to support the growth. Social and community infrastructure includes: schools, higher education facilities, health centres, GP surgeries, dentists, child care premises, supported accommodation, libraries, museums, community halls, places of worship, church halls, day centres, children's centres, indoor and outdoor recreation and sports facilities and any other facility owned by a publicly funded body to provide front line services.
- 6.161 The provision of adequate community facilities and social and community infrastructure is critical amongst the host of necessary infrastructure because it has a direct bearing on the well-being of the people. Community facilities play an important role in the development of a sustainable community, by providing a place for people to meet. They also offer services that are essential for education, health and well-being and support community cohesion and benefit the general quality of life of residents. The provision of community facilities is particularly important in view of our ageing population (see policy CS12: Older people and vulnerable groups) and reliance on third (charity and voluntary organisations) and faith sectors to provide services to the community.
- 6.162 One of the purposes of the Core Strategy is to deliver a significant amount of housing and jobs in the Borough. The Council is therefore committed to working with partners to deliver the social and community infrastructure to support it.

### **CS18: Social and community infrastructure**

The Council will work with its partners to provide an accessible and sustainable social and community infrastructure to support growth in the Borough. It will do so by taking the following steps.

- Promoting the mixed use of social and community infrastructure for a range of uses.
- Resisting the loss of existing social and community facilities or sites, unless the Council is satisfied that:
  - there is no identified need for the facility for its original purpose and that it is not viable for any other social or community use; or
  - that adequate alternative facilities will be provided in a location with equal (or greater) accessibility for the community it is intended to serve;
  - that there is no requirement from any other public service provider for an alternative social or community facility that could be met through change of use or redevelopment.
- Applicants will be expected to provide evidence that they have consulted with an appropriate range of service providers and the community.
- The provision of new community facilities will be encouraged in locations well served by public transport, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.

- The Council will work with other public sector bodies to encourage efficient use of public sector assets, such as through co-location to facilitate the delivery of community facilities.
- Developers will be required to provide and/or make a contribution towards the provision of community facilities where it is relevant to do so. The methods of securing financial contributions are set out in policy CS15: Infrastructure delivery.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.163 It is essential that the growth in population in the Borough is supported by adequate social and community infrastructure, including schools, health centres, centres for the community and community halls. The Council will work with partners to seek to develop the role of centres for the community and where possible new schemes such as community hubs, which provide leisure, recreation, education and community activities for older people and vulnerable groups.
- 6.164 The Council's Priority Places (as set out in policy CS5) are in need of additional infrastructure including sports, youth, community, health and library facilities. Meeting the needs in the most deprived areas are a priority for the Council.
- 6.165 The Council will encourage facilities that are capable of accommodating a mix of uses which will serve more sections of the community, rather than traditional single-use buildings. Community groups can often use buildings at different times of day or on different days of the week to enable the most efficient use of facilities.
- 6.166 Property prices in Woking are high and consequently so are land values. The Council is aware that it can be difficult for community organisations to compete with the prices that residential developers can pay for land. The evidence shows that existing social and community facilities are well used and the Council will therefore resist the loss of any facility that does, or has the potential to meet a current or identified need, unless the proposal replaces the facility in an equally accessible or improved location.
- 6.167 All development has some impact on the need for infrastructure, services and amenities, or benefits from existing ones, so it is only fair that developers make a contribution towards the provision of community facilities where relevant. It is also right that those who benefit financially when planning permission is granted should share some of that gain with the community, to help fund the infrastructure that is needed to make development acceptable and sustainable. In this regard, the Council will seek to secure developer contributions to provide community facilities. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being prepared to support the Core Strategy. It will provide evidence of the need for community facilities and how they can be met. This will be the basis upon which contributions will be secured.
- 6.168 When an application will involve the loss of social and community infrastructure which is not being replaced, applicants will be expected to provide evidence that they have consulted with an appropriate range of

service providers and the community to prove that there is no need for and no requirement for the facility from any other public service provider for an alternative social or community facility that could be met through change of use or redevelopment. Applicants will be expected to show that the property has been marketed for a period of at least one year. The Council and partner organisations can provide contact details of community organisations in the Borough.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.169 The Council will work with partners and key infrastructure service providers to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure provision in the Borough. Specifically, the Council will continue to play a central role in the activities of the ISG and the Surrey wide Key Infrastructure Service Providers Group. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be a key document that assesses capacity and need. It will be updated bi-annually and will take in to account changes in need, capacity and the availability of funding sources in order that the Council and partners can respond to any changes to priorities in a timely and co-ordinated manner. It is the Council's intention to introduce a tariff based system in order to secure contributions from new development to pay for essential infrastructure. The details of this are set out in the delivery strategy of policy CS15 Infrastructure Delivery. The Infrastructure Sub Group of the Woking Partnership will be a key partner in the production of this.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.170 Progress towards achieving the strategic objective through Policy CS18 will be measured against the following indicators and targets:
- The critical and priority lists from the Infrastructure Schedule.
- 6.171 The policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR:
- Loss of D1 facilities (permissions and m<sup>2</sup>) and what they were used for.
  - Gain of D1 facilities (permissions and m<sup>2</sup>) and proposed use.

### **Key evidence base**

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2010, forthcoming.
- Surrey Infrastructure Capacity Study, 2009.



## Heritage and conservation

- 6.172 The Borough has a diverse and unique heritage including historic buildings and places ranging from Woking Palace and Sutton Place to the Sha Jehan Mosque and Brookwood Cemetery. There are 180 Listed Buildings in the Borough including four that are Grade 1 Listed plus 25 Conservation Areas.
- 6.173 There is a wide diversity in the built character of Woking Borough from rural villages to an urbanised Woking Town Centre and suburban residential areas. It is expected that new development will take account of this.
- 6.174 Those aspects of Woking that define its heritage will be conserved for their worth and the benefits that they have in enriching the well-being of the local people and those who visit the area will be harnessed.

### **CS19: Heritage and conservation**

All new development must respect and enhance the character of the area in which it is proposed whilst making the best possible use of the land available. This will be assisted by the evidence contained within the Character Study.

Conservation Areas and sites of historic or architectural importance will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced in accordance with the relevant legislation and national guidance.

Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings must respect the host building in terms of scale, design, use of materials, retention of the structure, any features of special historic or architectural importance; and refusing consent for any alteration or extension to a Listed Building that will not preserve the building or its setting.

Within areas of high archaeological potential, development will not be permitted unless the following are satisfied:

- Submission of an archaeological assessment of the site.
- Where archaeological importance of the site has been identified, a programme setting out a full archaeological survey of the site has been submitted and agreed with the Council.

## Reasoned Justification

- 6.175 Woking Borough comprises a variety of character areas. The Council has undertaken a Character Study which provides a useful description and information about these areas. It is expected that new development will take account of the character within which it is situated.
- 6.176 Conservation Areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest. There are 25 Conservation Areas in Woking. The Council will continue to periodically appraise its Conservation Areas to assess changes which might have occurred over the years. This will inform a potential review of their boundaries or the creation of new areas. Development that adversely affects the Conservation Area and/or its setting, which cannot be mitigated, will be resisted. Development will be required to demonstrate that it will preserve and/or enhance the special features of the Conservation Areas.

- 6.177 To ensure sufficient information is available to make a proper assessment of any development that has the potential to threaten the heritage, culture and character of the area, planning applications will be required to include detailed drawings including details of materials and the relationship to adjoining properties.
- 6.178 The Council will resist the loss of Listed Buildings, and will use advice, negotiation and refusal of consent to ensure features of architectural and historic interest are preserved and the setting of Listed Buildings is safeguarded.
- 6.179 Locally Listed Buildings are not statutory listed, but are of local architectural or historic interest. They contribute to the character of the area as often they are local landmarks of historic merit or have architectural features of local significance. Approximately 330 buildings are Locally Listed in Woking Borough. They form an important part of the heritage of the area and will be preserved and enhanced.
- 6.180 It is considered that planning guidance such as Planning Policy Statements and national legislation provide sufficient protection of the historic environment and archaeology at the strategic level including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and historic parks and gardens.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.181 This policy will be delivered through the Development Management process. The Borough-wide Character Study provides the evidence base and will assist applicants in identifying key characteristics.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- Number of imposed planning conditions that require mitigation or recording.
- Trends shown by condition surveys of Local Authority owned assets.
- Number of Grade 1 and 2\* Listed Buildings at risk.
- Changes in the appearance and 'health' of the historic environment.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Character Study, 2010, produced by the Landscape Partnership





## Design

- 6.182 All forms of development should make a positive contribution to the environment and strengthen the character and distinct identity of the area.
- 6.183 Good design is of fundamental importance to the delivery of the Core Strategy, because it will contribute significantly to the acceptance and appreciation of development by local residents and occupiers of buildings. It also has a bearing on the well-being of people.
- 6.184 Woking Borough Council expects the design of buildings to be inclusive and comprehensive, not only looking at aesthetic quality, but also how the development brings various elements together to improve the quality of life of its users and enhance the character of the area. These elements include how development incorporates high quality sustainable construction standards and ensure the functionality of buildings. It is also about how development is accessible by its users and by various transport modes, including service vehicles.
- 6.185 Individual places within the Borough have their own distinctive characters. These have evolved over time, and they are well valued by the local community as part of the heritage of the area. The Council seeks a design solution that enhances the distinctive character of the area without compromising innovation and creativity.
- 6.186 A Character Study has been carried out to provide evidence of the character of the area. This will provide useful information to guide development and inform planning decisions.
- 6.187 There have been concerns by local residents about the poor quality of some past developments. The Core Strategy seeks to promote high density development in the main centres of the Borough. The design of the proposed developments will be key to their acceptability by the public, the people who use them, and the character of the area.

## **CS20: Design**

Proposals for new development should:

- Create buildings and places that are attractive with their own distinct identity; they should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land.
- Achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties avoiding significant harmful impact in terms of loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, or an overbearing effect due to bulk, proximity or outlook.
- Designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community, regardless of any disability and to encourage sustainable means of travel.
- Incorporate landscaping to enhance the setting of the development, including the retention of any trees of amenity value, and other significant landscape features of merit, and provide for suitable boundary treatment/s.
- Create a safe and secure environment, where the opportunities for crime are minimised.
- Incorporate measures to minimise energy consumption, conserve water resources, use the principles of sustainable construction and provide for renewable energy generation in accordance with policy CS21 Sustainable Construction and CS22 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation.
- Incorporate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials, and make provision for sustainable drainage systems.
- Ensure the building is adaptable to allow scope for changes to be made to meet the needs of the occupier (life time homes and modern business needs).

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.188 Different parts of the Borough present different contexts for development, as demonstrated by the Character Study and Conservation Area Appraisals. All forms of development, whether residential or commercial, should have regard to the value of their surroundings.
- 6.189 Good quality construction is an inseparable element of good quality design. Developments will be expected to make use of appropriate materials whether these are local architectural features or more unusual high-performance components.
- 6.190 There is potential to exert a positive social effect through design. The design and function of an environment can help to discourage crime and encourage positive use of public spaces. Areas where there is a mixture of uses or types of homes will ensure a footfall of people, offering natural surveillance and reducing incidents of crime and fear of crime. Quieter areas such as car parks should be overlooked, open spaces and pedestrian routes visible from roads and buildings.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.191 Planning applications must be supported by design and access statements and the Council expects applicants to demonstrate how all the design issues covered in the policy have been addressed in developing a good proposal.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.192 The Council will keep under review the number and reasoning behind planning appeals being allowed contrary to local design and character considerations.

#### **Key evidence base**

- Character Study, 2010, produced by the Landscape Partnership
- Surrey Design Guide, 2002, published by the Surrey Local Government Association.



## Sustainable construction

- 6.193 One of the key principles of the Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS1 is that local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change through policies which reduce energy use, reduce emissions and promote the development of renewable energy. The PPS requires local planning authorities to set out a clear and evidence-based local policy framework through which development proposals are to be assessed in terms of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and resilience to changes in climate.
- 6.194 The supplement makes it clear that where local circumstances warrant higher standards of energy efficiency, LZC (low or zero carbon) energy and climate change resilience these must be clearly expressed and evidenced.
- 6.195 Woking Borough Council has commissioned a climate change, renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy study to provide evidence to justify its specific requirements on development in the Borough. Furthermore, the Council has the commitment and credentials to manage and facilitate the delivery of the Core Strategy to achieve these targets. The Council leads by example and has built ten new affordable family homes in the Borough to a very high environmental standard to demonstrate that the targets can be achieved.
- 6.196 This is underpinned by the Council's Climate Change Strategy which was first adopted in 2002. This comprehensive strategy recognises the contribution that all council services can make towards climate change mitigation and adaptation and aligns with the target reduction in carbon dioxide equivalent emissions set out in the UK Climate Change Act (of at least 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, both against a 1990 baseline). The strategy is divided into ten key themes, one of which is Planning and Regulation, recognising the significance this policy area can have in reducing local area emissions.

### **CS21: Sustainable construction**

New residential development on previously developed land will be required to meet the energy and water components of the Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 (or any future national requirement) from now until 31 March 2013, the energy and water components of at least Code level 4 from 1 April 2013 and the energy and water components of Code level 5 from 1 April 2016. Where the scale, nature and location of a development would justify a higher Code level, the Council will negotiate with developers to achieve that because of the lower cost of developing such sites.

New residential development on greenfield sites will be required to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 (or any future national requirement) because of the relatively lower cost of developing such sites.

New non-residential development of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more (gross) floorspace is required to comply with BREEAM very good standards (or any future national equivalent).

All new development should consider the integration of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) or other forms of low carbon district heating in the development. All new

development in proximity of an existing CHP station or district heating network will be required to be connected to it unless it can be demonstrated that a better alternative for reducing carbon emissions from the development can be achieved. Details of the zones where connection will be required will be set out in an SPD and will be determined by factors such as the capacity of the existing CHP network, distance from it and physical constraints.

The evidence base<sup>22</sup> sets out the locations in the Borough which have significant potential for CHP or other forms of low carbon district heating networks. All development within these zones will be required to be designed and constructed to enable connection to the future network and will be expected to make a contribution to a fund which will enable the development of that network.

Applications for developments with exceptionally high total energy consumption, such as large leisure facilities with a high heat demand or buildings with exceptionally high power/cooling loads (such as data centres), will be required to reduce the total carbon emissions from the development by 10% through the use of renewable energy measures on site.

Where it can be demonstrated that these standards cannot be met on site, permission will only be granted if the applicant makes provision for compensatory energy and water savings elsewhere in the Borough equivalent to the carbon savings which would have been made by applying this policy.

The Council will encourage proposals for residential extensions and non-residential developments of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or less (gross) floorspace to incorporate energy and water efficiency measures.

The standards will be reviewed to reflect any future change in national standards and/or any equivalent standards that might be introduced.

The Council is actively promoting electric vehicle charging points and has already provided a number of these in the Borough. These are of particular value when the electricity source is low carbon. Details of when new development will be expected to provide electric vehicle charging points or when a contribution towards public charging points will be required, will be set out in an SPD.

### **Design and construction**

The design of all new developments will be required to take account of layout, landform, orientation and landscaping to maximise efficient use of energy and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The design of all new developments should facilitate the recycling and composting of waste.

All developments should consider the use of sustainable construction techniques that promote the reuse and recycling of building materials.

### **Checklist**

All applications for new development should include a completed copy of the Council's climate neutral checklist.



### Reasoned justification

- 6.197 The way in which developments are regulated, planned and built and the way in which resources are used to do this can determine whether or not they are sustainable. By simply re-evaluating how and where we build things we can reduce emissions and help adapt to the effects that climate change will bring about. Factors such as location, layout and landscape are all important as well as the use of climate neutral technologies.
- 6.198 Local evidence shows that the infrastructure in the Borough and the stresses placed upon it justify going further than the minimum requirements set at a national level.
- 6.199 Construction methods used and standards of buildings can help to reduce these effects and the design of buildings can ensure they are able to adapt better to the changing climate. Buildings are responsible for almost half of the country's carbon emissions, half of our water consumption, about one third of landfill waste and one quarter of all raw materials used in the economy<sup>23</sup>. The Government had identified this issue as a priority (see PPS1: Planning and Climate Change Supplement).
- 6.200 The national Code for Sustainable Homes (2006) is the Government's preferred system for measuring the performance of new homes. The code has six levels with mandatory requirements at each regarding energy and water usage, surface water run-off and waste. It also covers the categories of pollution, health and well-being (which incorporates Lifetime Home Standards), management and ecology but with flexibility over which standards to choose to achieve a specific Code rating. The attainment of higher Code levels requires the incorporation of renewable energy production. The Government intends to bring in the energy efficiency improvement equivalent to the Code's energy standards through stepped changes to the Building Regulations as set out in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Timetable for implementation of the Code**

Date	2010	2013	2016
Energy efficiency improvement of the dwelling compared to 2006 (Part L Building Regulations)	25%	44%	Zero carbon
Equivalent standard within the Code for Sustainable Homes	Code level 3	Code level 4	Code level 6

Source: CLG 2008: Greener homes for the future

- 6.201 Despite its limited size and other physical constraints, there is a significantly greater level of existing renewable and low carbon energy in Woking than in many other boroughs of comparable, or indeed, larger size. The reasons behind this are set out in detail in the evidence base and can be summarised as:
- A strong and early lead taken by the local authority through investing in decentralised energy since the 1990s.
  - Well-established delivery partners, including one of the first Energy Services Companies (ESCO) in the UK.
  - Consistent and assertive use of planning powers and tools to secure investment in decentralised energy through new development for over five years.

- 6.202 Future Water, the Government's Water Strategy for England<sup>24</sup> was published in February 2008 and sets out the Government's vision for the water sector by 2030. Future Water maps out how the above overarching target of reducing domestic water usage to 130 litres per person per day, can be achieved from a current estimate of 150 litres of water used by every person in Britain per day. Average water usage in Woking is estimated to be 170 litres per person per day. The Government introduced Building Regulations to improve the water efficiency of new homes from 6 April 2010<sup>25</sup>. This required a whole building standard of 125 litres per person per day.
- 6.203 The region's level of water stress combined with higher than average levels of water consumption in the Borough, the existing infrastructure in the town centre, and the scale of development required by the strategy justify sustainable construction requirements in advance of the proposed national programme. This policy will apply to all new development in the Borough. Special requirements will apply for greenfield development because of the relatively lower cost of developing such sites.
- 6.204 The establishment of the Thameswey Group of companies by the Council in 1999, which includes two ESCos (Thameswey Energy Limited and Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited), has enabled the Council to progress its investment in decentralised energy infrastructure through a Special Purpose Vehicle. This has established a robust commercial business platform on which to base further expansion of energy infrastructure and diversify its customer base. The infrastructure available in the town centre and elsewhere in the Borough has made Woking Borough Council a name synonymous with tackling climate change, and has given the Council an almost unique position. Development in parts of the town centre can connect to an existing district heating network today and through Thameswey the practical infrastructure is already in place to supply, bill and service customers.
- 6.205 On sites where it has been proved to be unviable for developments to meet the standards set out in policy CS21 on-site, one way that applicants could achieve equivalent energy and water savings elsewhere in the Borough would be to make a financial contribution to the Council to enable it to help to find schemes that would make the savings. The Council will publish updates of energy and water schemes that will be eligible and the cost per tonne of carbon dioxide and per cubic metre of water saved.

#### **Delivery Strategy**

- 6.206 An SPD will be produced which sets out the detail and delivery mechanisms behind this policy.
- 6.207 The Council's key partner in delivering the strategy is ESCo Thameswey Energy Limited which has enabled the Council to progress its investment in decentralised energy infrastructure through a Special Purpose Vehicle.
- 6.208 The Core Strategy has strong links with the Climate Change Strategy and each document supports the delivery of the other. The Council will work with community groups such as Local Agenda 21 to deliver both strategies.

### Monitoring and Review

6.209 This policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR:

- % of new development achieving each Code standard
- Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved
- % of commercial development which is BREEAM good, very good or excellent (%s for each).

#### Key evidence base

- Climate Change, Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Evidence Base, produced by ecsc, 2010.
- Woking Borough Council Climate Change Strategy, 2008.



## Renewable and low carbon energy generation

- 6.210 Key to the reduction of carbon emissions will be the generation of energy from renewable sources. The UK has committed to securing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 and government has set out how it expects this to be achieved in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2.
- 6.211 Photovoltaic or PV are solar electricity systems that capture the sun's energy using photovoltaic cells and convert the sunlight into electricity. Solar water heating systems (also called solar thermal) use the heat from the sun to heat water that can be used for domestic hot water.
- 6.212 The adopted PPS: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS 1 and the draft revision to it - Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate, both give a strong positive message about renewable and low carbon energy generation both as stand alone development and as part of residential and commercial development.
- 6.213 The Government is seeking to stimulate greater investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation through a wide range of measures. The Energy Act (2008) provided the basis on which the Secretary of State could introduce fiscal measures that reward the generation of LZC energy. This includes the introduction of a feed-in tariff (FIT) for small scale renewable electricity in April 2010 and the planned introduction of renewable heat incentive (RHI) the following year. These measures have been designed to provide a guaranteed income to owners and installers of small scale LZC heat and power generating technologies at a level and for a duration that is sufficient to incentivise significant investment in these measures.

### **CS22: Renewable and low carbon energy generation**

The Council recognises significant progress needs to be made if national targets for the generation of renewable energy are to be met and encourages the development of stand-alone renewable energy installations in the Borough. All proposals will be considered on their individual merits with regard to scale, location, technology type and cumulative impact on the surrounding area.

The Council particularly encourages applications from community-based and community-owned projects.

Applicants should take appropriate steps to mitigate any adverse impacts of proposed development through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures. All reasonable steps to minimise noise impacts should be taken.

Applicants should provide sound evidence of the availability of the resource which will be harnessed or the fuel to be used, including details of the adequacy of transport networks where applicable and detailed studies to assess potential adverse impacts such as noise nuisance, flood risk, shadow flicker and interference with telecommunications.

### Reasoned justification

- 6.214 The South East Plan (revoked July 2010) included a sub-regional target for the Thames Valley and Surrey sub-region. The Council is confident that the evidence used to inform the targets is sound and credible and will therefore retain them.
- 6.215 The targets for Thames Valley and Surrey are set out in Table 6. Whilst no sub-regional targets have been identified beyond 2016, the overall target for the region is likely to result in further increases equating to approximately a doubling of the 2016 levels by 2026.

**Table 6: Sub-regional targets for land-based renewable energy**

Sub-Region	2010 Renewable Energy Target (MW)	2016 Renewable Energy Target (MW)
Thames Valley and Surrey	140	209

Source: extract from policy NRM14 of the South East Plan, 2009 (revoked July 2010)

### The Climate Change Act

- 6.216 Development of renewable and low carbon energy provides one of the mainstays of the provisions set out in the Climate Change Act. The Act puts into statute the UK's targets to reduce the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by at least 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 (both against a 1990 baseline). The Act is supported by the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan which sets out the UK Government's strategy for climate and energy and proposes measures to reduce carbon emissions across all sectors.
- 6.217 Woking Borough Council commissioned a climate change, renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy study which sets out the Borough's opportunities and constraints for renewable energy development. The key opportunities were considered to be medium-large scale wind energy, combined heat and power (CHP) and solar heat and photovoltaic (PV).
- 6.218 A wind energy feasibility study for the Borough concluded that wind speed for medium - large turbines is not a limiting factor anywhere in the Borough but there were a number of land and planning-related constraints such as ancient monuments, designated landscapes and habitats which may constrain the development of wind turbines. In addition, there are 'possible' areas of constraint such as aerodrome notification areas where there is a requirement to consult the relevant operators and authorities. The study revealed there are very few unconstrained places for wind turbines in the Borough, therefore there will be some practical obstacles to be overcome in siting medium-large turbines. Nonetheless, there are many areas where it may be possible to locate wind turbines subject to over-coming one or more possible constraints. Locating wind turbines in any locations within the Borough would require detailed studies to assess potential adverse impacts such as noise nuisance, flood risk, shadow flicker and interference with telecommunications.
- 6.219 There are opportunities for further use of CHP and the Council's experience in the application of this technology means it is well placed to encourage further use of CHP. However, an adequate 'base' heat demand is required to maximise the efficiency of CHP and other forms of community heat network. In addition, physical constraints can limit the installation of new heat distribution infrastructure (or the expansion of existing networks).



Photovoltaic and solar thermal energies are considered to have good potential in Woking due to the favourable insolation levels in the south east of England. PV provides a good complementary energy source to CHP and, along with wind energy, provides a higher level of carbon emissions reduction than heat-based renewable energy sources. Woking has been a pioneer of local authority-led large scale PV installations with the result that nearly half of the total installed PV capacity in the region is located in the Borough.

- 6.220 A number of different fuel types are collectively described as 'biomass' including: wood fuel from woodland management or forest thinning operations, waste wood from sawmills and the construction industry, agricultural products and wastes including straw, slurry and chicken litter, energy crops including miscanthus grass and short rotation coppice and household putrescible waste. There is limited potential for the Borough to generate adequate biomass to meet a significant growth in biomass-based energy supply. However, supply chains are becoming established within Surrey (where greater potential exists) and Woking's road network and rail aggregates depot provide potential to enable importation of biomass fuel from local sources into the Borough. The existence of heat distribution mains in some parts of the borough could be used to distribute energy via community-scale biomass heating.
- 6.221 There are no active or recent landfill sites where methane gas is being produced on a regular basis or at any volume that would enable gas capture and re-use for energy production. The sludge from the only sewerage treatment works in the Borough is transferred to another site outside the Borough before being recycled. However, there may be opportunities to divert suitable wastes from existing waste collection and disposal arrangements to be used in anaerobic digestion to generate biogas. There are no power stations in the Borough so waste heat recovery opportunities and the small rivers with low flow provide very limited potential for hydro electricity.

### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.222 An SPD will be produced which sets out the detail and delivery mechanisms behind this policy.
- 6.223 The Council's key partner in delivering the strategy is its ESCo Thamesway Energy Limited. The existence of an ESCo in the borough with experience operating community energy systems and retailing heat to customers will help to ensure delivery of any new community heat energy.
- 6.224 The Core Strategy has strong links with the Climate Change Strategy and each document supports the delivery of the other. The Council will work with community groups such as Local Agenda 21 to deliver both strategies.

### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.225 This policy will be measured against the following indicators and targets annually through the AMR to enable the Council to effectively monitor the Borough's centres:
- MW of new renewable energy installations permitted.
  - MW installed capacity of new renewable energy.

### Key evidence base

- Climate Change, Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Evidence Base, produced by ecsc, 2010.
- Woking Borough Council Climate Change Strategy, 2008.



## Woking's landscape and townscape

- 6.226 Woking Borough has a varied and dynamic landscape and benefits from attractive local and neighbourhood centres. It is essential that the character and sense of place conveyed by these different landscapes and townscapes are fully considered when making decisions that affect them. Future development should be well situated, and sensitive to its location, to protect the Borough's different character areas, whilst accommodating the change needed to contribute to environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 6.227 Landscape character is a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another. Townscape character is the appearance and character of buildings and all other features of an urban area taken together to create a distinct visual impression. Landscape and townscape character is that which makes an area unique.

### **CS23: Woking's landscape and townscape**

All development proposals will provide a positive benefit in terms of landscape and townscape character, and local distinctiveness and will have regard to landscape character areas.

To protect local landscape and townscape character, development will be expected to:

- Conserve, and where possible enhance existing character, especially key landscapes such as escarpments and the canal/river network and settlement characteristics; maintain locally valued features, and enhance or restore deteriorating features;
- Respect the setting of, and relationship between, settlements and individual buildings in the landscape;
- Conserve, and where possible, enhance townscape character, including structure and land form, landscape features, views and landmarks, and appropriate building styles and materials;
- Support land management practices that have no adverse impact on characteristic landscape patterns and local biodiversity.

### **Reasoned justification**

- 6.228 This policy does not seek to prevent changes to the landscape; its aim is to guide the direction of any change, whether initiated through new development or land management decisions, indicating sensitivities that should be considered in order to minimise negative impact, and provide the most positive opportunities for change.
- 6.229 Development in the urban fringe, adjoining the countryside, requires special consideration because these areas are most vulnerable to a range of adverse environmental pressures. It will be important to maintain the clear transition between the urban areas and the countryside and to ensure that development on the edge of the urban area does not create obtrusive and unattractive skylines. The urban fringe should be conserved and, where possible, be enhanced through appropriate landscape restoration, management and habitat creation.

- 6.230 Development will not normally be permitted on the slopes of the escarpments which will be shown on the Proposals Map, or which would result in a significant reduction in the amount of tree cover. Development on the top of the escarpments will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect the character of the landscape.
- 6.231 The landscape values of canals, rivers and their valleys are an important attribute and can add considerably to the character of an area, included in this definition are the:
- . Valley of the Wey and the Wey Navigation
  - . Hoe Valley
  - . Basingstoke Canal
  - . Bourne Stream
- 6.232 This policy will prevent development which would harm this visual quality by protecting the water course, its immediate banks and wider setting which will be denoted on the Proposals Map.

#### **Delivery strategy**

- 6.233 All new development must respect and, where appropriate, enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape character area in which it is proposed. Landscape enhancement works may be required to avoid adverse impacts associated with new developments.
- 6.234 Some schemes may require landscape assessments, depending on the size and location of proposals.
- 6.235 The Council will encourage the preparation of Design Statements for local and neighbourhood by local amenity and community groups.

#### **Monitoring and review**

- 6.236 Landscape assessments.

#### **Key evidence base**

- . Character Study, October 2010, produced by The Landscape Partnership.

## 7.0 Implementation and monitoring of the Core Strategy

- 7.1 The Core Strategy should show a clear path for its implementation to demonstrate how its vision and objectives will be achieved. Furthermore, it should set out how it is effecting a positive change in the lives of people who live, work and visit the Borough by addressing the key challenges facing the Borough. This should closely be monitored to assess whether the policies and proposals are delivering the objectives, target and standards at the right time. PPS12: Local Development Frameworks sets out the key tests of soundness for the Core Strategy to meet. One of them is a clear demonstration of its delivery. This section sets out how the Core Strategy will be implemented and monitored.

### Implementation

- 7.2 The Core Strategy will be delivered by the following sectors:
- **Public Sector** - through investment in infrastructure to create the necessary environment for other policies and proposals to be delivered, direct investment in delivering some policies and proposals such as affordable housing, rationalisation of public sector assets to maximise their effective and efficient use. This will include disposal of assets for alternative uses or co-location for efficient use of land. It will also deliver the Core Strategy through development enabling and management by ensuring that development meets all necessary standards and objectives to support infrastructure provision.
  - **Private Sector** - through direct investment in land and buildings and developer contributions towards infrastructure delivery.
  - **Voluntary Sector** - through direct investment in land and buildings.
- 7.3 **An Infrastructure Delivery Plan** is being prepared to set out the scale, type and cost of infrastructure needed to support the Core Strategy, who will provide it and how it will be delivered. The Woking Partnership is responsible for coordinating the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It has an Infrastructure Sub Group, which will seek to coordinate the delivery of this programme. The Council will ensure that development is supported by the necessary infrastructure and/or contributions made towards that before planning permission will be granted.
- 7.4 The Council recognises that the implementation of the Core Strategy will involve a variety of delivery agencies and, for that matter, will need to take a proactive role in coordinating them to ensure that the objectives they seek to achieve are not lost in the process. It will also take a realistic approach towards the delivery of the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy. In this regard, it accepts that the nature and cost of schemes will influence when specific schemes come forward in the short, medium or long term. Some schemes might have to be phased to achieve its expected objectives. Other proposals will require extensive consultation depending on their nature, location and sensitiveness. The Council will therefore ensure that public consultation is integral to the delivery process. The Council will work closely with its partners to coordinate all these to ensure a comprehensive delivery of all aspects of the Core Strategy.



- 7.5 Each policy in the Core Strategy includes a section on delivery, monitoring and review. Details of these proposals comprise how, who and when the policy will be implemented. Furthermore, it includes targets and indicators against which the policy will be monitored and reviewed.
- 7.6 **Planning Application Process** - The Council has a primary role for enabling and determining the suitability of development proposals. It will exercise this responsibility proactively to ensure the delivery of the Core Strategy. It will seek to ensure that schemes that come forward are legally, technically and practically feasible in the short, medium and long term before they are approved. It will be proactive through pre-application discussions to ensure that developers are fully aware of the objectives and expectation of the basis upon which the suitability of their schemes will be judged. It will ensure that planning applications are submitted with adequate and appropriate information to make informed decisions before the application is accepted. Furthermore, it will ensure strict compliance of all necessary adopted standards such as design, parking and sustainable construction when planning applications are determined.
- 7.7 The Council will resist any proposed development that will prejudice the future development of a neighbouring site and/or prohibit the comprehensive development of a larger site.
- 7.8 **Planning Obligations** - Development should be supported by adequate infrastructure. The Public Sector has a significant role to play in providing part of this infrastructure. However, development has impacts and it is only fair that developers also make a contribution towards mitigating the impacts of their development. The Council will ensure that this is the case. **The Council will require developers to contribute towards the provision of facilities, services and infrastructure to make a scheme acceptable in planning terms before planning approval is granted. This infrastructure will include green infrastructure and other forms of social, community and environmental requirements. The Council will ensure that all forms of development will achieve a net benefit to the community; taking into account its needs and aspirations.** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will provide evidence of the infrastructure needs of the community and how they will be delivered.
- 7.9 The Council proposes to introduce a tariff based system in the future as a mechanism for securing developer contributions. An Infrastructure Schedule and a charging level will be established as part of that process. In the transitional period, the Council will continue to use Planning Obligations and Planning Conditions as the main mechanisms for securing developer contributions. The tests of Circular 05/2005 are now a statutory requirement and the requirement of Planning Obligations as set out in Regulation 04/2010 will apply.
- 7.10 **Compulsory Purchase Powers** - The Council has Compulsory Purchase Powers, which it is willing to use to assemble land to enable the implementation of the Core Strategy. This power will be used as a last resort, because the Council's preferred approach to any land assembly will be through negotiation.
- 7.11 **Rationalisation of Public Sector Assets** - The Council will seek to maximise opportunities for the use of public sector assets for the

implementation of the Core Strategy. Public sector assets in the form of land and buildings will play a significant role in delivering the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy. It could provide land for the provision of housing and employment or buildings to provide community facilities and services. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Employment Land Review (ELR) take into account public sector land that is available and suitable for development. The Council is committed to the Surrey Public Sector Asset Review. This review will establish a common database for all public sector assets, their performance and efficient use to inform decisions about how they could be utilised efficiently. Any future review of SHLAA and ELR will take the outcome of this exercise into account.

- 7.12 **Delivery mechanisms of the Council** – Woking Borough Council will continue to be very proactive towards delivering its key priorities, including affordable housing and mitigation of climate change. It has set up Thamesway Limited, which is an independent company to deliver these priorities. Thamesway Limited enters into public/private joint ventures to deliver its energy and environmental strategies and targets. As part of its energy efficiency programmes, the Council, through Thamesway, implemented its first CHP system in 1992 and the United Kingdom's (UK) first small scale CHP/heat fired absorption chiller system in 1994. What marks these systems out from any other system in the UK is the direct sale of co-generated heat and sustainable electricity to local customers at a lower price than conventional sources. The company will seek to work in partnership with developers and customers to deliver the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy where it is technically and economically feasible.
- 7.13 The Council has also set up **Woking Borough Homes**, which is a subsidiary of Thamesway. It focuses on affordable homes with emphasis on the intermediate rent market. It will continue to acquire and build properties for affordable housing. The Core Strategy identifies a significant unmet need for affordable housing. Woking Borough Homes will contribute significantly towards meeting this need. The company aims to deliver 50 affordable housing units per year.
- 7.14 **Other Council plans and strategies** will complement the implementation of the Core Strategy. This will include:
- . Supplementary Planning Documents.
  - . Housing Strategy.
  - . Climate Change Strategy.
  - . Sustainable Community Strategy.
  - . Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
  - . Development Management Development Plan Document
  - . Town Centre Area Action Plan
  - . Any other plans and strategies that the Council may feel it is necessary to prepare to enable the Core Strategy to be delivered.
- 7.15 Working in partnership – The Council will proactively work in partnership to deliver projects of cross boundary significance such as the strategic monitoring and mitigation of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and transport projects where the County Council is the highway authority.

### Monitoring

- 7.16 Monitoring the performance and effects of the Core Strategy will be integral to its delivery. PPS12: Local Development Frameworks requires Core Strategies to have clear arrangements for monitoring and reporting results to the public and civic leaders. In this regard, the Council will be preparing Annual Monitoring Reports to be based on the period 1 April to 31 March and be submitted to the Secretary of State at the end of each calendar year. The Annual Monitoring Report is also published on the Council's website.
- 7.17 The Council has a project management plan for the preparation of LDF documents. How the Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with timescales set out in the plan is the first stage of its monitoring. At this stage, the Core Strategy has been prepared according to timescales in the plan.
- 7.18 Each policy includes a section of how it will be monitored and reviewed. It also identifies a set of indicators and targets for the effective monitoring of the policies in a consistent manner.

### Risk and contingencies

- 7.19 The Council is working towards the comprehensive delivery of the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy and has no reason to believe that they will not be implemented in full. However, it accepts that there could be circumstances where development fails to come forward for a number of reasons, some of which can be beyond its control. Where the Council is able to use its influence and power to enable the delivery of the Core Strategy it will do so. The Core Strategy has in-built mechanism to monitor performance through an Annual Monitoring Report. Generally, the outcome of the monitoring process will inform whether or not the Core Strategy and/or other complimentary plans and strategies should be reviewed. At this stage, two potential areas of risk and the contingency measures to deal with them in the event that they materialise are identified below.
- 7.20 **Failure of sites coming forward for housing and/or employment development due to difficulties of land assembly and/or housing and employment delivery falling behind the projected trajectory** – At the end of three years after the adoption of the Core Strategy, the Council will undertake a comprehensive monitoring of the performance of housing and employment floorspace delivery. This monitoring will look at the cumulative delivery of housing and employment floorspace. If delivery is significantly behind the projected cumulative target over this period as set out in the housing trajectory and the Five Year Housing and Employment Land Supply Position Statements is not providing any evidence that this will be addressed in subsequent years, the Council will take the following steps.
- . Use its compulsory purchase powers to ensure that key sites are brought forward to meet any shortfall in supply.
  - . Re-prioritise its infrastructure investment programme (through CIL) to create the conducive environment for key sites to come forward.
  - . Review and re-prioritise its heads of terms for securing developer contributions to enable priority schemes to be developed.
  - . Review its SHLAA, Site Allocations DPD to bring forward new sites.
  - . Carry out an Employment Land Review and Market Appraisal of employment land to maximise their efficient use.

- . The Council has safeguarded Moor Lane Westfield and Brookwood Farm for possible long-term housing. Restrictions on the release of these sites will be lifted to enable them to come forward for development to achieve a five year housing supply between 2012/2013 – 2016/2017.
  - . If this situation continues, the Council will seek a selective review of the housing and employment policies of the Core Strategy.
- 7.21 **Infrastructure provision to support development** – The Council will continue to work in partnership with infrastructure providers and the Woking Partnership to coordinate an effective and efficient delivery of infrastructure. A significant proportion of the funding to deliver infrastructure will be secured in the form of development contribution at the back of housing and employment development. In this regard, all the above contingency measures will also apply where relevant.

## Glossary

**Adoption:** The formal approval or acceptance of local documents by the Council.

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR):** Monitors progress against the Local Development Scheme and policy targets.

**Area Action Plans:** Document for key areas of change or conservation which focuses on proposals for the area and their implementation.

**BREEAM:** (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) is the world's most widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. The residential version of BREEAM is called EcoHomes.

**Community:** Usually refers to those living within a specific area but can be any group with shared needs or interests living in the Borough.

**Community Strategy:** Our long-term vision for improving the quality of people's lives, with the aim of improving the economic, social and environmental well being of the Borough. Sometimes referred to as a Sustainable Community Strategy.

**Core Strategy:** Sets out the long term vision for area and the main strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.

**Development Plan Document (DPD):** Local Development Framework (LDF) documents containing the core planning policies and proposals. These are subject to independent examination.

**Examination:** Formal examination of local development framework (LDF) documents by an independent inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

**ECSC:** Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities designs and implements projects to create a socially responsible, sustainable energy future.

**Local Development Documents (LDD):** Comprises of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement i.e. both statutory & non-statutory documents.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):** A folder of Local Development Documents that provides the framework for planning in the Borough and to guide planning decisions.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS):** Three-year project plan for the production of Local Development Documents.

**Natura 2000:** a European network of protected sites which represent areas of the highest value for natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community. The Natura 2000 network includes two types of area Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

**Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) :** Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and their replacements Planning Policy



Statements (PPSs) are prepared by Central Government after public consultation to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on planning policy and the operation of the planning system. They also explain the relationship between planning policies and other policies which have an important bearing on issues of development and land use. Local authorities must take their contents into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance and policy is also relevant to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

**Proposals Map:** Illustrates policies and proposals in the development plan documents.

**Representations:** General comments or responses to a consultation which support or object to proposals.

**Site specific allocations:** Allocation of sites for specific or mixed-use development.

**Spatial Policies:** Location specific policies addressing issues such as the natural environment, the Green Belt and housing.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):** These areas are of international importance because they are home to rare or endangered species of plants or animals (other than birds). SACs are designated under the Habitats Directive.

**Special Protection Areas (SPA):** Areas which support significant numbers of wild birds and their habitats. SPAs are classified under the Birds Directive.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** Sets out the Council's standards for involving the community in the preparation, alteration and review of Local Development Documents and the consideration of planning applications.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** Environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. Required under the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

**SuDS:** Sustainable Drainage Systems.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Non-statutory documents that expand upon policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents.

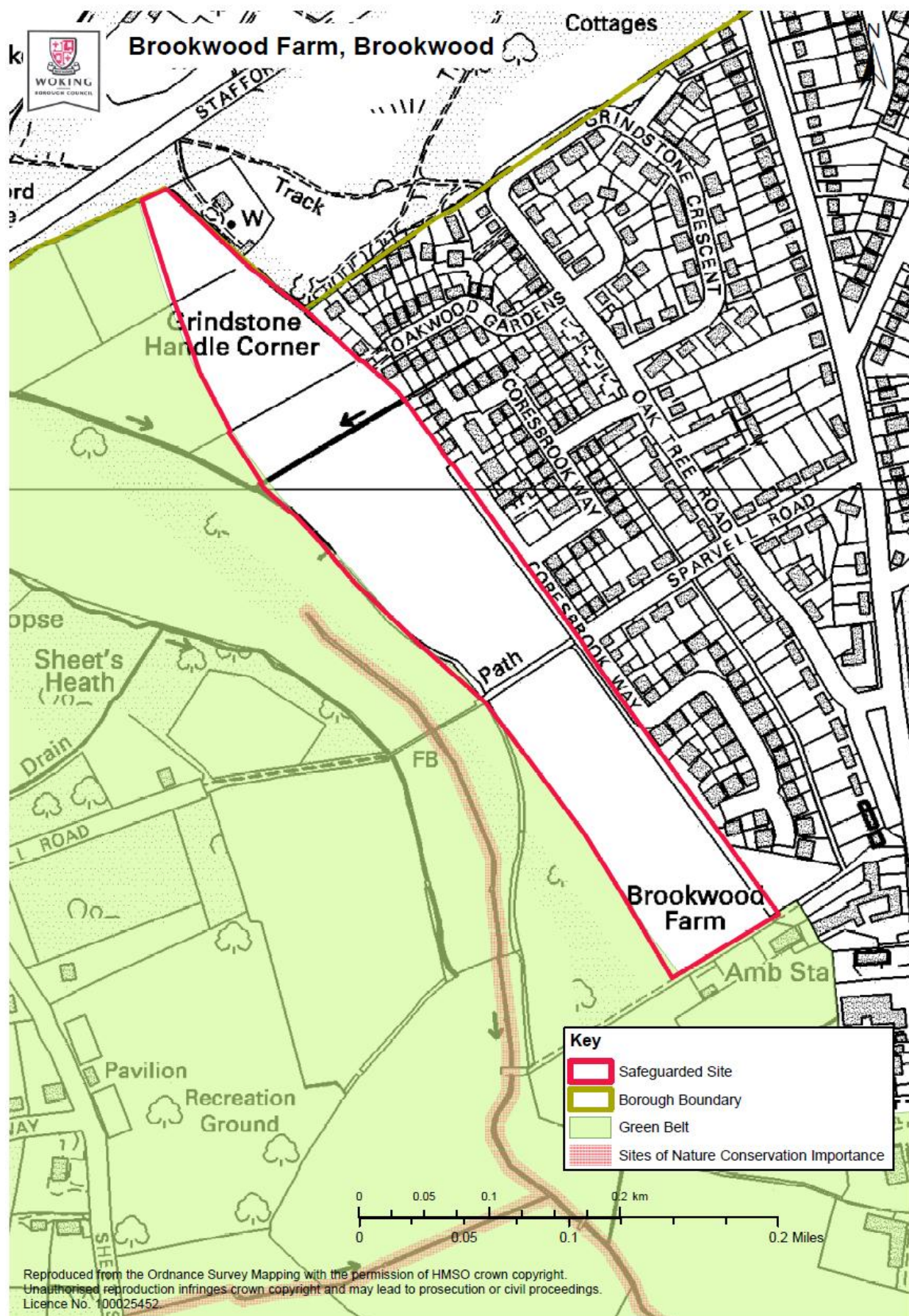
**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** A social, economic and environmental assessment primarily used for DPDs, incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive.

## Appendix 1 Evidence Base Supporting the Core Strategy

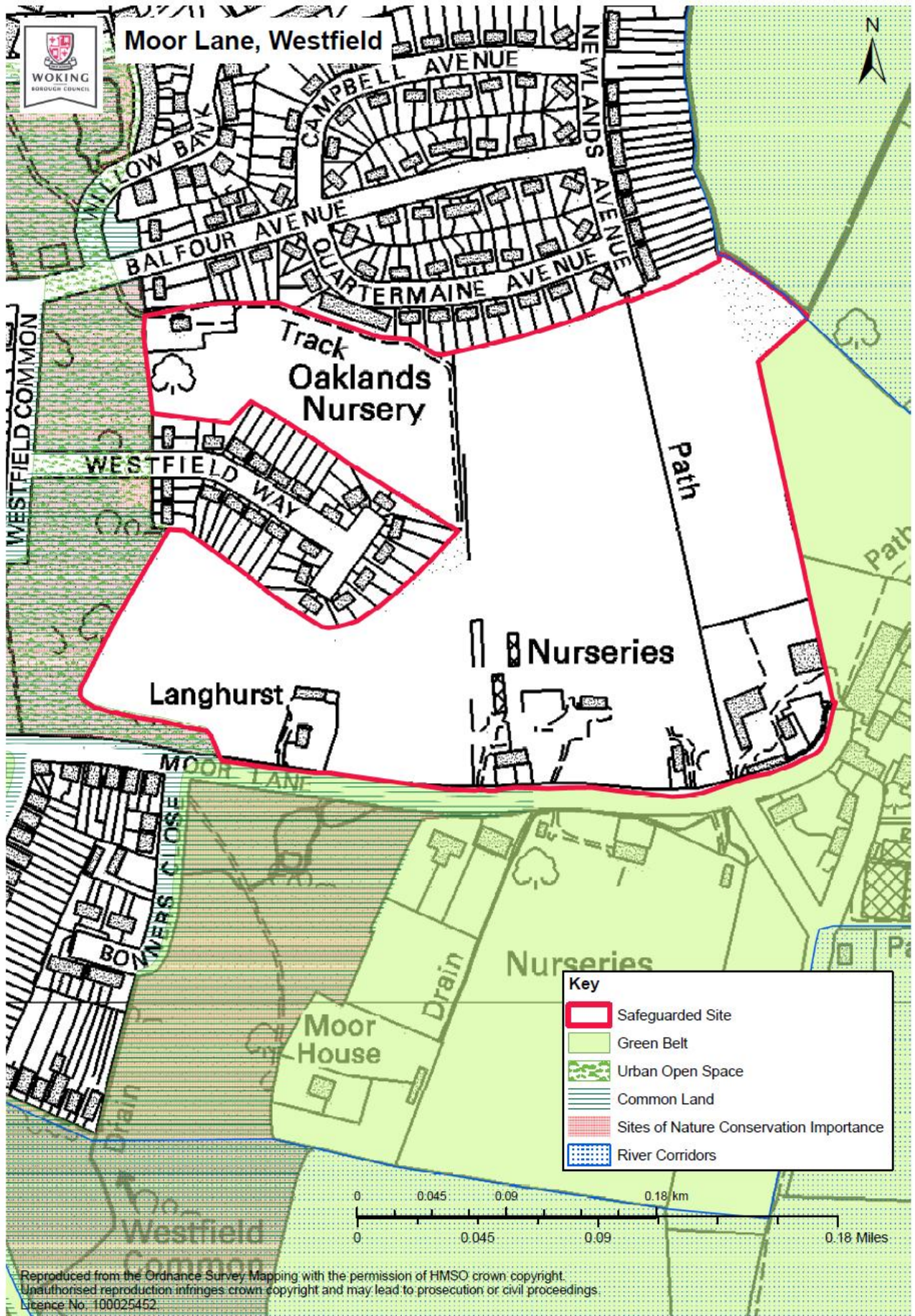
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009 and 2010)
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2009)
- Housing Land Supply Position Statement (2010)
- Housing Topic Paper, 2010
- Employment Land Review - Employment Position Paper (2010)
- Employment Land Review – Market Appraisal (April 2010)
- Gypsies and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (April 2007)
- Transport Assessment (June 2010)
- Town, District and Local Centres Study (September 2009)
- Character Study (October 2010)
- Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study (2006)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2010, forthcoming)
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Audit (2008)
- Appropriate Assessment of Special Protection Areas (forthcoming)
- Appropriate Assessment of Special Areas of Conservation (forthcoming)
- Sustainability Appraisal Report (June 2010)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (July 2009)
- Climate Change Study (June 2010)
- Economic Viability Assessment (July 2010)
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy (2010-2015)
- Woking and Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy (2006 and 2010)
- Population Paper, 2010.

All of the above documents can be viewed on the Council's website [www.woking.gov.uk/woking2027](http://www.woking.gov.uk/woking2027)

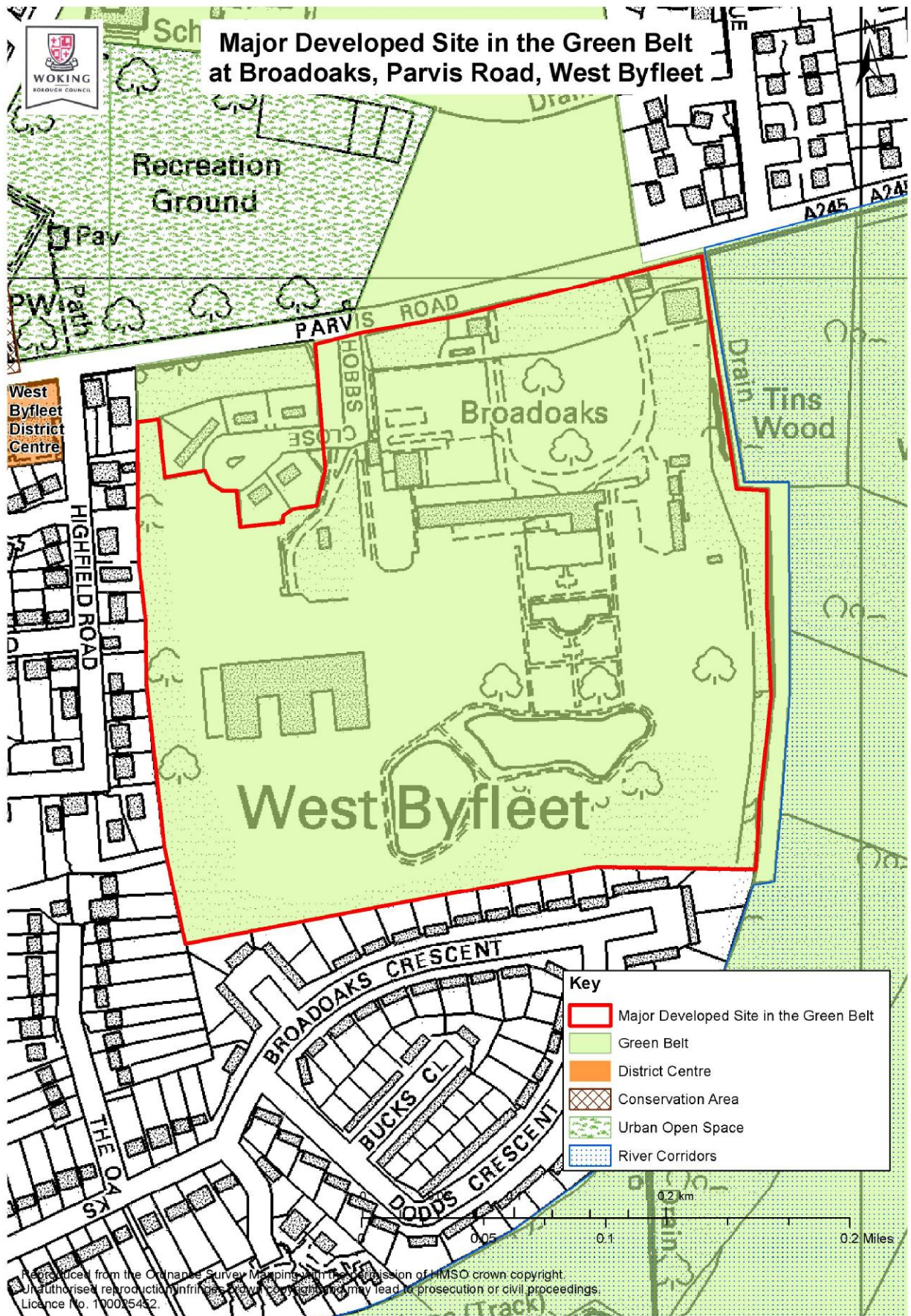
## Appendix 2: Site boundaries









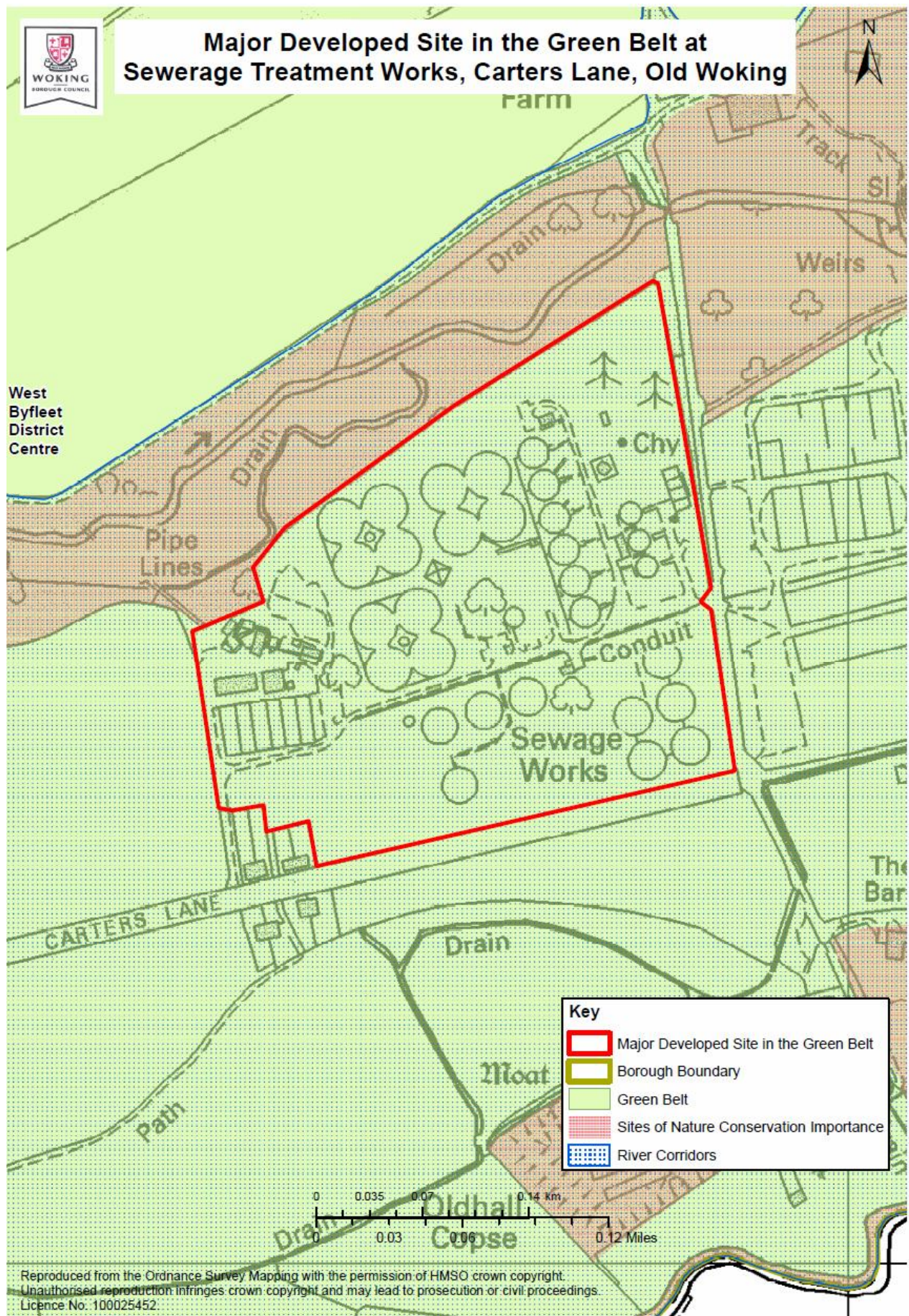






## Major Developed Site in the Green Belt at Sewerage Treatment Works, Carters Lane, Old Woking

West  
Byfleet  
District  
Centre





## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> 2004/5 figure Council Survey, 2009 figure Lambert Smith Hampton

<sup>2</sup> Woking Town Centre boundary is defined on Map 2

<sup>3</sup> Up to 15% of this provision could be accommodated within the Butts Road/Poole Road employment area.

<sup>4</sup> For employment uses occupying self-contained ground floor premises

<sup>5</sup> Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007 (CLG)

<sup>6</sup> On sites outside the employment areas

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.woking.gov.uk/council/planningservice/ldf/ldfresearch/shlaa>

<sup>8</sup> A list of employment areas is provided in the reasoned justification and employment areas are shown on the proposals map

<sup>9</sup> E.g. scrap metal merchants.

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this policy employment floorspace is defined as B class uses

<sup>11</sup> Except small, outmoded office units above ground floor on the High Street and Broadway, where consideration may be given to release for suitable alternative uses where premises are vacant and have been unsuccessfully marketed for a period of 12 months

<sup>12</sup> This policy relates to the larger local centres considered in the market appraisal and listed in the reasoned justification

<sup>13</sup> Comprises the Employment Position Paper and Market Appraisal

<sup>14</sup> A mix of B uses

<sup>15</sup> The policy does not apply to Goldsworth House in Goldsworth Park Local Centre which is recommended for release to alternative use in the market appraisal

<sup>16</sup> A minor alteration to the boundary of the estate removed land immediately north of Berry's Lane due to the predominantly residential nature of this area

<sup>17</sup> Although this site is identified in the market appraisal for consideration for release, it has been retained as it is fully occupied and provides for the needs of small businesses in this part of the Borough

<sup>18</sup> Subject to feasibility work currently being undertaken.

<sup>19</sup> This will be achieved either through current planning obligations or through the future infrastructure tariff system the Council will introduce.

<sup>20</sup> Available from the Department for Transport and Surrey County Council.

<sup>21</sup> In July 2009 Heathrow Airport Ltd/BAA submitted an application to the Secretary of State for Transport for an Order under the Transport and Work Act 1992.

<sup>22</sup> Climate Change and Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Evidence Base, June 2010, ecsc.

<sup>23</sup> Strategy for Sustainable Construction, HM Government, 2008

<sup>24</sup> Future Water, the Government's water Strategy for England, Defra, February 2008

<sup>25</sup> Building (Amendment) Regulations 2009: New Part G in Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations and new minimum water efficiency requirements. The Amendment Regulations were due to come into force on 1 October 2009 but this was postponed to 6 April 2010 by circular 10/2009.