



New Local Plan for Woking Borough Local Development Scheme December 2024 to December 2027

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Table of contents

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1.0 | Introduction..... | 2 |
| 2.0 | The current adopted development plan for Woking..... | 3 |
| 3.0 | Geographical scope of the new local plan | 4 |
| 4.0 | Timetable..... | 4 |
| 5.0 | Evidence..... | 4 |
| | Table 1: Local Plan scope..... | 6 |
| | Table 2: Local Plan timetable..... | 7 |
| 6.0 | Programme management..... | 8 |
| | Glossary of terms | 8 |

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council is preparing a new local plan that will replace the current suite of documents that make up the Local Development Framework. The new local plan will be a single document, a *whole* plan and will set out the policy framework for delivering the Borough’s future development needs for the period 2027/28 to 2044.
- 1.2 Local plans follow a set process set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and need to be prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This LDS sets out the programme for preparing a new local plan, covering the period 2024 to 2027.
- 1.3 The Council has no plans to prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and if this changes, the LDS will be updated accordingly. Progress against this LDS will be reviewed annually and reported by the Council’s Local Plans team. Other documents that will accompany the local plan include:
- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** – sets out how the Council will consult the local community and other interested parties on developing planning policy for Woking and on significant planning applications.
 - **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** – annually produced report setting out information on how the policies in the local plan are being delivered.
- 1.4 This is the first LDS for the new Local Plan. Members agreed the [recommendations of the Executive committee on 12 October 2023](#) to commence work on a new local plan. Shortly after that meeting, a government consultation on a new plan-making system was published and, given the proposed transitional arrangements within the consultation and the publication of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, it would not have been possible for the Council to progress a new plan to completion under the current system, under the transitional arrangements. The necessary detail to

progress with a local plan under the new system was expected during the summer of 2024. This was not forthcoming and the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that launched in July 2024 was very clear that this would now not be published until summer/ autumn 2025. The government have also been very clear that local authorities should progress their local plans without delay. As a result, Woking Borough Council is proposing to progress under the current system but will reassess as part of the annual review of this LDS.

2.0 The current adopted development plan for Woking

2.1 Woking's current development plan consists of:

- Core Strategy
- Development Management Policies Development Plan Document
- Site Allocations Development Plan Document
- Proposals Map

2.2 The policies in these documents are further amplified by the following Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Climate Change (2023)
- Affordable Housing Delivery (2023)
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy (2022)
- Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022)
- Parking Standards (2018)
- Design (2015)
- Hot Food Takeaway (2014)

2.3 Additionally, the following 'made' neighbourhood plans form part of the Borough's development plan and these are:

- Hook Heath Neighbourhood Plan (2015)
- Pyrford Neighbourhood Plan (2017)
- West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan (2017)

2.4 The new local plan will replace the Council's policies only. Neighbourhood plans are a matter for the relevant neighbourhood forum. Surrey County Council also produce plans that, when adopted form part of the Woking Borough development plan. These are:

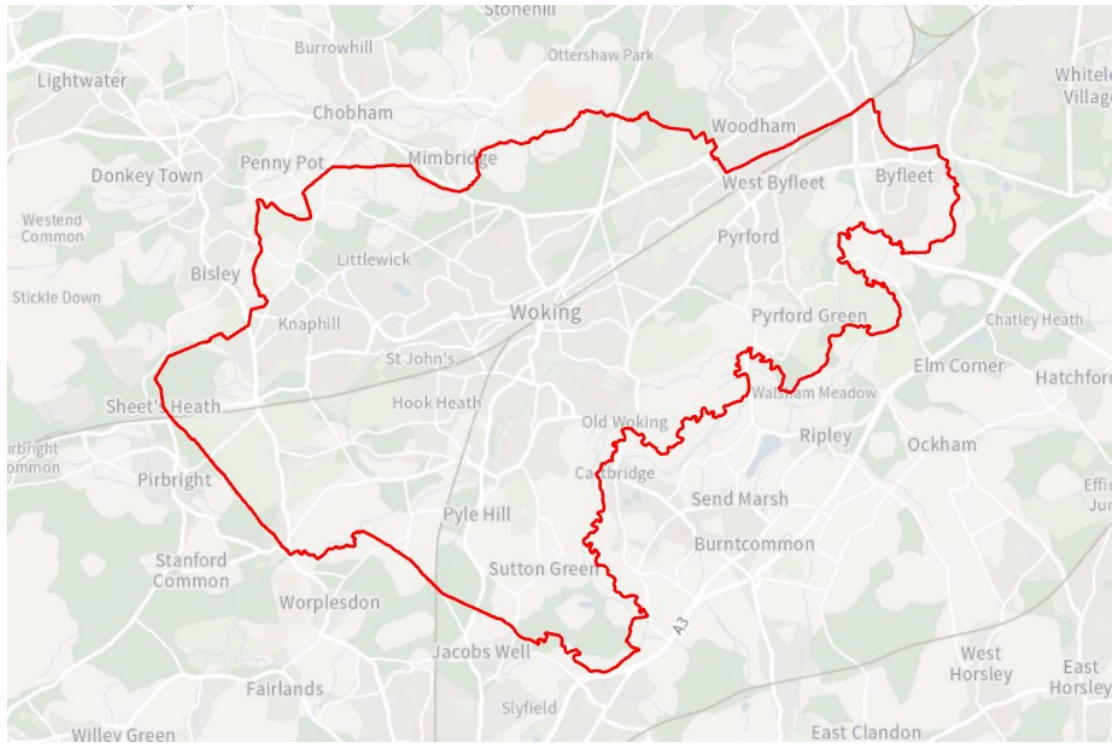
- The Surrey Minerals Plan (2011)
- The Surrey Waste Plan (2020)
- Saved policy of the South East Plan; Policy NRM6 Thames Basin Heath SPA

2.5 The recent consultation draft of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has made specific reference to the introduction of strategic planning. Woking will work with Surrey County Council and the other Surrey authorities as required to shape and develop a strategic approach to planning policy as the opportunities arise. If this results in a formal arrangement, any strategic planning document will form part of the Woking development plan and this LDS will be updated accordingly.

3.0 Geographical scope of the new local plan

- 3.1 The new local plan will cover the whole borough of Woking, shown on the map below for information.

Map 1: Extent of the Borough of Woking including boundary line.



4.0 Timetable

- 4.1 The timetable for preparing the Woking Borough Local Plan is based on current legislation and national planning policy and guidance. Existing resources within the Council are also taken into consideration. The government is clear that it expects local planning authorities to progress with preparing their local plans. Within this context, the Council is commencing plan-making under the current system but will review our course once the detail for the proposed new plan-making system is published. Any transitional arrangements for the new system will need to be carefully considered to determine how best to continue for Woking.
- 4.2 In the meantime, the Council intends to progress at pace with the resources available to deliver a sound new local plan in 2027.
- 4.3 Table 1 sets out the detail on the scope of the new Local Plan and table 2 sets out the dates for each of the key stages of production up to adoption.

5.0 Evidence

- 5.1 Local plan evidence is required to be 'proportionate' to inform and justify the direction of travel for local plan content as well as specific detail. Given that the government is expected to publish National Development Management Policies in summer 2025, the new local plan will focus on our identified development needs and our options and capacity for delivering those needs within the context of the

emerging corporate strategy, Woking for All, focussing on how best to deliver the 'spatial' elements of that plan and wider priorities.

5.2 Local plans are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with the legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are sound if they are *positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy*. To ensure this achieved, the following evidence is in preparation or will be prepared, (not an exhaustive list as circumstances may change):

- Green Belt Review
- Biodiversity Baseline Study
- Green and Blue Infrastructure Assessment
- Landscape Character Assessment Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1) with Level 2 and Sequential Test Assessment if needed
- Water cycle study
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Development Capacity Study
- Settlement Hierarchy Study
- Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show-people Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Strategic Land Assessment
- Woking town centre masterplan and design code
- Traffic and Transport Assessment including assessment of active travel
- Assessment of commercial and economic floorspace needs
- Infrastructure Needs Assessment
- Assessment of Needs for leisure and sports facilities
- Open Space and SANG Needs Assessment
- Whole plan viability of policies and proposals

5.3 The Council will also appraise the sustainability of the new local plan as an iterative part of its production. Sustainability Appraisal reports will also be published at key stages along with the Habitat Regulation Assessment to set out the impacts the new local plan could have on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area and how the Council intends to avoid and/ or mitigate those impacts.

Table 1: Local Plan scope

| Document profile | Coverage | Subject |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Woking Local Plan (2027/2028 to 2044)</p> | <p>Whole of Borough area</p> | <p>The new Local Plan will set out the Council’s vision and strategy for the future delivery of its development needs, including the required objectives and policies.</p> <p>The new Local Plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out the requirement for housing, including specialist housing and Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show-people accommodation and, economic land, and supporting infrastructure • Specifically set out what infrastructure provisions are needed and the timing of that provision • Allocate sites for development • Set out specific place-based policies, for example for Woking Town Centre • Set out policies on green and blue infrastructure nature conservation and biodiversity net gain as well as open space and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces to mitigate against the recreational pressures additional residential development can place on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area • Set out Green Belt policies • Development management policies unless the National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) are published or there are specific issues that justify a local DM policy. |

Table 2: Local Plan timetable

| Local Plan stage | Details | Dates |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Consultation on vision for the borough and identifying the issues facing the borough. (Regulation 18) | Early consultation seeking view on the high-level strategic vision for the future of the Borough and how the new local plan can address the issues it faces over the next 15 to 20 years. | May to June 2025 |
| Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report (SA/SEA). Consultation on issues and options and the preferred approach. (Regulation 18) | Consultation on a Plan setting out 'direction of travel' with draft policies and broad site allocations, supported by evidence and SA/ SEA. | February to March 2026 |
| Formal consultation on the draft plan that the Council intends to submit for examination. Final SA/SEA Report. (Regulation 19) | The Council publishes its final version of the new Local Plan that will be submitted for Examination to the Secretary of State. Updated and additional evidence including the SA and Habitat Regulation Assessment in also published along with a statement that sets out how the Council addressed the main issues raised at Regulation 18 consultation stages. | October to November 2026 |
| Submission of the plan and supporting evidence and documents to the Secretary of State for Examination. (Regulation 22) | The Council submits its final version of the new Local Plan, the evidence base and all procedural documents to demonstrate legal compliance. Any representations received from the above consultations are also supplied. Once submitted, the new Local Plan will be assessed to see if it is legally compliant and meets the tests of 'soundness' set out in national policy. | February to March 2027 |
| Examination hearing sessions | Examinations usually include public hearing sessions run by the Local Plan Inspector and based around those matters and questions identified and set by them. | Summer 2027 |
| Inspector's Report | The Inspector will issue their report setting out any recommendations they may have to the new Local Plan. If this is the case, the Council may need to consult on those recommendations if they are main modifications. | Late 2027 |
| Adoption of new Local Plan | The Council adopts the new Local Plan as part of the Development Plan for Woking Borough and it takes primacy, such as it is the key policy document for the purpose of determining planning applications. | early to mid 2028 |

6.0 Programme management

6.1 The scope and timetable for production of the Local Plan is set out above in tables 1 and 2. Preparing a new Local Plan is a corporate priority and key project and, along with other key corporate projects is monitored quarterly through the Councils internal performance monitoring systems.

6.2 In terms of reporting protocols, the Council operates a committee system. All decisions of the Executive are subject to call-in by the Scrutiny Committee for Environment and Place. The new Local Plan will be reported to Full Council for endorsement at Regulation 19 and for agreement to final adoption of the Plan.

6.3 Inevitably, there are a number of factors that present risks to the progression of the new local plan in line with the timescales set out in this LDS.

- Evolving government policy and introduction of new legislation
- Staff changes
- Project management and capacity of external specialist consultants
- Capacity of statutory consultees to provide input
- SANG capacity

6.4 To ensure the LDS is up-to-date, it will be monitored and reviewed annually and adjustments made, where required. The review will focus on the progress of the plan against the preparation milestones and information on the extent to which policies within the Development Plan are being achieved against key indicators and targets.

Glossary of terms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AMR | Authority Monitoring Report |
| DPD | Development Plan Document |
| LDS | Local Development Scheme |
| SA/ SEA | Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| SCI | Statement of Community Involvement |
| SPD | Supplementary Planning Document |
| SANG | Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace |
| SPA | Special Protection Area |
| PINS | Planning Inspectorate |