



COUNCIL

10 February 2022

To: The Mayor and Members of
WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO A MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend an ORDINARY MEETING of the COUNCIL to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking on THURSDAY, THE TENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2022 at 7.00 pm to transact the business specified in the agenda overleaf

JULIE FISHER
Chief Executive

Civic Offices,
Woking

NOTE: Filming Council Meetings

Please note the meeting will be filmed and will be broadcast live and subsequently as an archive on the Council's website (www.woking.gov.uk). The images and sound recording will also be used for training purposes within the Council. Generally the public seating areas are not filmed. However by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed.



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AGENDA

Prior to the commencement of business, Reverend Lucy Brierley, Minister of the United Reformed Church, Woking will say prayers.

1. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 2 December 2021, as published.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

4. URGENT BUSINESS.

To consider any business which the Chairman rules may be dealt with under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. (Pages 7 - 8)

- (i) To receive declarations of interest from Members and Officers in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.
- (ii) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor A Azad declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (iii) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor K M Davis declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (iv) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (v) In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor C S Kemp declares a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that speaking and voting are permissible.
- (vi) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs Fisher may advise the Council on those items.
- (vii) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Joanne McIntosh, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs McIntosh may advise the Council on those items.
- (viii) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Planning,

Giorgio Framaliccio, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mr Framaliccio may advise the Council on those items.

- (ix) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Geoff McManus, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mr McManus may advise the Council on those items.
- (x) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she is a Council-appointed director. The companies are listed in the attached schedule. The interests are such that Mrs Strongitharm may advise the Council on those items.
- (xi) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declares a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arises from her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club. The interest is such that Mrs Clarke may advise the Council on those items.

6. QUESTIONS.

To deal with written questions submitted by Members under Standing Order 8.1. Copies of the questions and of the draft replies (which are subject to amendment by the Leader of the Council) will be laid upon the table.

7. COUNCIL TAX WBC22-002. Report to follow.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES WBC22-004. (Pages 9 - 18)

To receive and consider recommendations from the Executive.

- 8a. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2022-23 EXE22-001
- 8b. Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2022-23 EXE22-002
- 8c. Investment Programme 2021-22 to 2025-26 EXE22-003
- 8d. Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies EXE22-004
- 8e. Notice of Motion - Cllr M Whitehand - Women's safety in public places EXE22-020.
- 8f. Notice of Motion - Cllr E Nicholson - Male violence against women EXE22-021.
- 8g. Notice of Motion - Cllr A-M Barker - Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting EXE22-022.
- 8h. Phase 2 – Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan (IDP) - East of the Borough and Borough-wide Study EXE22-014. (Pages 19 - 80)
- 8i. Review of the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) EXE22-012. (Pages 81 - 108)
- 8j. Review of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy EXE22-013. (Pages 109 - 186)
- 8k. Review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) EXE22-011. (Pages 187 - 230)

9. **DR GIFTY EDILA'S REPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - UPDATE TO COUNCIL ON RECOMMENDATIONS** WBC22-007. (Pages 231 - 244)
10. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION REVIEW PANEL** WBC22-006. (Pages 245 - 264)
11. **DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACE - WARD OF ST JOHNS** WBC22-008. (Pages 265 - 270)
12. **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022-23 AND GENDER PAY GAP DATA** WBC22-003. (Pages 271 - 284)
13. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR(S) TO COUNCIL COMPANIES** WBC22-005. (Pages 285 - 290)
14. **NOTICES OF MOTION.**

To deal with any motions received in accordance with Standing Order 5.0. Any motions received before the deadline has passed for the receipt of motions will be published in advance the meeting.

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published - 2 February 2022

Note: At the close of the meeting the Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Lyons, would like to invite the following to join him in the parlour:-

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Hussain, and Councillors A Azad, T Aziz, A-M Barker, A Boote, K Davis, G Elson, D Harlow, K Howard, C Kemp, R Leach, L Morales, E Nicholson, C Rana and J Sanderson, together with Officers attending the meeting.

Agenda Item 5

Schedule Referred to in Declaration of Interests

Council-appointed directorships

Councillor A Azad	
Export House Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Rutland Woking (Carthouse Lane) Limited	Thameswey Limited
Rutland (Woking) Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited
Thameswey Developments Limited	Victoria Square Residential Limited
Thameswey Energy Limited	VSW Hotel Limited
Victoria Square Woking Limited	

Councillor K M Davis	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	LAC 2021 Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited

Councillor D Harlow	
Thameswey Guest Houses Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Thameswey Housing Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Thameswey Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited

Councillor C S Kemp	
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Thameswey Developments Limited	Thameswey Limited
Thameswey Energy Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Julie Fisher, Chief Executive	
Thameswey Limited	Victoria Square Residential Limited
VSW Hotel Limited	Victoria Square Woking Limited

Joanne McIntosh, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	
Thameswey Developments Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Thameswey Guest Houses Limited	Thameswey Limited

Giorgio Framallicco, Director of Planning	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Thameswey Energy Limited
Brunswick Road (Pirbright) Residents Company Limited	Thameswey Limited
Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Export House Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited
Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Geoff McManus, Director of Neighbourhood Services	
Brookwood Cemetery Limited	Thameswey Energy Limited
Brookwood Park Limited	Thameswey Limited
Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited	Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
Export House Limited	Thameswey Solar Limited
Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited	Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited
LAC 2021 Limited	Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited
Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited	Woking Shopping Limited

Louise Strongitharm, Director of Housing	
Rutland Woking (Carhouse Lane) Limited	Thameswey Developments Limited
Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Rutland (Woking) Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Thameswey Limited	

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 20 January 2022 and 3 February 2022, as set out in this report. The minutes of the Executive held on 3 February 2022 will be published in due course. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 are set out in this report.

Procedure to be followed.

The Mayor will take the report on Council Tax 2022-23 (Agenda Item 7) first, together with the recommendations of the Executive meeting on 3 February 2022 relating to the following:

- 8A. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2022-23.
- 8B. Housing Revenue Account Budgets 2022-23.
- 8C. Investment Programme 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- 8D. Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies.

The items above will be debated after the Leader of the Council's Budget Statement.

The remaining recommendations from the Executive, listed below and set out in detail later in this report, will be considered once the Council Tax for 2022-23 has been agreed.

The Executive held on 20 January 2022:

- 8E Notice of Motion - Cllr M Whitehand - Women's safety in public places EXE22-020.
- 8F Notice of Motion - Cllr E Nicholson - Male violence against women EXE22-021.
- 8G Notice of Motion - Cllr A-M Barker - Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting EXE22-022.
- 8H Phase 2 – Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan (IDP) - East of the Borough and Borough-wide Study EXE22-014.
- 8I Review of the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) EXE22-012.
- 8J Review of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy EXE22-013.
- 8K Review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) EXE22-011.

EXECUTIVE – 3 FEBRUARY 2022

8A. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS), GENERAL FUND, SERVICE PLANS, BUDGETS AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2022-23.

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

That (v) the Revenue Estimates and Human Resource requirements for 2022/23 be approved;

(vi) a Band D Council Tax for the Borough of Woking for 2022/23 of £255.46 be approved; and

(vii) the Prudential Indicators at Appendix 3 to the report be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment Programme, revenue budgets and Final Government Settlement.

8B. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETS 2022-23.

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

That (i) the draft Housing Revenue Account budgets for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed; and

(ii) with effect from 4 April 2022, rents be increased by 4.1%.

8C. INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2021-22 TO 2025-26.

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

That (i) the Investment Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26 be approved subject to reports on projects where appropriate; and

(ii) the proposed financing arrangements be approved.

8D. CAPITAL, INVESTMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

That (ii) the Capital and Investment Strategies for 2022/23 be approved; and

- (iii) the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators set out in table 1 of Section 4 of the Treasury Management Strategy and the MRP policy set out in Appendix A be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment Programme, revenue budgets and Government Funding Settlement.**

EXECUTIVE – 20 JANUARY 2022

8E NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M WHITEHAND - WOMEN'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES EXE22-020.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Whitehand

“The Council will bring forward policies that ensure women feel safe when out and about in Woking’s public places. One of which should be the designation of women only parking places in its car parks during the hours of darkness, especially those sited near staircases and entrances. Women’s safety should feature greatly in its community safety programme and every endeavour be given in establishing what areas can be reviewed that would deliver such assurance.”

Councillor Whitehand attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of women only parking spaces, and it was noted that neither the Council’s Parking Service Manager or Surrey Police Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) were aware of any segregated type parking facility in the UK. The Executive was informed that the DOCO recommended that female only areas were not used and that people who were concerned around their safety should be encouraged to use the main car parks around the Peacocks Centre due to the high footfall.

Councillor Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, welcomed the Motion and was supportive of promoting more awareness of the measures already in place, such as clearly signed help points in the Council’s main larger car parks which were linked to the control room and manned 24 hours. It was noted that the Council’s car parks had been awarded the Park Mark, a Police Crime Prevention Initiative aimed at reducing crime and fear of crime in parking facilities. Officers would continue to look at further improvements in order to ensure women felt safe in the Council’s car parks.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8F NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR E NICHOLSON - MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN EXE22-021.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

“That Woking Borough Council notes that violence against women is a serious, prevalent, and preventable issue in our society.

Male violence against women must be ended, once and for all. Simply agreeing with the principle is not enough.

As a responsible authority we have a moral obligation to stand against and work to end male violence against women.

MOTION

Recommendations of the Executive

Council recognises the importance of White Ribbon and its contribution as part of a global campaign taking action to stop male violence against women and resolves to become an accredited authority.

Council commits to making White Ribbon Day part of the civic calendar with ambassador-led activities involving staff, members and the public.

Council agrees to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign through regular updates and features in internal and external communications and provide opportunity to highlight the work of the Women's Refuge and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council will provide support to staff and members to take the pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and to become ambassadors and champions. Council will work closely with local partnership agencies and organisations involved in tackling male violence against women to work towards making Woking a White Ribbon Borough.

Council commits to hosting annual awareness training for all members."

Councillor Nicholson attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive heard that the Council already acknowledged White Ribbon and had supported the 16 days of activism in recent years. The Executive was supportive of the Council becoming an accredited authority, noting that it would require a commitment across the organisation and a steering group to be identified to oversee a three year action plan. Following a question, the Executive was advised that the cost of accreditation was £300 annually and would also require sufficient staff resource. Councillor Kemp stated that he would be happy to volunteer as a male ambassador in support of White Ribbon.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8G NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - GOLDSWORTH PARK LAKE FOOTPATH LIGHTING EXE22-022.

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor A-M Barker

"Motion to update Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting to LED system

Council notes that

Taking exercise in the open air has become increasingly popular in a Covid world.

Reducing journeys by carbon emitting vehicles is good for the climate change agenda.

Goldsworth Park lake path provides both a pleasant and enjoyable environment for exercise and a walking route for journeys across and around Goldsworth Park.

Well lit paths encourage use of walking routes, particularly in winter months.

Many people will not use paths with significant dark spots.

Recommendations of the Executive

There have been recent failures of lights on the Goldsworth lake path and SERCO are struggling to find parts to fix the lights.

Unlike most lighting in the borough the lights around Goldsworth Park lake are the responsibility of Woking Council.

Surrey County Council is converting all of its lighting stock to more environmentally friendly LED lights, which last longer and have fewer problems.

Council calls for:

A review of options to secure replacement LED lighting for Goldsworth Park lake footpath, to include:

Investigating whether Surrey would take on the responsibility for these lights as there may be economies of scale to upgrade these lights alongside work on their own lighting stock

Exploring funding options from environmental funders to update the lights.

Look for funding that may be available from crime and safety budgets, including those held by the Police and Crime Commissioner.”

Councillor Barker attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Councillor Barker highlighted the benefits of LED lights in terms of cost effectiveness and energy use. The Executive noted that two of the lights around Goldsworth Park lake had been replaced with LED lights and Officers would gain feedback on the effectiveness of the new lights before making further plans. Officers would continue to explore funding options.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

8H PHASE 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY STUDY AND DELIVERY PLAN (IDP) - EAST OF THE BOROUGH AND BOROUGH-WIDE STUDY EXE22-014.

NOTE: A copy of the document presented to the Executive, with the amendments agreed at the meeting, is attached for information.

Following the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced a report which set out the second part of the joint Study with other local authorities and partners on the future infrastructure requirements of the east of the Borough. It was noted that the revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) also reviewed the borough-wide infrastructure needs to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the IDP at its meeting on 16 December 2021. The Portfolio Holder advised that an Infrastructure Sub-Group of the Joint Committee had been set up to co-ordinate the delivery of infrastructure.

Discussion ensued on the comprehensive report and it was noted that it was intended to combine Parts 1 and 2 of the Study and to publish the revised IDP as a single document. Comments raised regarding formatting could be taken on board by Officers.

Regarding crematorium capacity, the Executive was informed that no evidence was provided by infrastructure providers during the 2021 review to indicate that the needs of existing and future residents generated by planned growth would not be met by Woking Crematorium and crematoria in adjacent boroughs. However the Portfolio Holder highlighted that the IDP

continued to identify an opportunity to enhance infrastructure provision at Brookwood Cemetery, including increasing cremation capacity.

Members discussed infrastructure needs in the Borough including gas and electricity, the need of the ambulance service, and the Byfleets pharmacy needs. It was noted that the IDP was a living document which was reviewed bi-annually and could be updated to reflect changes in requirements. Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging capacity, the Executive heard that UK Power Networks (UKPN) had identified the growth in demand for EVs and was prioritising areas which its models had identified as the first ones to be overloaded when the new load materialised.

Following a query regarding out-of-date information in the IDP, the Portfolio Holder agreed to take the comments onboard and confirmed that the IDP would be updated before it was published.

Following a question concerning the latest status of the Rive Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme and Horsell SANGs, the Executive was advised that the work was being led by Surrey County Council and supported by Woking Borough Council and Horsell Common Preservation Society as the landowner. It was noted that there had been delays in receiving the required consents. Once consent had been received it was hoped to commence the works, which were expected to take around six months to complete, in Spring 2022. Questions were also raised regarding cycling, playing pitches, playgrounds and Sanway-Byfleet Flood Alleviation project.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the contents of the Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan be noted and approved.

Reason: To ensure that future development is supported by adequate infrastructure in a timely manner to facilitate sustainable development.

81 REVIEW OF THE OUTLOOK, AMENITY AND DAYLIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) EXE22-012.

NOTE: A copy of the document presented to the Executive, with the amendments agreed at the meeting, is attached for information.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the consultation on the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the report at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SPD and the report.

Following a request for the document to highlight changes in order to make it more easily accessible, the Portfolio Holder agreed to discuss the request with Officers.

Discussion ensued on paragraph 3.18 of the revised SPD on page 172 of the Agenda Pack regarding communal amenity space. Officers advised that it would be difficult to request that a minimum amount of amenity space should be delivered by a development and advised against setting a rule in this regard, noting that other factors may make a scheme favourable. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed with Officers prior to Council.

Following a query regarding the list of consultees, the Executive was advised that Officers were currently reviewing the list to ensure it was up-to-date.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the various representations to the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;

(ii) the revised Outlook, Amenity and Daylight SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing development across the borough and other planning decisions;

(iii) Appendix 2 of the SPD which relates to examples of separation distances of other local authorities be deleted; and

(iv) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.

Reason: To ensure that there is up to date guidance on achieving suitable and appropriate outlook, amenity, daylight and sunlight in new residential development.

8J REVIEW OF THE THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AVOIDANCE STRATEGY EXE22-013.

NOTE: A copy of the document presented to the Executive, with the amendments agreed at the meeting, is attached for information.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the draft Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA) Avoidance Strategy, and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments to the revised Avoidance Strategy be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the Strategy at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the Strategy.

Following a question regarding existing open space accessible to residents, the Executive was advised that existing open space could be brought to SANG standard if it met the necessary criteria. However, any existing use of the land would be discounted from the SANG capacity. Regarding transport and fuel costs for the ranger, the Executive was informed that the rangers patrolled the SANGs and the cost for doing so was part of the maintenance cost.

Discussion ensued on disabled access to SANGs. The Portfolio Holder commented that the Council would always consider accessibility when planning any new SANG or undertaking improvement works to existing SANG, with a view to making as accessible as possible within the limitations of the site. The use of boardwalks at Heather Farm was highlighted.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the various representations to the consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (ii) the revised Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of avoiding harm to the integrity of the Special Protection Areas due to development pressures;
- (iii) the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy should apply to all relevant decisions from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022; and
- (iv) Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council work in partnership to ensure access to SANGs and other parts of the Borough by all modes are considered, and this to be added to the remit of the Infrastructure Task Group.

Reason: To help avoid harm to the SPAs as a result of development.

8K REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) EXE22-011.

NOTE: A copy of the document presented to the Executive, with the amendments agreed at the meeting, is attached for information.

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, the Executive received a report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and recommended to Council that the proposed modifications to the SCI be adopted to provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the revised SCI at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SCI.

Councillor Ashall highlighted a modification which he was currently working on with Officers regarding making clear to residents who would receive neighbour letters and why, for example, neighbours two doors down from planning applications. The Executive welcomed the proposed modification and hoped that progress would be made before Council on 10 February 2022.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the various representations to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) consultation together with Officers' responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (ii) the revised Statement of Community Involvement included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted for the purposes of setting out how the Council wishes the local community to be

involved and engaged when preparing key planning policy documents and determining of planning applications; and

(iii) the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.

Reason: To provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions.

Background Papers: None.

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Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ayesha Azad
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Shadow Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ann-Marie Barker
Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 2 February 2022

REPORT ENDS



Local Development Framework Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan

DRAFT 2021 Review – PART 2 OF 2

November 2021

Produced by the Planning Policy Team.

**For further information please contact:
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DRAFT

1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This report represents the second part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) review. It should be read in conjunction with the first part¹, which sets out in detail the methodology and latest context under which the report has been prepared.
- 1.2 The first phase of the review focused on four key infrastructure types: transport, education, health and flood alleviation. This second phase provides an update on the remaining themes, where new information has become available:
- Social and community infrastructure;
 - Public services (including emergency services);
 - Utilities; and
 - Green infrastructure.
- 1.3 Planning for infrastructure is a continuous and iterative process, and the IDP represents the Council's understanding of the infrastructure required to support the development proposed at the time the IDP is prepared. The IDP will therefore continue to be updated as committed in the Core Strategy to reflect the latest available information on infrastructure requirements and provision. The study is structured into sections. Section 2 is a schedule of infrastructure delivery requirements that summarises the key infrastructure projects that have been identified to meet future development needs. Sections 3 to 6 comprise of detailed analysis that has informed the schedule.

¹ Available here: <https://moderngov.woking.gov.uk/documents/s19257/EXE21-062%20Appendix%201.pdf>

2. Schedule of Infrastructure Delivery Requirements

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Project and Location	Delivery Requirement		Lead delivery organisation	Estimated cost	Funding sources	Funding Gap	Other comments
	Timing	Critical/ Essential/ Preferred					
Supported accommodation							
Provision of new Extra Care Sheltered Housing scheme in east of Borough	COMPLETION OCT 2021	E	WBC	£17m	Homes England grant, Council borrowing	None	Hale End Court in Old Woking – 48 units to be completed in October 2021, of which 12 will be for tenants needing care.
Provision of additional extra care housing and sheltered housing	To 2027	E	SCC, WBC, private investment	To be determined	Grants, SCC, private investment	To be determined	Contingent on identification of suitable sites and providers. Extra care housing is regarded by SCC as being in greatest shortage. Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme – 117 net additional sheltered/supported living units planned for delivery by April 2023. 196 extra care units (Class C2) approved at land at Station Approach, West Byfleet – under construction.
Provision of additional care home units	To 2027	E	SCC, WBC, private investment	To be determined	Grants, SCC, private investment	To be determined	SCC Commissioning Statement indicates c.127 beds needed by 2025. As at 1 April 2019, supply includes an 80-bed care home at the Broadoaks site, West Byfleet.
Provision of specialist accommodation for	To 2027	E	WBC	To be determined	Grants, SCC, private investment	To be determined	New premises for York Road Project required.

vulnerable young people							
Provision of additional supported independent living accommodation for those with learning disabilities and/or autism	To 2027	E	SCC, WBC, Private developers	£1.9m for feasibility study	SCC capital fund, private capital	Future stages to be determined	In 2021, four sites in the county have been identified by SCC to deliver c.85 units of new supported independent living accommodation to meet needs, one of which is in Woking. Project at feasibility stage to develop a business case for each scheme. The site locations are commercially sensitive at this time.
Provision of 'move on' accommodation for those with support needs	To 2027	E	SCC, WBC	To be determined	Grants, SCC, private investment	To be determined	Affected by Covid-19 pandemic response. Funding secured for move-on accommodation to support rough sleepers, and WBC is committed to continue to provide support. Council to undertake a strategic review of temporary accommodation portfolio to identify future development opportunities.
Community facilities							
Development of youth activities within the Borough's existing youth and community centres	To 2027	P	WBC, SCC	N/a	N/a	N/a	Future priorities are to work with SCC to make best use of existing youth centres (Lakers , WYAC and Sheerwater Youth Centre); and support future community delivery opportunities via Centres for the Community (including replacement Sheerwater infrastructure – see entry below).

Development of a Community Facility Hub in Sheerwater	April 2023	P	SCC, WBC, NWS ICP, Local stakeholders	To be determined	Developer contributions	To be determined	Work on yellow phase to commence later in 2021, which will contain the 'community campus'. Needs assessment underway. Parkview and health centre will not be demolished until the new facilities are built.
Re-provision of Centre for Community in Byfleet	<i>REVISED PROJECT COMPLETED – AUTUMN 2020</i>	P	WBC		WBC, TBC		New community-led approach to refurbishment of St Mary's Centre has been adopted in response to the pandemic and associated income challenges. New Art Café and outdoor space, salon and halls completed in Autumn 2020.
Expansion and improvements to the Borough's other Centres for the Community – The Vyne, Moorcroft, Parkview	To 2027	P	WBC in partnership with local community groups	To be determined	WBC Investment Programme	To be determined	Community-led approach to refurbishment of Moorcroft Centre using community innovation, due to income challenges as a result of the pandemic. Modernisation of the centre, including new Haven café and outside space was completed end of 2020. Parkview: plans to redevelop community infrastructure will form part of wider Sheerwater Regeneration work. Vyne: a busy centre which has also been recently modernised. No additional infrastructure enhancements identified at this stage.
<i>NEW ITEM:</i> New non-faith community facility in West Byfleet	To 2027	P	West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum, WBC	To be determined	Neighbourhood CIL, SCC	To be determined	Due to scale of growth planned in West Byfleet, the Neighbourhood Forum

					community grants, other sources tbc.		have identified a need for a new community facility. Dependent on identification of available land and sources of revenue funding.
<i>NEW ITEM:</i> Enhancements to The Maybury Centre	To 2027	P	WBC, Maybury Centre Trust	£25,000 <u>To be determined</u>	<u>Community Fund grants, other sources tbc.</u>	<u>None To be determined</u>	<u>Proposals for a new café and associated refurbishment to help the centre remain sustainable and to continue delivering its services to meet future need. Potential for refurbishment to help the centre remain sustainable, subject to the identification of funding.</u>
Upgrade of other existing community facilities	To 2027	P	WBC, Neighbourhood Forums	To be determined	Community Fund, CIL, S106	To be determined	To improve and upgrade community facilities to meet future needs arising from population growth.
Indoor Sports							
Programme of improvements to Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park to increase capacity	<i>COMPLETED</i>	P	Freedom Leisure Ltd ²	£1.6m	Freedom Leisure Ltd		Includes flumes and changing rooms upgrade, heating and ventilation upgrade.
Hoe Valley School Leisure Centre	<i>COMPLETED</i>	P	Freedom Leisure Ltd	£16.5m	DfE / CIL / S106		Opened September 2018
Bishop David Brown School Leisure Centre	<i>COMPLETED</i>	P	Thamesway Developments Ltd	£12.6m	Thamesway Developments Ltd		Eastwood <u>Leisure Centre opening-opened</u> October 2021
Public Realm							
Improvements to town centre public realm/ civic spaces	To 2027	E	Woking Shopping	To be determined	S106, WBC, private investors		Works underway as part of town centre redevelopments

² Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park managed by Freedom Leisure Ltd since December 2011 for a period of 10 years.

Improvements to West Byfleet district centre public realm/civic spaces	Summer 2024	E	Developer	Unknown	Developer contributions	n/a	To be delivered as part of Sheer House redevelopment proposals
Improvements to Sheerwater public realm	By 2026	E	Thamesway Developments Ltd	Unknown	S106, WBC, private investors		Facilitated by regeneration of Sheerwater
Provision of new public art ³	To 2027	P	WBC, private investors	To be determined	WBC, S106, private investors	Dependant on type/ nature/ location of development.	

PUBLIC SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE

Project and Location	Delivery Requirement		Lead delivery organisation	Estimated cost	Funding sources	Funding Gap	Other comments
	Timing	Critical/ Essential/ Preferred					
Waste							
Potential need for a new waste management facility <i>UPDATE: land has been allocated outside the borough to meet future needs</i>	2019-2033	E	SCC	n/a	SCC	n/a	Five strategic waste sites and land for one household waste materials recycling facility have been allocated to meet future demand in the new Surrey Waste Local Plan 2019-2033 (replacing the 2008 Plan). Byfleet and Monument Way East Industrial Estates identified as broad areas which could potentially accommodate waste management development.
Libraries							
Re-provision of library service in West Byfleet	By 2025	E	SCC, WBC, private developer	Developer supplies shell.	Developer contributions,	To be determined	Planning permission secured for redevelopment

³ Details of this are set out in the IDP and the Council's Public Art Strategy.

to improve infrastructure and increase capacity				Fit out costs to be determined based on detailed design.	Capital programme		of Sheer House. Detailed design and specification of replacement library underway.
Re-provision and enhancement of library in Byfleet (currently a Community Partnered Library)	2025-2026	E	SCC, WBC, Local stakeholders, Private developer	Developer supplies shell. Fit out costs to be determined.	Developer contributions, Capital programme	To be determined	Currently classed a CPL library. Library services to be retained/reprovided elsewhere during any redevelopment of the site.
<i>NEW ITEM:</i> modernisation of Woking Town Centre and Knaphill Libraries, including through use of new technologies to make services more efficient, engaging and accessible.	By 2025	P	SCC	To be determined	Developer contributions, Capital Programme	To be determined	As per Surrey County Council's Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025.
Cemeteries							
Brookwood Cemetery restoration and development	2020-2040	E	WBC	Rolling annual amount of £1m for capital improvements	WBC capital and revenue grants. Cemetery income.	None	Allocated site in SA DPD. The Masterplan and Experience Plan were approved by Council in July 2020 to guide development over the next 10-20 years. New visitor facilities will include a café, walking trail, education centre and museum, subject to planning approval. Step 1 sees gradual improvements to the landscape to re-establish the cemetery as a high-quality, cared for public amenity. First priority is to meet growing demand for burials and cremations due to local and regional growth and an ageing population.
Places of worship							

Facility to accommodate expansion of Coign Church	COMPLETED	P	The Coign Church				New and extended church facility delivered (PLAN/2018/0410).
Ambulance services							
Enhancement and expansion of Chertsey Make-Ready Centre (within Runnymede borough), or new replacement in alternative location.	To 2025/26	P	SECamb	c.£6m	Government capital funding	To be determined	Enhancements to Chertsey Make Ready Centre which serves Woking but is located in Runnymede borough.
New Ambulance Community Response Post in the Town Centre.	To 2025/26	P	SECamb	c.£100k	Government capital funding	To be determined	Review of existing ACRPs ongoing. New ACRP sought in Woking Town Centre.
Police							
Capital infrastructure to support additional uniformed officers and support/divisional staff needed to police an estimated additional 1,298 incidents per year generated by housing growth, including: start-up costs; floorspace conversion costs; vehicles; ANPR cameras.	To 2027	E	Surrey Police	c.£525,169	Government capital grant, capital receipts, Council Tax, revenue contributions, borrowing, Developer contributions	c.£525,169	As per Surrey Police's assessment of the implications of growth and the delivery of housing upon the policing infrastructure in the borough (2017).
Potential upgrade/ replacement of Woking Police Station (and Mount Browne Station in Guildford), with a single, modern HQ. New Surrey Police Headquarters	Completion by Spring/Summer 2024 c.2029	P	Surrey Police	£16.7m (full cost will only be finalised once RIBA stage 2 is complete) To be determined	Government capital grant, capital receipts, revenue contributions, borrowing	To be determined	Site in Leatherhead purchased. Redevelopment of Mount Browne Station in Guildford, to be delivered in phases. Woking Police Station to close with some services transferring to the Civic Offices.
Fire and rescue							
No specific additional needs identified over the remaining lifetime of the Core Strategy – new Fire Station on Goldsworth Road delivered as part of redevelopment of site.							

UTILITY SERVICES

Project and Location	Delivery Requirement		Lead delivery organisation	Estimated cost	Funding sources	Funding Gap	Other comments
	Timing	Critical/ Essential/ Preferred					
Electricity							
May be requirements for improvements to existing National Grid substation or a new grid supply point	To 2027	E	UK Power Networks and developers	To be determined	UK Power Networks / Developer funding	None	No major schemes identified to meet projected demand caused by growth.
Gas							
New development will require new gas supply connections	To 2027	E	SGN and developers	To be determined	SGN / Developer funding	None	No major schemes identified to meet projected demand caused by growth.
Decentralised Heat Networks							
Expansion of existing distribution networks in town centre Heat Zone 1 (Victoria Way)	To 2027	E	Thamesway Energy Ltd, WBC	c.£1.0m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, developer contributions, Heat Networks Investment Project funding	To be determined	Expansion to connect to Cornerstone (aka Elizabeth House) completed. Further strategic expansion along Victoria Way planned.
New energy station in Heat Zone 2 and distribution infrastructure	COMPLETED	E	Thamesway Energy Ltd, WBC	£25m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, developer contributions	None	Cost of delivery was higher than estimate.
Expansion of energy distribution infrastructure to Heat Zone 3, including under Victoria Arch.	To 2027	E	Thamesway Energy Ltd, WBC	c.£1.75m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, developer contributions, Heat Networks Investment Project Funding	To be determined	Contingent on delivery of Victoria Arch widening (see Transport section of IDP).
Renewable heat generators within Poole Road Energy Centre	To 2027	E	Thamesway Energy Ltd	c.£3m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, Green Heat Networks Fund	To be determined	

Centralised and distributed thermal storage throughout Town Centre network(s)	To 2027	P	Thamesway Energy Ltd, Private developers	c.£1m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, developer contributions, Heat Networks Investment Project Fund, Green Heat Networks Fund	To be determined	
New decentralised energy network within Sheerwater Regeneration Area	To 2027	E	Thamesway Energy Ltd, WBC	c.£10m	Thamesway Energy Ltd, Green Heat Networks Fund	To be determined	
Water supply							
Renewal of distribution mains and trunk mains in Wey Water Resources Zone 6	<i>COMPLETED</i>	E	Affinity Water	To be determined	Affinity Water investment	To be determined	
Leakage reduction across network	Ongoing	E	Affinity Water	To be determined	Affinity Water investment	To be determined	
Major local network reinforcement across the Woking area to meet additional load imposed by projected development, in the form of new pipelines and potentially new pumping stations.	To 2027	E	Affinity Water, Developers	To be determined	Affinity Water investment, Private developers	To be determined	Affinity Water's current plan considers reinforcements to be installed in the next few years according to forecast domestic and employment-education demand. New infrastructure will be available for the initial plan period that may be able to accommodate initial phases of projected growth.
Waste water							
Upgrades to existing wastewater network to serve new/ redevelopment	To 2027	C	Thames Water	To be determined	Thames Water, private developers	None	Redevelopment provides an opportunity for important capacity uplift; development that attenuates surface water flow (e.g. through SUDS / improving run-off to Greenfield rates) 'creates capacity' for the additional

							foul water flow anticipated from new or intensified development.
Expansion and improvements at Old Woking STW	To 2027	C	Thames Water	To be determined	Thames Water	To be determined	Designation as Major Development Site in Core Strategy.
Digital Telecommunications							
Continued improvements to existing mobile network and new base stations	To 2027	E	Mobile operators	Not known	Mobile operators	Not known	
Borough-wide improvements to digital infrastructure through actions in Surrey's Digital Infrastructure Strategic Framework and Woking's emerging Digital Infrastructure Strategy	To 2027	E	SCC, telecoms providers, WBC, BDUK	To be determined	Government grants (Project Gigabit), Investment by telecoms providers, local grants	To be determined	SCC's Digital Infrastructure Framework covers gigabit-capable broadband and 5G coverage. Identification of gaps in coverage is underway (due for completion Autumn 2021).
New development designed to enable high-quality and future-proofed broadband connectivity – ultra fast full fibre to the premises.	To 2027	E	Developers, telecoms providers	To be determined	Developer-led	To be determined	In accordance with Development Plan policy, and potentially amended Building Regulations (under consultation).

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Project and Location	Delivery Requirement		Lead delivery organisation	Estimated cost	Funding sources	Funding Gap	Other comments
	Timing	Critical/ Essential/ Preferred					
Outdoor sports⁴ and recreation							
Implementation of improved and new pitch provision as set out in the Playing Pitch &	To 2027	P	WBC, NGBs, Clubs, Schools	£5.244m	IP, S106, CIL	To be determined	

⁴ These are listed in full in the Final Action Plan, as referenced in the IDP, available at: www.woking2027.info/ldfresearch

Outdoor Facilities Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2027							
<i>NEW ITEM:</i> West Byfleet and Byfleet Recreation Ground improvements	To 2027	P	WBC, WBNF	To be determined	S106, CIL, NCIL, Community grants, other sources tbc	To be determined	Improvements could include refurbishment of West Byfleet tennis courts, cricket square, pavilion and access path, as per West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan, and improvements to Byfleet tennis courts.
Natural and semi-natural open space (including SANG) and informal outdoor space							
On-going improvements to existing SANGs at Horsell Common, Brookwood Country Park and White Rose Lane.	To 2027	C	WBC, HCPS	To be determined	S106/ CIL	To be determined	c.£1m spent since 2007 including work at Horsell Common under remit of Horsell Common Preservation Society; all works at Brookwood Country Park complete; footpath and boardwalk construction at White Rose Lane to be considered under Hoe Valley Flood Alleviation Scheme.
Upkeep and ongoing improvements to Heather Farm SANG ⁵	To 2027	C	HCPS, WBC	c.60k pa	S106/ CIL	c.60k pa	WBC has recently provided funding for the expansion of car parking spaces to support increased use of SANG.
Gresham Mill SANGs	To 2027	C	WBC, private developer	Total unknown (£45,000 for the initial works)	S106/ CIL	To be determined	Take into account funding for Old Woking Flood Alleviation Scheme (see Flood Alleviation infrastructure requirements). Draft site masterplan has been developed.
Additional SANG provision as proposed in Draft Site Allocations	To 2027	C	WBC, private developer,	c.£5.5m	S106/ CIL Flood alleviation investment	To be determined	Consider extension to Brookwood Farm SANG to 26ha, to be delivered in

⁵ Joint SANG with Surrey Heath Council

DPD at Byfleet, Brookwood Farm, Westfield Common			Environment Agency				phases. SANG Management Plan and Proposals being developed. Byfleet SANG delivery as part of the Sanway-Byfleet Flood Alleviation Scheme – subject to funding.
Horsell Common SANG Extension	2022	E	HCPS, WBC	c.£350k (initial estimate)	S106/ CIL	c.£350k (initial estimate)	An updated management plan is being agreed with Natural England. Application made by SCC to Secretary of State for common land consent. Delivery date tbc.
<i>NEW ITEM:</i> New/improved Great Crested Newt habitat (compensation sites). Includes ongoing works within Westfield Common.	2021-2031	P	Natural England, WBC, SWT, volunteer groups, developers.	To be determined	Developer levy. Biodiversity Net Gain contributions (tbc). WBC grant reserves.	To be determined	First five years of Westfield Improvement Plan have been completed – network of GCN ponds. Identification of future sites is ongoing, taking into account Strategy Opportunity Areas Plan.
New/enhanced informal outdoor space as part of development coming forward (parks and gardens, amenity green space, natural and semi-natural space excluding SANGs)	To 2027	E	Developer-led	To be determined	On-site provision as part of development coming forward	To be determined	A financial contribution through S106/CIL towards improvement of an existing open space may be sought in lieu of on-site provision where existing space lies within suitable walking distance of a proposed development.
Children and young people provision							
Ongoing refurbishment of and improvement to existing children's play areas across Borough	To 2027	E	WBC, private developers	c.£1,600k (2017-27)	S106/ CIL, Council investment programme	To be determined	Four priority play areas identified for next round of refurbishment at Loop Road, Horsell Moor, Oakfield, Sutton Green. In accordance with the Council's refurbishment programme.
Ongoing refurbishment of and improvement of	To 2027	E	WBC, private developers	c.£716k (2017-27)	S106/ CIL, other	To be determined	2020/2021 refurbishment of skate parks complete.

existing teenage provision across Borough							
Additional children's and teenage play provision to meet existing shortfall in provision	To 2027	P	WBC, private developers	To be determined	S106/CIL, grant, IP, other	To be determined	Existing areas identified in Core Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy 2017, and updated in IDP. In order to address the shortfall of provision in Pyrford, the Neighbourhood Forum has identified the following possible locations (subject to further assessment on availability and feasibility): Sandringham Close Leisure Ground; land at the Arbor Centre.
Additional on-site children's and teenage play provision to meet needs from large-scale development	To 2027	P	WBC, private developers	c.£1,884k	Delivered on-site (subject to planning consent)	c.£1,884k	In accordance with FiT guidelines and with advice from GI team. Significant increased play capacity to be provided as part of Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme.
Allotments							
127 additional five-rod plots (or 63.5 standard size plots) to meet demand from future development	To 2027	P	WBC, private developers, community groups	c.£319,151	WBC, private developers	c.£319,151	Identification of suitable sites is challenging. Policy CS17 seeks to protect existing provision, and supports new provision through on or off-site contributions. Other initiatives such as food-production space incorporated into community gardens could help meet demand.
Amenity space							
No specific additional requirements identified over the lifetime of the Core Strategy, other than new amenity space to be provided as part of development coming forward in line with policy CS21.							
Green corridors							
Enhancements to key corridors at	To 2027	P	Basingstoke Canal Authority,	To be determined	Various sources	To be determined	Could be delivered as part of transport schemes

Basingstoke Canal, Hoe Stream, River Wey and Wey Navigation			SCC, WBC, SWT, SNP, National Trust				earlier in Schedule – see in particular LCWIP findings.
Walking and Cycling Network – improvements to accessibility	To 2027	P	WBC, SCC	To be determined	WBC, SCC, LEP, CIL, S106	To be determined	Could be delivered as part of transport schemes earlier in Schedule – see in particular LCWIP findings.
Provision of new or enhanced green and blue infrastructure assets in order to connect/enhance the existing GI Network	To 2027	P	WBC, Private developers	To be determined	S106/CIL, Private developers	To be determined	New green 'linear' corridor to be delivered as part of Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme (site allocation ref. UA24). Blue infrastructure includes Basingstoke Canal, Hoe Valley stream, Rive Ditch, River Wey and Wey Navigation.

The following chapters provide detailed analysis of the various categories of infrastructure which has informed the IDP Schedule set out above, in Chapter 2.

3. Social and community infrastructure

Summary of 2018 IDP

3.1 A summary of the 2018 IDP is provided below:

Supported Accommodation

- Whilst housing is a function of Woking Borough Council (WBC), the Care Act 2014 has introduced explicit references to housing as part of Surrey County Council's (SCC) statutory duty to promote the integration of health and social care.
- SCC's Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy 2015 indicated a declining demand for residential care and a growing popularity of Extra Care Housing and an increase in people being supported to live independently. Demand for nursing care in Surrey was projected to increase due to people living at home for longer, and need more intensive services later in life. SCC was working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to see how care and support could be integrated into accommodation (such as Extra Care Housing, Assisted Living, Supported Living and Supported Housing accommodation) to reduce the need for traditional care services (although there would continue to be a need for care homes and nursing homes, delivered via private and public organisations).
- The Integrated Commissioning Statement for Accommodation with Care and Support – Older People (NW Surrey CCG Area, 2016) identified a need for additional nursing care, residential care and extra care beds across North West Surrey to meet planned development growth.
- Potential for additional Extra Care Home scheme in the east of the borough identified (similar to Brockhill scheme). Woodham and Knaphill wards were identified as having little or no residential or nursing provision.
- Accommodation to meet needs of the elderly included as a key requirement in site allocations for Sheerwater regeneration scheme and land at Broadoaks.
- Specialist supported accommodation scheme for vulnerable young people required to support growth to 2030.
- Delivery would be through new development, and the continued implementation of the Housing Strategy – being considered for review – which prompts continual monitoring of Woking's sheltered and supported housing stock. Funding is complex and comes from a variety of sources, including Housing Benefit/Universal Credit and local authority adult social care and housing and homelessness funding. A Local Grant Fund was to be established for short-term and transitional supported housing, with the welfare system continuing to fund long-term supported housing.

Community Facilities

- An audit of social and community facilities was undertaken in 2011, presented in the Social and Community Facilities Study. The 2018 IDP sought to update the findings of the audit, drawing on the Surrey Infrastructure Study 2017, and evidence underpinning various Neighbourhood Plans.
- There is a drive for co-located service provision, with significant potential for the development of 'community hubs' in the borough catering for a variety of uses. Maybury, Sheerwater, Byfleet and Pyrford were identified as potential locations for future hubs.

- Overall, the borough is well-served by community and social facilities, although there are some areas where facilities are operating at capacity and required refurbishment, which would be compounded by future development growth. Any loss of social and community infrastructure is resisted through policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, supported by various policies in Neighbourhood Plans. Key requirements in site allocation policies in the draft Site Allocations DPD also seek re-provision of community uses on sites identified for redevelopment. Community groups, in partnership with WBC and developers, aim to deliver a number of projects to help meet demand.
- Facilities for youth activities were needed in Maybury and Sheerwater, Goldsworth Park (East and West), Knaphill, and Kingsfield and Westfield. A new Youth and Community Centre was planned for delivery as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme; and the refurbishment of Woking Youth Arts Centre was planned for delivery in Knaphill.
- Funding comes from a variety of sources, including the Council's Community Assets programme, WBC investment programme (loans and/or the New Homes Bonus), and developer contributions via S106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – particularly through neighbourhood CIL funds.

Indoor Sports Facilities

- Primarily delivered at Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park, owned and managed by the Council, as well as private health and fitness clubs and school facilities with community-use agreements. The Leisure Centre had been subject to extensive refurbishment to provide additional services and improve the quality of facilities, with further proposals planned to meet growing demand. Plans to refurbish Pool in the Park had been identified.
- New or improved facilities to meet growing demand were planned at Hoe Valley School on Egley Road (estimated cost £16.5m), Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme (at Bishop David Brown School) (estimated cost of leisure centre element £12.6m), and Woking Gymnastics Club at Ten Acre Farm.

Public Realm and Public Art

- The Economic Development Strategy 2012-2017 identified a need to significantly improve the core Town Centre public realm, with a masterplan leading to the delivery of Jubilee Square and the creation of 'Market Walk' in Autumn 2014. The second phase of refurbishment and upgrades were underway along Commercial Way, extending to Victoria Square as part of its redevelopment.
- Improvements to the public realm outside of the Town Centre would be delivered as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme, and the redevelopment of Sheer House in West Byfleet.
- Key requirements included in site allocation policies for sites in the urban area include the requirement to make improvements to the quality of the public realm, funded by developer contributions.
- The Public Art Strategy (2007) has identified opportunities for future investment and commissioning of public art, with broad locations for delivery including at gateways, along cycle and walking routes, greenspaces, along the canal and riverside, and in town, district and local centres.
- Major development schemes are expected to contribute to the provision of new public art either on-site or by way of developer contributions, in accordance with the scale of development, the nature of the public art appropriate to the location, and the cost of installation.

Updated Position

- 3.2 This chapter of the report provides an update on the provision of social and community infrastructure within the borough and its capacity to meet housing growth, where new information has become available. The following sources have been used to populate this section:

Information Sources
Draft Site Allocations DPD and Schedule of Main Modifications (September 2020)
Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule, April 2018
Surrey County Council Representation in response to Main Modifications Consultation (December 2020)
Surrey County Council Commissioning Statement: Accommodation with care, residential and nursing care for older people, for Woking Borough Council (April 2019 onwards), available at: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/professionals-partners-and-providers/adult-social-care-strategies-policies-and-performance/accommodation-with-care-and-support-commissioning-statements
Surrey County Council Report to Cabinet on a Feasibility Study for Supported Independent Living (June 2021)
Surrey County Council Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025 .
Living Well in Woking – Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2031 (July 2021) (as yet unpublished)
Woking Borough Council Draft Housing Strategy 2021-2026 (2021)
Surrey County Council Developer Contribution Guide (November 2020)
Woking Borough Council Report to Council on Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 (February 2021)
Correspondence with Surrey County Council Spatial Planning and Woking Borough Council Housing Team
Correspondence with local Neighbourhood Forums and Residents' Associations

Delivery Update

Supported Accommodation – Capacity and Needs Update

- 3.3 Surrey County Council (SCC) has set out its expectations for the market to respond to the Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy cited in the 2018 IDP, in terms of older people's services within the borough. SCC's 'Commissioning Statement: Accommodation with care, residential and nursing care for older people' covers extra care settings across all tenures; close care settings; and care homes, whether residential or nursing and including specialisms.
- 3.4 Extra care housing is regarded by SCC as being in greatest shortage, which needs to be addressed so that an increased availability of attractive extra care options (and associated shared facilities with communal living) will reduce the likelihood of older people moving directly into a care home as their care needs increase. Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy supports the delivery of specialist accommodation for older people, including extra care housing, to help meet demand. This draws on evidence presented in the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – the latest SHMA was published in 2015 and set out a need for an additional 911-924 units of specialist housing for older people to 2033, some of which would come in the form of extra care housing.
- 3.5 These aims align with objectives in Woking Borough Council's emerging Housing Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which seek to help people to achieve independence and wellbeing, whilst retaining connection to their communities, for as long as possible. The Health and Wellbeing Task Group has been established to monitor the delivery of the health and wellbeing action plan and will drive delivery of the Health

and Wellbeing Strategy. One action is to increase the provision of extra care accommodation through the opening of Hale End Court by September 2021 (see below).

- 3.6 Population increases due to future growth will impact on the demand for services and the ongoing need to examine alternative approaches to older and vulnerable care provision. The demand for extra care housing will continue to rise. Facilities will need to adapt in order to cater for more residents with medium to high needs, support clients with dementia and provide neighbourhood activities to meet the needs of the wider elderly community.
- 3.7 The Commissioning Statement calculates future demand for extra care in the borough, using Housing LIN methodology which states that demand for extra care is likely to be required at 25 units per 1000 population aged 75 plus. The desired tenure mix will vary according to local and market factors. As at 1 April 2019, future demand for extra care for 2025 and 2035 is assessed as follows:

75+ population projection (2025)	Total demand (2025)	Rental unit demand (2025)	Leasehold unit demand (2025)	75+ population projection (2035)	Total demand (2035)	Rental unit demand (2035)	Leasehold unit demand (2035)
10,100	253	68 (minimum target)	184	12,500	313	84 (minimum target)	228

- 3.8 To help meet this demand, the following extra care facilities were operational in the WBC as at 1 April 2019:
- Barnes Wallis Court, West Byfleet KT14 4HJ – leasehold, 50 units
 - Brockhill Extra Care, Goldsworth Park GU21 3NE – rental, 48 units
 - Mayford Grange, Mayford GU22 9QF – leasehold, 42 units.

- 3.9 In addition to extra care schemes, the Council owns nine sheltered housing schemes. This accommodation is typically for applicants aged 60+ but could also be for applicants with a physical disability or mobility issues who would benefit from the facilities of a sheltered scheme.

- 3.10 The Commissioning Statement sets out in detail the complexities around defining demand for residential and nursing care in the borough. Having adopted a series of assumptions made clear in the Statement, estimated demand figures are as follows:

Planning authority area	1 April 2019 No. of care home beds	75+ pop. (2019)	Beds per 1,000 75+ pop. (2019)	75+ pop. (2025)	Beds per 1,000 75+ pop. (2025)	No. beds to reflect England 2019 ratio (2025)	Reduction due to rental extra care (2025)	2025 indicated demand	75+ pop. (2035)	Beds per 1,000 75+ pop. (2035)	No. beds to reflect England 2019 ratio (2035)	Reduction due to rental extra care (2035)	2035 indicated demand
Woking	433	8,500	50.94	10,100	42.87	445	10	2	12,500	34.64	551	26	92
Elmbridge	817	12,500	65.36	15,000	54.47	661	50	-206	18,100	45.14	797	71	-91
Guildford	448	11,800	37.97	14,300	31.33	630	57	125	16,900	26.51	745	74	223
Runnymede	223	7,400	30.14	8,800	25.34	388	0	165	10,400	21.44	458	0	235
Surrey Heath	387	8,900	43.48	10,700	36.17	471	72	12	13,000	29.77	573	88	98
Surrey	4,909	111,700	43.95	134,600	36.47	5,930	546	475	161,800	30.34	7,129	697	1,523
England	210,669	4,781,800	44.06	5,836,500	36.10	-	-	-	7,138,800	29.51	-	-	-

Figure 1: Estimated demand for residential care up to 2035 in the WBC area. Source: SCC Commissioning Statement, April 2019.

Planning authority area	1 April 2019 No. of care home beds	75+ population (2019)	Ratio of beds per 1,000 75+ (2019)	75+ population (2025)	Beds per 1,000 75+ (2025)	No. beds needed to reflect England 2019 ratio (2025)	2025 indicated demand	75+ population (2035)	Ratio of beds per 1,000 75+ (2035)	No. beds needed to reflect England 2019 ratio (2035)	2035 indicated demand
Woking	341	8,500	40.12	10,100	33.76	466	125	12,500	27.28	577	236
Elmbridge	606	12,500	48.48	15,000	40.40	692	86	18,100	33.48	835	229
Guildford	570	11,800	48.31	14,300	39.86	660	90	16,900	33.73	779	209
Runnymede	251	7,400	33.92	8,800	28.52	406	155	10,400	24.13	480	229
Surrey Heath	944	8,900	106.07	10,700	88.22	493	-451	13,000	72.62	600	-344
Surrey	6,877	111,700	61.57	134,600	51.09	6,208	-669	161,800	42.50	7,462	585
England	220,524	4,781,800	46.12	5,836,500	37.78	-	-	7,138,800	30.89	-	-

Figure 2: Estimated demand for nursing care up to 2035 in the WBC area. Source: SCC Commissioning Statement, April 2019.

- 3.11 SCC stresses that these figures should not be seen as a requirement by planning authorities, but rather as indicative figures. SCC's methodology reduces the 2025 and 2035 residential demand figures by the equivalent rental extra care demand figures to reflect their focus on identifying and supporting older people who would benefit from accessing rental extra care through nominations processes to eliminate a need for future residential care as much as possible.
- 3.12 Figures show that existing residential care capacity is above the county and national average, and compares favourably to three out of four of the neighbouring boroughs. Indicative demand to 2025 for residential care beds is low (only 2 beds), particularly in relation to that of some neighbouring boroughs and to wider county equivalents. By 2035, needs increase to 92 residential care beds, although this still represents low levels of need relative to other boroughs and the county as a whole.
- 3.13 Woking currently has a lower ratio of nursing care beds per 1,000 75+ residents relative to county and national levels, and less capacity than three out of four neighbouring boroughs. There is a higher indicative need for nursing care beds – 125 beds in 2025, rising to 236 beds in 2035. SCC projects demand for nursing care in Woking to increase due to people living at home longer and needing more intensive services later in life.
- 3.14 For both instances, there is an estimated oversupply of beds in neighbouring boroughs which could help meet demand, although the potential adverse impacts on their local health system would need to be considered if there were an influx of patients from Woking to nearby areas.
- 3.15 There are a number of schemes in the pipeline to help meet specialist accommodation demand identified in the Commissioning Statement. These are at different stages of delivery, and include the following:
- Hale End Court: new extra care accommodation in Old Woking is being delivered on land allocated for residential uses, including affordable housing, in the SA DPD, site reference UA22. This includes 45 x 1-bed and 3 x 2-bed units (48 units in total, of which 12 will be for tenants needing care), with opening scheduled for October 2021. This will help meet extra care housing demand in the borough, including that arising from tenants affected by the Sheerwater redevelopment proposals. Whilst many residents will be aged 60 or over, the Extra Care Panel for the development will consider other applicants who would benefit from the accommodation – such as disabled applicants and those with early onset

dementia. Both Brockhill and Hale End Court provide 24/7 personal care to help those with additional support needs to remain as independent as possible.

- Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme: 117 net additional sheltered/supported living apartments (site allocation policy reference UA24), with anticipated completed in April 2023.
- Broadoaks Care Home: 80-bed care home and 75 unit sheltered accommodation block under construction at Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet (site allocation policy reference GB10). Completion expected Summer 2021.
- Woodbanks Apartments, Hook Heath: 51 x 1- and 2-bed assisted living apartments, completed in 2020.
- Moor's Nook, Horsell: 34 x 1- and 2-bed retirement apartments, completed in 2020.
- Sheer House, West Byfleet: Retirement ~~Village-led community~~ scheme approved (February 2021) to deliver 196 apartments for extra care retirement living (site allocation policy reference UA40). Construction has started.
- Former Greenfield School, Brooklyn Road, Woking: a planning application is pending consideration to redevelop the site to deliver 49 extra care units (C2 use class) for private sale, part-rent part-buy and rent.

3.16 Most of the schemes above have been delivered via private developers, although some have received public subsidy (for example, Hale End Court). The Council will continue to pursue bringing these schemes forward and other opportunities which present themselves. The commitment to provide extra care housing and additional care home beds is identified within the updated IDP Schedule.

3.17 SCC continues to work with the Care Quality Commission, CCG, district and borough councils (including WBC), the Children Schools and Families Directorate and other critical partners to jointly commission solutions and develop flexible models of care, with a focus on individuals living within and being part of a thriving community and remaining independent.

Community Facilities (including Libraries)

3.18 Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy sets out how the Council will work with its partners to provide accessible and sustainable social and community infrastructure to support growth in the borough, and promotes the use of such infrastructure for a range of uses. The loss of existing facilities or sites is resisted in recognition of their importance in achieving a sustainable community for Woking and for the wellbeing of its people.

3.19 Community centres come in a variety of scales and forms – some are owned by the Council but run by voluntary groups. The Council's Centres for the Community include St Mary's in Byfleet, Moorcroft in Westfield, The Vyne in Knaphill and Parkview in Sheerwater. The remainder of the community centres in the borough are run by third parties. The Council's draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy emphasises that these are important, valued assets, but recognises that they can be better utilised to support health and wellbeing. This has been addressed in the accompanying action plan, which identifies a range of services meeting the needs of both young and older residents – such as mental health and maternity services - which could be accommodated in the Council's Centres for the Community. The Council plans to launch local community stakeholder groups in the Centres by December 2021 which will meet quarterly and review current use and opportunities for future uses, focussing on the needs of residents in the local area.

- 3.20 The 2011 IDP identified a short-term need for the development of a community hub to serve Maybury and Sheerwater (later designated as a priority place by the Core Strategy); and the further development of existing community facilities through appropriate grant schemes. In the longer-term, the potential to develop a community hub to serve the Byfleets area was identified. These requirements were based on the findings of the 2011 Social and Community Facilities Study. The 2018 IDP sought to update these findings, drawing on information from emerging Neighbourhood Plans and in consultation with community groups. The 2018 assessment reaffirmed the need for a new community hub as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme, to include youth provision and reprovision of the community centre (Parkview); and to improve community facilities in the Byfleets area to accommodate future growth, including St Mary's Centre for the Community. The IDP Schedule also highlighted the need to improve the remaining Centres for the Community at The Vyne and Moorcroft.
- 3.21 Since the 2018 IDP was published, there has been much change, including the Covid pandemic and related income challenges. St Mary's and Moorcroft are considered to be under-utilised, but are located in busy locations where there is a growing need for them – which may be compounded by planned development in Westfield and the Byfleets area. The Council recognises that infrastructure enhancements are required to secure the sustainability of the centres, but seeks to achieve this in a way that reduces revenue costs, increases income and increases quality, whilst having a greater community impact. As such, a community-led, cost-effective approach was adopted during 2020 to help deliver enhancements to both centres, resulting in new community spaces for people to enjoy. A new café and outside space was launched at St Mary's in September 2020, alongside modernisation works to the whole centre, salon and halls. The Haven café was launched at Moorcroft, in addition to modernisation of the internal and external spaces. This has improved the capacity of the centres to generate income and meet local needs of a wider demographic of the local community, including young people. Plans to improve community services at Parkview to meet development needs will be delivered as part of the wider Sheerwater regeneration work (see table below for progress report).
- 3.22 Similarly, to meet needs for youth provision, future priorities are to work with SCC to make the best use of the borough's existing youth centres (~~Lakers~~, Woking Youth Arts Centre and Sheerwater Youth Centre), and support future youth work opportunities at the Council's Centres for the Community, and at other community facilities where appropriate.
- 3.23 West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum (WBNF) has also been pursuing its vision for a non-faith community centre to meet an identified gap in local provision, and in recognition of the fact that planned growth in the Byfleets area will place increased pressure on existing community infrastructure. WBNF are in discussions with stakeholders regarding possible sites. Both West Byfleet and Byfleet Neighbourhood Forums report that existing community facilities are highly valued and well-used, but there is limited spare capacity to accommodate additional growth in the area. Fundraising has commenced for the acquisition and renovation of Old Byfleet Fire Station, with a view to turn it into a new community facility. A change of use application is pending consideration. In order to relieve pressure on community facilities in the Byfleets area currently used by residents of Pyrford, including healthcare facilities, there is also scope to increase the capacity of facilities in the neighbouring Pyrford ward. A number of community projects have been identified in the Pyrford Neighbourhood Plan (particularly Appendix 1) which would enhance infrastructure capacity.
- 3.24 Libraries, whilst traditionally focused on access to books and other reading material, are increasingly seen to be more multi-functional community spaces, providing access to

computers and the internet and venues for community events and activities. SCC continues to operate three libraries across the borough at Knaphill, West Byfleet and Woking Town Centre. Byfleet is a Community Partnered Library, run by community volunteers.

- 3.25 Since the 2018 IDP was published, SCC has produced a strategy to achieve long-term sustainability of library and cultural services within a context of limited resources. Visits to the borough's libraries and book borrowing has seen a downward trend over the last ten years. However, attendance at events and activities in libraries has been increasing (before the pandemic). SCC considers its libraries to be well-used and its strategy aims to halt the decline in visits and book borrowing, and generate greater impact. The Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025 sets out SCC's vision and approach to modernising these services over the next five years, by working closely with communities and partners. Whilst existing libraries are not expected to close, the infrastructure will become more flexible, offering and facilitating more events and activities, and embracing new technologies (including digital to reach new audiences and offer 24/7 access). SCC will be looking for partners to co-locate into its larger libraries where possible, such as maternity services and GP practices or community groups, to support the wider health and wellbeing agenda. SCC considers in particular that the easily accessible Woking Town Centre library provision should be diversified to meet a wider range of service needs.
- 3.26 For all community facilities, the Council continues to focus on increasing the utility of the existing stock, therefore reducing demand for additional facilities which would otherwise be difficult to meet, particularly given the challenging financial climate post Covid-19. However, as well as modernising existing facilities and enabling co-location of community spaces, there are also new development-related opportunity sites that can accommodate new multi-purpose facilities reflecting the new need arising from the development and the potential to consolidate provision in more accessible locations/fit for purpose buildings.
- 3.27 In order to facilitate the delivery of new or improved flexible community and library spaces to meet needs arising from planned growth across the borough, as identified in previous iterations of the IDP, land has been allocated in the draft Site Allocations DPD as follows:

SA DPD reference and address (MM Consultation version)	Allocation details	Update since 2018 IDP
UA1 Library, 71 High Road, Byfleet	Allocated for mixed-use development to include a replacement community facility (library provision) and ensure that some form of library service is retained during redevelopment of the site.	The Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum seeks to protect its local community facilities from harm – including the library. Depending on scale of redeveloped community floorspace, any new provision should consider co-location with other community services where appropriate, tailored to meet local needs at the time, as per SCC Library and Cultural Services Strategy 2020-2025.
UA13: 30-32 Goldsworth Road, Woking Railway Club and Athletics Club, Systems House and Bridge House, Goldsworth Road	Allocated for mixed-use development to include re-provision of community floorspace, in line with policy CS19: <i>Social and community infrastructure</i> .	Permission was refused <u>has been granted through Planning Appeal (January 2022)</u> for a development proposal on land to the north and south of Goldsworth Road, which sought to demolish the existing buildings (including the building housing the York Road Project, which provides hostel-style accommodation and move-on accommodation for homeless people) and deliver a mixed-use scheme comprising 929 residential units, communal residential space, commercial uses, a homeless shelter (c.1728sqm), replacement floorspace to house the Woking Railway Athletic Club (c.367sqm)

		and public realm works. The proposed York Road Project building aimed to consolidate a number of existing uses into one location, ranging from day centre and staff facilities through to accommodation with differing levels of support. An appeal has been lodged and an Inquiry commenced in June 2021.
UA15: The Big Apple, HG Wells Conference Centre, 48-58 Chertsey Road	Allocated for mixed-use development to include provision of community/cultural and entertainment floorspace, in line with policy CS19: <i>Social and community infrastructure</i> .	Permission was refused in March 2020 for a development proposal at Crown Place, Chertsey Road, which sought to demolish all existing buildings and deliver a mixed-use scheme comprising 366 residential units, commercial and community uses, and new public realm. The land continues to be allocated in the SA DPD for mixed-use development including community/cultural and entertainment floorspace, and an indicative 67 dwellings. The proposal seeks to deliver a new, purpose-built community centre, designed in consultation with key user groups who would struggle to afford other available spaces in the area, at market rates (c.865sqm floorspace). The space would be capable of accommodating existing community uses, and providing capacity to accommodate future community uses. An appeal has be lodged and Hearings are due to take place in September 2021.
UA20: Backland gardens of houses facing Ash Road, Hawthorn Road, Willow Way and Laburnum Road, Barnsbury Farm Estate	Allocated for residential uses, but incorporates a key requirement to ensure that social and community uses within the existing shopping parade are retained or replaced in accordance with policy CS19: <i>Social and community infrastructure</i> .	No progress to note.
UA24: Land within Sheerwater Priority Place	Allocated for regeneration to include community and leisure uses.	Since the last IDP was published, significant progress has been made with the community hub, now referred to as a 'community campus', as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme. WBC has been working with Well North Enterprises, a community interest company, to look at how the community and commercial space across the development can be best used to serve the needs of the community. Plans for a new, two-storey community centre are being developed, and will form part of the yellow phase of redevelopment, due to commence July 2021. The campus will bring together the replacement for Parkview, the existing nursery facility, the Sure Start facility, youth services and the Health Centre into one building. Retail units have been placed next to the community hub, including one that is proposed to be a pharmacy.
UA30: Walton Road Youth Centre, Walton Road:	Allocated for residential and community uses, to include enhanced youth provision.	Permission was granted for the demolition of the existing former youth centre, which is now complete. SCC confirm that the services previously provided at the facility (which closed in 2015) were relocated in alternative premises, including at the Maybury Centre. The Maybury Centre is located c.175m from the Walton Road site, and provides a wide range of community uses, including a youth centre. The Maybury Centre is, however, in need to of refurbishment, and a capital sum of £25,000 has been allocated in the Council's Investment Programme to deliver a café and associated modernisation works, and assist the centre in recovering and become self-managing post Covid-19, to remain sustainable. This has been included in the IDP Schedule.
UA40 Land at Station Approach, West Byfleet	Allocated for mixed-use development to include a replacement library. Policy S&C4 of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan also	Permission has been granted (April 2021) for a mixed use development to include 1400sqm of communal amenity floorspace to serve the extra care units; and c.361sqm community floorspace (Class F1/Class F2) to

	supports the enhancement of library facilities.	provide opportunity for the re-instatement of existing library services. Development has commenced. West Byfleet is a band C library which is considered by SCC to deliver key services to support reading, digital, learning, health and wellbeing and cultural activities. The library is central to the community and will play a key role in the new development. SCC, WBC and the developer are working towards a detailed design and specification for the library space (using national space standards), and exploring opportunities to incorporate shared spaces with public, voluntary, community and private sector organisations. A flexible space is preferred in order to host activities and events, some of which will be led by the library service, and some community-led. Meeting room space to host classes and workshops is also preferred. Temporary library provision at the Old Sorting Office on Rosemount Avenue is sought (pending planning permission).
UA41 Camphill Club and Scout Hut, Camphill Road, West Byfleet	Allocated for residential and community use, to include a replacement for the existing community facility (currently used as a Social Club and Scout Hut).	There continues to be widespread community support for improved built facilities to accommodate the Scouts and the Guides (see West Byfleet Neighbourhood Plan).
UA42: Woking Football Club, Gymnastics Club and Snooker Club, Westfield Avenue	Allocated for mixed-use development to include community/leisure uses – including a football stadium with enhanced facilities.	Woking Football Club funding has been removed from the funded Investment Programme for the time being as planning permission for the scheme (ref. PLAN/2019/1176) has not yet been achieved. <u>The land continues to be allocated in the SA DPD for mixed-use development including an enhanced football stadium, retail floorspace, and an indicative yield of 93 dwellings.</u> The council is committed to providing a loan financing facility should the project proceed following a successful appeal. The project would need to be reinstated to the funded Investment Programme. The Gymnastics Club project is included on the 'temporarily suspended' projects list in the Investment Programme, as this is associated with the Football Club development. Should the football club redevelopment proceed, the gymnastics club relocation would also be reinstated in the funded Investment Programme as a Council commitment through the development agreement.
GB3: Brookwood Cemetery	Allocated for community uses to include an enhanced cemetery and ancillary facilities.	The masterplan and experience plan were approved at Full Council in July 2020. New visitor facilities will include a café, walking trail, education centre and museum, with new information points and zoning (subject to planning approval). The plans also seek to expand future burial areas to increase capacity. Capital improvements are underway at the cemetery, but the assumed level of capital grants have been reduced in the Council's Investment Programme. A total capital grant of £300k has been approved for the cemetery as of February 2021.

3.28 A number of projects had been included in the IDP Schedule to help meet growing demand. The up-to-date IDP Schedule in Chapter 2 brings these requirements up to date, based on the latest progress with projects and any newly identified projects to meet growing demand. WBC will continue to engage with SCC and local stakeholders to identify needs and respond to opportunities that align objectives in the Council's forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and SCC's Library and Cultural Services Strategy.

3.29 Where there is no spare capacity to meet the additional demands arising from new developments, and it is not feasible to incorporate new provision on-site, WBC will seek

a developer contribution towards the provision of additional/enhanced facilities locally to mitigate development impacts.

3.30 SCC's Developer Contribution Guide explains how specific requirements will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the scale of housing proposed and the existing provision locally.

3.31 For libraries, [the Surrey County Council Developer Contribution Guide sets out that](#) developer contributions may be required towards the provision of:

- Site or a building to enable relocation and expansion
- Modification, upgrading or extension of existing accommodation
- Co-location with other services
- Library fit out and additional stock
- Upgrading infrastructure related facilities such as IT.

DRAFT

4. Other Public Services

Summary of 2018 IDP

4.1 A summary of the 2018 IDP is provided below:

- Additional waste capacity to be provided through intensification and enhancement of existing sites, including that at Martyrs Lane, and at new appropriate sites brought forward by the waste management industry. A new waster transfer station at the Slyfield industrial estate in Guildford Borough would increase recycling capacity for residents of Woking.
- Land at Martyrs Lane to the east of the existing Community Recycling Centre is safeguarded in the Surrey Waste Plan 2008 for waste management facilities to meet growing demand.
- New infrastructure would be required to accommodate additional police officers and patrol vehicles to meet growing demand, accompanied by improvements and additions to Automatic Number Plate Recognition infrastructure. In the longer-term, a new, modern headquarters is preferred, potentially co-located with other Blue-Light services.
- In terms of fire and rescue service, a new fire station had been delivered on Victoria Way, which was considered sufficient to meet demand generated by planned development in the Core Strategy. Crewing levels would be continually reviewed based on ongoing assessment of community risk.

Updated Position

4.2 This chapter of the report provides an update on the provision of remaining public service infrastructure within the borough (which hasn't been covered in Chapter 3) and its capacity to meet housing growth, where new information has become available. The following sources have been used to populate this section:

Information Sources
Draft Site Allocations DPD and Schedule of Main Modifications (September 2020)
Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule, April 2018
Surrey County Council Representation in response to Main Modifications Consultation (December 2020)
The Surrey Waste Local Plan 2019-2033 (December 2020)
Thames Water 'Building a Better Future – Enhancing Thames Water's Business Plan for 2020-2025', available at: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan
Thames Water Business Plan for period covering 2020-2025, available at: https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/regulation/our-five-year-plan
Thames Water Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan documents, available at: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/201050209c7a4658a1c2265aa4411375
Surrey County Council Developer Contribution Guide (November 2020)
Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, Police and Crime Plan 2018-2020, available at: https://surrey-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Surrey-Police-16pp-A4-Police-and-Crime-Plan-2018-2020-1.pdf
Surrey Police and Crime Panel Documents, 5 February 2021, available at: https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/g8119/Public%20reports%20pack%20Friday%2005-Feb-2021%2010.30%20Surrey%20Police%20and%20Crime%20Panel.pdf?T=10
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust Board Papers, available at: https://www.secamb.nhs.uk/what-we-do/about-us/trust-board-meeting-dates-and-papers/
Woking Borough Council Report to Council on Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 (February 2021)
Meetings and correspondence with Surrey County Council Spatial Planners, Woking Borough Council Housing Team, Surrey County Council as Fire Authority and estate advisers to SECamb.

Delivery Update – Waste

- 4.3 SCC is the waste disposal authority operating household waste recycling centres (HWRC) and waste transfer stations (WTS) across the county. Woking's HWRC is located at Martyrs Lane; and the nearest WTS is at Slyfield Industrial Estate in Guildford, co-located with another HWRC which is accessible to residents of Woking. Co-mingled recyclables collected from kerbside are delivered to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Leatherhead.
- 4.4 On 8 December 2020, SCC adopted the Surrey Waste Local Plan (replacing the 2008 Plan), which sets out how and where different types of waste will be managed in Surrey to 2033. A series of up-to-date assessments, including a waste needs assessment, underpin the new spatial strategy for sustainable waste management capacity across the county. Additional capacity will be provided for by safeguarding existing capacity; through appropriate extensions and enhancements to existing facilities; and by the development of new facilities in suitable locations. It aims to make the best use of existing sites, and in this regard, the existing waste facility at Martyrs Lane and existing wastewater infrastructure is safeguarded. However, the 7.3ha site to the east of the Martyrs Lane facility which was previously safeguarded for waste management has not been carried forward in the new Plan as the identified need was not considered to provide sufficient justification for the allocation of such land (which is situated in the Green Belt).
- 4.5 Five strategic waste sites have been allocated outside the borough to meet future needs, including land to the north east of Slyfield Industrial Estate (Guildford); the former Weylands sewage treatment works at Walton-on-Thames (Elmbridge); land adjoining Leatherhead Sewage Treatment Works (Mole Valley); Oakleaf Farm, Stanwell Moor (Spelthorne) and Land at Lambs Business Park, South Godstone (Tandridge). Land adjacent to Trumps Farm, Longcross (Runnymede) is allocated for the development of a Household Waste Recycling Facility.
- 4.6 Whilst no new strategic waste infrastructure sites have been allocated in Woking, two 'Industrial Land Areas of Search' (ILAS) have been identified at Byfleet and Monument Way East Industrial Estates, which are 'in principle' areas within which it is more likely that sites considered suitable for the development of additional waste management facilities can be delivered to meet future need. These are not allocated as sites for waste development, but identified as areas within which there may be potential for waste development as their existing uses – employment use, industrial use and storage or appropriated mixed-use – are considered to be compatible with waste management uses. Any existing waste management facilities within these sites are also safeguarded by the Plan. This will be reflected in a modified Proposals Map which accompanies Woking's Development Plan for the area.
- 4.7 The IDP Schedule has also been updated to reflect these infrastructure requirements.

Wastewater

- 4.8 The Surrey Waste Local Plan also identifies suitable locations and sites for wastewater treatment works to provide certainty that the additional capacity need to manage wastewater needs in Surrey can be developed and that the national requirement to identify sites has been met. The Plan safeguards sites in existing waste use, including wastewater and sewage treatment works (including those with temporary permission). Woking continues to be served by five Sewage Treatment Works: one within the borough in Old Woking, and four outside the borough in Wisley, Chobham, Chertsey

and Hockford as illustrated in the 2018 IDP, which are all safeguarded as per Policy 7 of the new Waste Plan.

- 4.9 Woking Town Centre, Sheerwater Regeneration area and West Byfleet, where the majority of housing and commercial growth is planned, are within catchments served by Woking Sewage Treatment Works at Carters Lane, and Wisley Sewage Treatment Works.
- 4.10 Thames Water Utilities Ltd are the statutory water and sewerage undertaker for Woking Borough and are a statutory consultation body for both planning applications and local plan preparation. Since the 2018 IDP was published, Thames Water has entered 'AMP7' (Asset Management Plan 7) which covers the five-year period to 31 March 2025, thus covering the majority of the remaining Core Strategy period. Thames Water is also working on a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) aimed at improving long-term drainage and wastewater planning, ready for consultation in summer 2022, to support their business plans for the 2024 price review. This will include a detailed capacity assessment and what might be available in the future to accommodate planned growth. Updated future development and site allocations continue to be shared with Thames Water to ensure that plans for wastewater infrastructure upgrades take into account the most up to date projections.
- 4.11 To date, Thames Water have not identified any specific long-term infrastructure improvement requirements to meet development needs in Woking. The new Surrey Waste Local Plan sets out how the majority of wastewater treatment works across Surrey have sufficient capacity to accept wastewater and treat sewage sludge from the growth anticipated across the county, including that generated in Woking, over the Plan period (to 2033) without the need for improvements to existing facilities. However, policy 12 of the Plan supports the improvement or extension of existing wastewater and sewage treatment works where a need is identified in the future. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy designates the treatment works at Carters Lane as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt to allow for limited infilling and redevelopment for this purpose, without compromising the integrity of the Green Belt.
- 4.12 Thames Water have conducted a review and assessed the capacity of existing wastewater treatment works in relation to proposals for new development, including housing and employment allocations, as part of the Site Allocations DPD process, and indicated where there may be localised capacity constraints that may need to be addressed. Key requirements have been included in the following site allocation policies to ensure developers engage with Thames Water early in the development management process, and to ensure a detailed wastewater drainage strategy is submitted with any planning application to inform any necessary upgrades and achieve sufficient management of waste water capacity:
- UA6: 2-24 Commercial Way and 13-28 High Street, Woking GU21 6BW
 - UA14: Poole Road Industrial Estate, Woking GU21 6EE
 - UA24: Land within Sheerwater Priority Place, Albert Drive, Woking GU21 5RE
 - UA25: 101-121 Chertsey Road, Woking GU21 5BW
 - UA29: 95-105 Maybury Road, Woking GU21 5JL
 - UA31: Car Park (east), Oriental Road, Woking GU22 8BD
 - UA32: Royal Mail Sorting/Delivery Office, White Rose Lane, GU22 7AJ
 - UA33: Coal Yard/Aggregates Yard adjacent to the railway line, Guildford Road/Bradfield Close, Woking GU22 7QE
 - UA38: Camphill Tip, Camphill Road, West Byfleet KT14 6EW
 - UA40: Land at Station Approach, West Byfleet KT14 6NG
 - UA42: Woking Football Club, Westfield Avenue, Woking GU22 9AA

- GB7: Nursery Land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford GU22 0PL
- GB9 and GB9A: Land surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road, West Byfleet KT14 6EY
- GB10: Broadoaks, Parvis Road, West Byfleet KT14 6LP

- 4.13 Thames Water stress that more detailed modelling may be required at an early phase of development management to refine any requirements, based on the nature of the development proposed. Planning permission for development coming forward on these sites which result in the need for off-site upgrades, or any other sites in the borough where Thames Water has indicated a capacity constraint through statutory consultation, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades. Phasing conditions may be appropriate to ensure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.
- 4.14 Thames Water have highlighted a need to take account of Woking Sewage Treatment Works at Carters Lane, Old Woking, should any development at GB17: Woking Palace take place. The modified draft Site Allocations DPD sets out how the Council aims to produce a development brief to explore viable uses of the site (rather than allocating the land at this stage), and Thames Water will be involved in this process at the appropriate time.

Delivery Update – Emergency Services

Police Service

- 4.15 The assessment of infrastructure requirements presented in the 2018 IDP, which identified the need for additional police officers, support/divisional staff and capital infrastructure to support new staff, remains valid. Capital infrastructure identified to support housing growth includes start-up capital costs, adaptation costs for conversion of floorspace to accommodate additional staff, investment in new patrol vehicles, and improvements and additions to the Automatic Number Plate Recognition infrastructure in the borough. The 2018 IDP also reported that a replacement of both Mount Browne and Woking stations with a single, modern HQ potentially located with other Blue-Light services would be a viable option.
- 4.16 Surrey Police had stated that the funding it receives from central Government, the Council Tax precept, asset disposal, redirection of revenue funding and other grants would not be sufficient to fund the infrastructure identified to meet needs arising from planned growth in the borough. They stressed that the number of increased households do not lead directly to an increase in central government grant; and whilst there might be growth through the council tax generated by an increase in the Council Tax Base, this funding would not be available to fund the infrastructure that would be required to effectively police the proposed areas of new development in Woking. The 2018 IDP therefore stated how the Council would continue to engage with Surrey Police during the development management process, and through future reviews of the CIL Charging Schedule, to determine whether there is justification to use CIL income to deliver capital police infrastructure.
- 4.17 Strengthening police numbers is now a priority for both national government and Surrey Police Force. In March 2017 there were 1,944 officers on the establishment, and by March 2021 this had increased to 2,022, partly due to the government's Police Uplift Program, and partly due to an increase in local council tax police and crime commissioner precept. In the context of the 2021/22 national policing settlement and the £15 precept increase, an additional £4.1m of funding will allow Surrey Police to meet increased demand and accelerate their recruitment plans. The 2021/22 investment will

pay for an additional 10 police officers (above the 73 paid for by the second tranche of Operation Uplift) and 67 operational staff, and allow the Force to invest in a number of areas to improve crime prevention and solve crimes.

- 4.18 A 'Building the Future Project' (BFT project) was initiated in 2016 with a view to purchase a 10 acre, new HQ site in Leatherhead. A review identified the Mount Browne, Reigate and Woking sites as providing poor value and unlikely to meet the future needs of modern policing. In November 2021, following an independent review, a decision was taken that the best option to create a policing base fit for a modern day police force while providing the best value for money for the public was to redevelop Mount Browne. The development will take place in phases including a new joint Contact Centre and Force Control Room, a better location for the Surrey Police Dog School, a new Forensic Hub and improved facilities for training and accommodation. The Leatherhead site will be sold. The project is progressing well: in April 2019 a site in Leatherhead was purchased to become an operational hub. It will replace the existing Mount Browne HQ and Woking Police Station, in addition to replacing Reigate Police Station. It is intended that the specialist crime teams operating out of Woking Police Station will move to the new site. The project is proceeding to RIBA stage 3, conditional upon the financial model being validated by an independent body, and the Force aims to move in around Spring/Summer 2024. The capital budget for 2021/22 allocates £16.7m for the Estates Strategy up to 2023/24, which provides for the new headquarters together with a new Dog School and Firing range. The full costs of the BFT project to 2025/26 are currently being finalised. Funding of capital will be challenging given the pressures on the revenue budget and lack of government grant – more schemes will need to be funded by borrowing, and there is significant pressure on the delivery of the Force's capital program in future years.
- 4.19 The Neighbourhood Policing Team serving Woking borough will continue to operate from the council offices, ensuring local response times are maintained. Western and Northern divisional teams will be retained at Guildford and Staines police stations. The move is part of an extensive estates project to deliver long-term savings by moving out and disposing of some of the current outdated and costly buildings. A more efficient estate will be created that will allow the Force to work in new ways and meet the challenges of modern policing. The front counter service at Woking Police Station moved into the borough council offices in the Town Centre in January 2020.
- 4.20 This new infrastructure will help accommodate an increase in police officers as a result of the Government's Operation Uplift and local objectives to expand the workforce to meet growing demand. However, there is still scope to seek developer contributions to fund the capital infrastructure required to address additional incidents caused by a growth in housing in the borough, as identified in the 2018 IDP.

Fire and Rescue Service

- 4.21 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) continues to operate from 25 locations across Surrey, although the way some of them are crewed has changed, including at Woking Fire Station.
- 4.22 In May 2018, the Government revised its Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, seeking to embed an ambitious programme of reform within the fire and rescue sector. In response to both this national framework, and driven by the changing nature of society and a decrease in threats and risk of accidental fire, the Fire and Rescue Authority (SCC) developed a 'Making Surrey Safer' Plan for 2020-2024 to change the delivery of services, within the context of a challenging budget. This includes a shift towards more preventative action, which also aligns with SCC's new vision to 2030,

placing greater emphasis on prevention, services for vulnerable people, and the need for greater collaboration with partners.

- 4.23 The Plan sets out how the way the SFRS works in Woking (and wider area) is changing – with a refocus to increase work with communities and business to prevent emergencies from happening. In 2019, the crewing level at Woking Fire Station was two 'whole-time crews' i.e. two crews were located at the fire station, ready to respond on a 24/7 basis. Implementation of phase one of the Plan resulted in this changing to one 'whole-time crew' and one 'day crew' i.e. one of the crews is now only be based at the fire station during the day. There were also reductions in crewing at Camberley, Guildford and Chobham Fire Stations.
- 4.24 However, the Plan is underpinned by significant modelling to demonstrate how this approach does not affect the ability to respond to emergencies in a timely manner from all staffed locations, day and night. It would still be possible to send the closest and most appropriate resource to the situation, regardless of where they are based, which may include resources from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, and other emergency services and partners, including voluntary groups, to manage emergencies as part of a multi-agency response (e.g. widespread flooding).
- 4.25 In terms of infrastructure, there is no further update on the 2018 IDP – in order to meet needs arising from housing and commercial growth to 2027, the new fire station on Victoria Way has been delivered as part of the redevelopment of the site. The SFRS is now turning its attention to implementing the second phase of its Making Surrey Safer Plan and focusing resources where they're most needed. Crewing levels continue to be reviewed based on up-to-date assessments of community risk.
- 4.26 Development proposals need to be planned with fire safety, including emergency access, in mind, as per the requirements of the latest Building Regulations. The local Fire and Rescue Service is a statutory consultee for major proposals.

Ambulance Service

- 4.27 As depicted in Part 1 of the IDP review under health provision, policy changes towards 'integrated healthcare' require rapid restructuring towards collaborative ways of working. In this new operating environment, the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) aims to work with Integrated Care Systems and Partnerships, and Primary Care Networks, to deliver extended urgent and emergency care pathways. This has strategic implications on the way the Trust is organised, and about investing or disinvesting in its key resources areas, including estates, fleet, technology, workforce and finance. An Estates Strategy review is underway.
- 4.28 In the meantime, partly in response to an expanding population and increase in new housing developments across the South East, SECamb continues to consider the provision of additional Make Ready Centre (MRCs) and Ambulance Community Response Post (ACRPs) infrastructure. Woking's residents are served by out-of-borough facilities, the nearest of which is the Chertsey MRC in Ottershaw.
- 4.29 The 'Make Ready' program involves the co-location of smaller, out-dated ambulance stations into purpose-built, larger, centralised ambulance centres – MRCs - from which crews are dispatched across a locality. This program was 80% complete as at March 2021, to achieve a fully modernised estate portfolio. A ninth centre opened in November 2020 in Brighton, and work is now focused on the development of new Banstead and Medway Make Ready Centres. The Banstead MRC will serve North Surrey (but a different operating area to that of Woking), and will become fully operational by Spring

2022. Ambulance crews operating from Epsom, Leatherhead, Redhill, Dorking and Godstone ambulance stations will transfer to the new centre, and SECAMB then intend to market the existing stations for potential sale and redevelopment.

- 4.30 The Trust is currently reviewing its portfolio of ACRPs to ensure they are in the right place, and fit-for-purpose. ACRPs are strategically located across the region with suitable rest facilities for crews between responding to emergency calls and when on a break. Priority will be given to co-location with other services if possible, alongside reconfiguring existing property, rather than developing new infrastructure.
- 4.31 SECAMB has an immediate requirement for an ACRP in Woking Town Centre or to the east thereof – up to 500sqft of accommodation providing staff/crew welfare facilities. The Trust has also indicated that the existing facility in Chertsey is sub-optimal, and will continue to come under more pressure partly as a result of planned cumulative development in the operating area, including from Woking. If the existing site cannot be expanded, a new site would be sought – c.1.5acres or c.20,000sqft plot industrial unit. The IDP Schedule has been updated to reflect these needs, with indicative costings.
- 4.32 The fleet replacement programme is also ongoing, including increasing the number of ambulances available for its teams and introducing different types of ambulances in line with national recommendations made through the Carter Review.
- 4.33 In terms of longer-term planning, a new 'Better by Design' Programme commenced in April 2021 (planning phase) and will move into an implementation phase in October 2021. This will focus on the structural changes required to deliver ambulance response times sustainably in the future, and respond to a projected increase in demand.

Summary on future infrastructure for emergency services

- 4.34 Increasing pressure on Surrey's emergency services, and a requirement to do more with less, necessitates the need to streamline and create more efficient services. This model of delivery will be facilitated by the freeing up of assets to provide much-needed funding, and consolidation into co-located hubs with other essential community services. With the assistance of technological advancements and innovation, this will enable the services to increase their capacity and overall effectiveness.
- 4.35 The emergency services need to remain dynamic in order to respond to the political climate, and meet the strategic needs of the wider sub-regional area, allocating resources effectively through flexibility. Such requirements within Surrey are being assessed on an ongoing basis, and both the county and local borough councils will work with infrastructure providers to ensure any additional capacity within the borough to meet needs from housing and commercial growth can be facilitated. The IDP will continue to be updated to reflect any new requirements, budget allocations and technological advancements.

5. Utilities

Summary of 2018 IDP

5.1 A summary of the 2018 IDP is provided below:

- The 2018 IDP assessed requirements for gas supply, electricity supply, CHP supply, water supply, wastewater treatment and communications infrastructure.
- Gas: SGN anticipated an overall reduction in demand to 2027 due to various measures, such as introducing government targets for renewable energy, increasingly decarbonised energy economy, and smart metering. No major infrastructure projects were identified for the borough in SGN's Long Term Development Statement, but specific development proposals may require reinforcement (to be determined at development management stage).
- Electricity: future demand assessment identified a need for c.50MW electricity supply to 2026, and that adequate supply capacity was available to meet this demand. Two projects to upgrade infrastructure at Brookwood and Byfleet would help to increase network capacity. Specific development proposals may require reinforcement (to be determined at development management stage).
- CHP: planning policy CS22 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure new development incorporates CHP or other forms of district heating, and connects to an existing network (or is designed to connect to a future network) if there is one in proximity to the proposed development, as per the connection zones described in the Climate Change SPD. The energy station on Victoria Way would have capacity to supply new developments in the eastern half of the town centre, but new generating capacity and/or distribution networks serving development sites to the west and south of the Town Centre would be need to meet projected energy demand arising from planned development. Further expansion of the network to the northern and eastern parts of the Town Centre would serve new development coming forward in these areas. A new energy centre at Poole Road Industrial Estate had secured planning permission. There was potential to serve new development in Sheerwater with a dedicated energy station and district heating network. A number of site allocations had been assessed for their potential to be supplied by existing and new decentralised energy plants and distribution infrastructure, and key requirements had been incorporated into site allocation policies accordingly.
- Water: Affinity Water anticipates that its Central region, within which Woking is situated, will not have sufficient water supply to meet increased household needs over 25 year plan period (but non-household demand will remain stable). No large-scale infrastructure projects identified to address needs; rather a focus on demand management measures, namely metering, water efficiency and leakage reduction via pipe repairs. No strategic network upgrades likely to be required as a result of proposed housing developments in the draft SA DPD, but local network reinforcements likely in Mayford/Kingfield, Pyrford, Town Centre and West Byfleet areas. Developers of sites in these areas should engage with Affinity Water early in the development management process to assess extra capacity required. Any planning permission for residential development is conditional on achieving high water efficiency standards. IDP to be updated once new Water Resource Management Plan is published.

Updated Position

5.2 This chapter of the report provides an update on the provision of utilities infrastructure within the borough and its capacity to meet planned housing and commercial growth,

where new information has become available. The following sources have been used to populate this section:

Information Sources
Draft Site Allocations DPD and Schedule of Main Modifications (September 2020)
Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule, April 2018
Correspondence with suppliers, including UK Power Networks, Affinity Water, Thamesway Energy and SGN
UK Power Networks Electric Vehicle Strategy (November 2019), available at: https://innovation.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/UK-Power-Networks-Electric-Vehicle-Strategy-November-19.pdf
SGN RIIO GD2 Business Plan Appendix – Capacity Management (December 2019), available at: https://www.sgnfuture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Appendix-018-SGN-Capacity-Management.pdf
Correspondence with SCC Superfast Broadband Project Manager (May 2021), and Economic Development Officers at WBC.
SCC Cabinet Papers setting out Surrey's Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Update (April 2021), available at: https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/Agenda/Agenda-Item/27042021-1400
WBC draft Economic Development Action Plan and Digital Infrastructure Strategy (not yet published, subject to further consultation in Autumn 2021)
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Project Gigabit Delivery Plan - Summer Update (August 2021), available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007788/Project_Gigabit_Summer_Update_Accessible_PDF_2_Aug_2021_1.pdf
UK Parliament, House of Commons Library Data Dashboard: Constituency data on broadband coverage and speeds (May 2021), available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-broadband-coverage-and-speeds/
Think Broadband – independent broadband information site, available at: https://www.thinkbroadband.com/ .
Affinity Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2080 (April 2020), available at: https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/docs/Affinity_Water_Final_WRMP19_April_2020.pdf

Delivery Update

- 5.3 The Council continues to share data with suppliers on an annual basis to allow them to integrate data directly into their planning tools and gain a better understanding of emerging decarbonisation strategies, infrastructure and growth plans. Data is shared in the form of shapefiles, which contain geo-spatial polygons which are a digital representation of potential development areas. These are then incorporated into suppliers' network analysis models. The following updates have been received since the 2018 IDP was published.

Gas Provision

- 5.4 SGN's network within the borough is predominantly fed through one Transmission Regulator Station (TRS) from the Local Transmission System (LTS). Woking TRS feeds the borough, reducing pressure to the Medium Pressure (MS) system. In turn, the MS system is further broken down to local Low Pressure (LP) systems directly supplying the majority of existing domestic customers. Future gas demand is predicted to decline in the southern region due to the introduction of government targets for renewable energy, policies to decarbonise the energy economy, growing low-carbon economy and smart metering.
- 5.5 Since the 2018 IDP was published, SGN have carried out a high level assessment on the impact of the draft SA DPD proposals and confirms that no large-scale reinforcements are likely to be needed to meet forecast demand. SGN do not develop

firm extension or reinforcement proposals until they are in receipt of confirmed developer requests. In this regard, developers are encouraged to engage with the operator early in the development management process once the nature of development becomes clear, to determine if LP network reinforcement, in addition to that required for the Intermediate Pressure and Medium Pressure network, will be needed. Reinforcement solutions are likely to involve the provision of a new pipeline in parallel to SGN's existing mains system, but may also include the installation of above-ground apparatus involving land purchase.

- 5.6 Developer funding is required for new connections and upgrades to existing infrastructure that is required as a result of development.

Electricity Provision

- 5.7 UK Power Networks (UKPN) has provided an up-to-date assessment of need based on their latest Regional Development Plan, taking into account projected growth within the borough. They have advised that given the good working order of existing infrastructure, they do not see any need for additional major schemes or projects within Woking which will not come forward as a result of development. Developers should continue to engage with UKPN early in the development management process to review whether their additional load and/or generation or battery storage triggers a need for reinforcement. If that were the case, then a proportion of the costs would be chargeable to the developer.

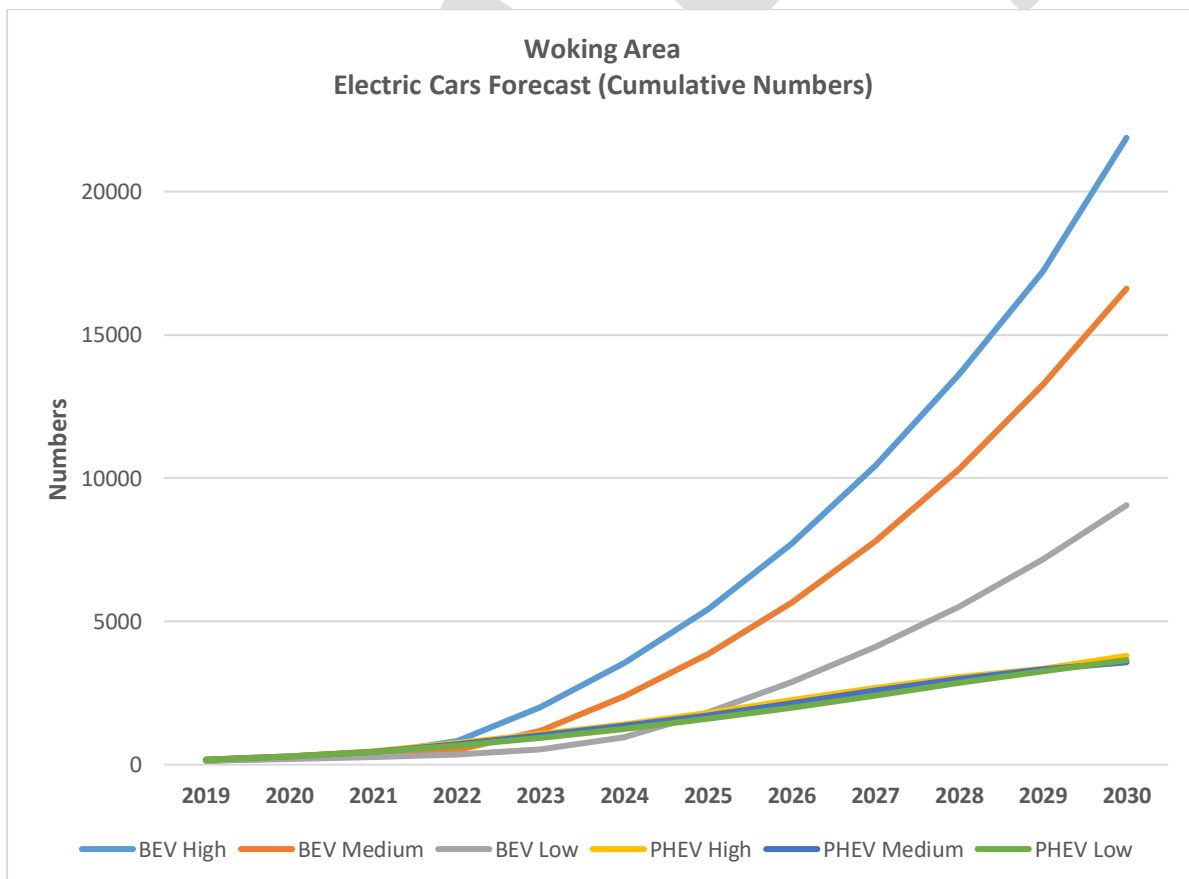


Figure 3: Electric Cars Forecast for Woking Area. Source: UK Power Networks, January 2021

- 5.8 However, in response to national and local policy aims to provide energy with the lowest environmental impact, UKPN has identified a growth in demand for Electric Vehicles (EVs) (see Figure 3), and low carbon technologies which are triggering a need for high voltage and low voltage reinforcement across the whole of its network. UKPN is

prioritising individual circuits and substations located across the borough which, according to its models, will be the first ones to be overloaded when this new load materialises. Outcomes of recent consultations on EV infrastructure within the Building Regulations framework and Smart Charging will set expectations, and inform UKPN's future investment plans. The Council will continue to share development data with the network operator, including making UKPN aware when charging infrastructure is likely to be installed in new developments, to assist with their detailed forecasting.

- 5.9 Upgrades/improvements to local electricity distribution network are funded by system charges, through electricity bills. Developer funding is required for new connections and upgrades to any infrastructure that is required as a result of development.

Decentralised Energy Networks

5.10 A Decentralised Energy Network (DEN) is a system of pipes that move energy in the form of hot or chilled water, from where it is created directly to where it is needed. These systems replace the conventional arrangement for each building using individual on-site generation equipment, such as boilers or chillers, serving one site only. DENs may also generate and supply locally generated electricity, typically derived from the use of combined heat and power (CHP) technology.

5.11 Operating DENs in Woking since 2001, Thameswey Energy Limited (TEL) has recently completed a third network in the town centre, served by a new energy centre situated in Poole Road and district cooling centre in the Victoria Square development. The IDP Schedule has been amended to reflect the delivery of this project.

5.12 This new network is considered a 'Fourth Generation' heat network, which operates at lower flow and return temperatures than most conventional heat networks. This design difference enables the network to use renewable heat generators such as heat pumps, at a high efficiency. The Poole Road Energy Centre has not been tailored to a single generation technology – the space can be easily adapted to accommodate whichever plant is required in the future.

5.13 The following table summarises the networks and generation capacity of existing plants and plants due to be installed in the near future (subject to change depending on new plant, storage or other infrastructure adjustments):

Energy network name	Operational from	Generation capacity (kWth or kWe)	Services provided	Potential for New Connections
Woking Town Centre 1 (Victoria Way)	2001	4,000	Heat	Limited
		500?	Cooling	Limited
		1344	Power	Low
Pool in the Park & Leisure Centre	2002	1000	Heat	Low*
		0?	Cooling	N/A*
		835	Power	Low
Woking Town Centre 2 (Poole Road)	2021	1600?	Heat	High
		1000?	Cooling	High
	2022	1500	Power	Limited

Table 1: Woking Energy Networks, Capacity and Potential for New Connections (2021)

* = Denotes significant need for generation infrastructure to accommodate new connections.

5.14 The Poole in the Park and Leisure Centre DEN has limited capacity for connections to new buildings, with current generators. However, the principal piece of DEN

infrastructure is the network of pipes. A major new development in close proximity to Woking Park may create a feasible opportunity to extend the network and add new generators, pipework and thermal storage. The draft Site Allocations identifies only one site for which this may be relevant: UA42 Woking Football Club, Gymnastics Club, and Snooker Club, Westfield Avenue.

5.15 An alternative to extending the existing heat network to the south of the railway line, which the 2018 IDP considered, is investing in a third town centre energy centre. Now that the Poole Road Energy Centre has been delivered, with the capacity to serve sites south of the railway line, this option is not preferred and would only be pursued should the expansion of the network under Victoria Arch face significant physical or financial constraint. The development known as 'Harrington Place' on the St Dunstan's site to the south of the railway line has been designed and delivered to be 'futureproofed' for connection to the heat network once it is available.

5.16 The map below has been updated from that in the 2018 IDP to show the DENs and energy stations within the town centre, including planned extensions and connections to the network that are in progress although nearing completion (as of February 2021). It also shows zones designated as 'District Heat Areas' in the Climate Change SPD where new development is expected to connect or be connection-ready (unless a better alternative for reducing emissions is demonstrated). Lastly, potential connection zones are included where recent analysis has shown that further suitable sites (drawing on spatial distribution of sites in the draft Site Allocations DPD) could be served by the network. The Council intends to update the Climate Change SPD to reflect this latest analysis, subject to further consultation. Key requirements have been included in relevant site allocation policies to ensure development coming forward connects to an existing or proposed district heating network unless it can be demonstrated that a better alternative for reducing carbon emissions can be achieved.

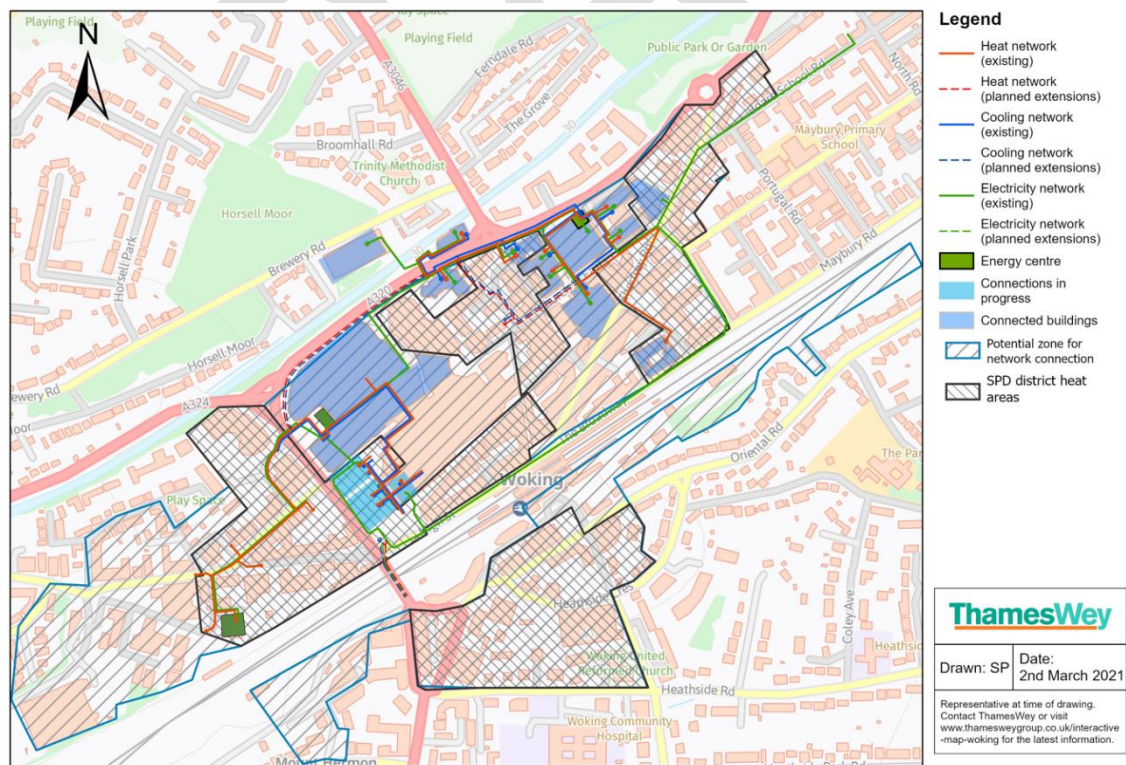


Figure 4: DENs and energy stations in Woking Town Centre, District Heat Areas, and potential connection zones (March 2021)

- 5.17 The two sections of planned extensions represented by dotted lines along Victoria Way and crossing Victoria Arch are considered to be of significant strategic importance to the network. These will facilitate a greater 'step-change' in network decarbonisation, boost capacity for connections in the east of the town centre, and allow sites south of the railway to access network services.
- 5.18 Beyond the town centre and park, the draft Site Allocations DPD allocates land within Sheerwater Priority Place, Albert Drive, for major regeneration. A DEN is planned for this site as part of the new infrastructure provision for the regeneration scheme.
- 5.19 A summary of sites with potential to be supplied by existing, extended, improved or new decentralised energy infrastructure is provided below.

Energy network infrastructure	Site allocations
High potential to be supplied by existing DENs	UA2 Trizancia House, Thomsen House & Woodstead House 72, Chertsey Road
	UA3 Chester House, 76-78 Chertsey Road, Woking, GU21 5BJ
	UA4 1-12 High Street and 26-34 Commercial Way, Woking, GU21 6EN
	UA6 2-24 Commercial Way and 13-28 High Street, Woking, GU21 6BW
	UA8 The former Goldsworth Arms PH, Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6LQ
	UA9 113-129 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6LR
	UA10 MVA and Select House, Victoria Way, Woking, GU21 6DD
	UA11 1-7 Victoria Way and 1-29 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6JZ
	UA12 Synergy House, 8 Church Street West, Woking, GU21 6DJ
	UA13 30-32, Woking Railway and Athletic Club, Systems House and Bridge House, Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6JT
	UA14 Poole Road Industrial Estate, Woking, GU21 6EE
	UA15 The Big Apple American Amusements Ltd, H.G. Wells Conference Centre, the former Rat and Parrot PH and 48-58 Chertsey Road, Woking, GU21 5AJ
	UA16 Chertsey House, 61 Chertsey Road, Woking, GU21 5BN
	UA17 Griffin House, West Street, Woking, GU21 6BS
	UA18 Concorde House, 165 Church Street East, Woking, GU21 6HJ
UA25 101-121 Chertsey Road, Woking, GU21 5BW	
High potential to be supplied by <i>extensions</i> to existing DENs	UA31 Car Park (east), Oriental Road, Woking, GU22 8BD
	UA32 Royal Mail Sorting/Delivery Office, White Rose Lane, Woking, GU22 7AJ
	UA33 Coal Yard/Aggregates Yard adjacent to the railway line, Guildford Road, Bradfield Close, Woking, GU22 7QE
	UA34 Quadrant Court, Guildford Road, Woking, GU22 7QQ
	UA35 The Crescent, Heathside Crescent, Woking, GU22 7AG
	UA36 Somerset House, 1-18 Oriental Road, Woking, GU22 7BG
Potential to be supplied by existing DENs subject to significant infrastructure improvements	UA42 Woking Football Club, Woking Gymnastics Club, Woking Snooker Club, Westfield Avenue, Woking GU22 9AA
High potential to be supplied by a new DEN	UA24 Land within Sheerwater Priority Place, Albert Drive GU21 5RE

- 5.20 Remaining sites in the draft SA DPD have low potential to be supplied by new or existing decentralised energy plant and distribution infrastructure, but criteria in policy CS22 of the Core Strategy on integration of CHP and/or heat networks should still be taken into account in any planning application.
- 5.21 The IDP Schedule in Chapter 2 has been updated to reflect the latest indicative costs and sources of funding for delivering decentralised energy network infrastructure requirements.

Water Supply

- 5.22 Since the 2018 IDP was published, Affinity Water has renewed 2km of large diameter water mains along Littlewick Road, and laid 1.4km of new water mains to facilitate new

housing developments. It now operates around 470km of water mains in the borough, and supplies drinking water to around 45,000 properties.

5.23 Affinity Water has provided an up-to-date assessment of infrastructure requirements to meet planned growth in Woking to 2027. There are three key factors they analyse when reviewing proposed sites and indicative yields, as follows:

- (i) **Whether any sites are within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ):** none of the sites reviewed are within or close to an SPZ1 and Affinity Water therefore does not have significant concerns for developments relating to potential contamination of water sources. However, a precautionary approach has been adopted and key requirements have been included in site allocations (as recommended by the Environment Agency) to ensure thorough assessment is carried out at development management stage.
- (ii) **Impacts on existing water network:** a number of areas have been identified where there is potential for development coming forward on allocated land to impact the existing water network – developers will need to engage with Affinity Water as early as is practicable to ensure this infrastructure is taken into consideration in developing their plans, and refer to Affinity Water's 'Developing and working near our pipes and apparatus' guidance.

Sites with critical mains apparatus within their boundaries where it will be essential that these are taken into consideration in the early stages of new developments	Sites which have infrastructure in the vicinity of site boundaries which development plans will need to take account of	Allocations for areas of active development which are already supplied by Affinity Water's distribution network, which will need to be taken account of
UA40 GB3, GB6, GB9, GB10, GB12	UA8, UA14, UA15, UA16, UA41 GB4, GB11, GB17	UA24, UA26, UA27

- (iii) **Current infrastructure and future requirements:** Affinity Water assessed two different scenarios – current demand to establish the baseline, and future demand using shapefiles of proposed developments – which were scaled to reflect peak summer demand conditions. It is projected that pressures at critical points in the network due to proposed development are such that major reinforcements in the network will be required. This normally means new pipelines, although in some cases new pumping stations will also be required. The results suggest that there is sufficient water supply in the region to meet development needs to 2027 in the borough.

5.24 Affinity Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2019 (WRMP19) sets out how supply and demand will be maintained over the next 60 years (2020-2080) and accounts for projected population growth based on local authority plans (including Woking's). The current WRMP19 considers reinforcements to be installed in order to meet the demand arising from growth, and new infrastructure will be available to accommodate needs arising from the initial phases of growth in the planning period. In addition, each developer will be expected to contribute to the required reinforcements to meet needs arising from individual developments depending on the relative impact on the network. At pre-application stage, the Council will continue to encourage developers to discuss their proposals with Affinity Water in advance of submitting a planning application, utilising Affinity Water's pre-application advice service.

5.25 WRMP19 also seeks to ensure water resources can be managed effectively to meet growing demand, and expects new development to meet low water usage targets and incorporate water efficient fittings and fixtures. Policy CS22 of the Core Strategy

continues to seek low water usage in new development through the BREEAM and Building Regulations regimes.

- 5.26 Water companies have a legislated duty to supply water for domestic purposes to customers and are hence obliged to connect development to the network once planning permission has been received. Any localised upgrades to existing supply networks are likely to be funded from water developer requisitions and investment processes.
- 5.27 Affinity Water continually monitors the performance of the distribution system and puts in place measures to ensure high quality water supply and pressures are maintained. They will continue to work with Woking Council, along with neighbouring local planning authorities and developers, to ensure that infrastructure is in place in line with the pace of development and that realistic forecasts of development phasing is used to forecast infrastructure requirements.

Digital infrastructure

- 5.28 At a national level, the NPPF continues to strongly promote the expansion of high quality communications infrastructure. The Government has recently set targets to deliver gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks, aiming for:
- a "minimum of 85%" of UK premises to have gigabit-capable broadband coverage by 2025⁶ - this will be enabled by 'Project Gigabit' announced in March 2021; and
 - for a "majority" of the population to have a 5G signal by 2027⁷.
- 5.29 At a county level, SCC recognise that a digitally connected Surrey will ensure that its residents and businesses can benefit from new and emerging technologies, including virtual and augmented reality, autonomous electric vehicles and transport, hyper-automation, drone delivery services and digital healthcare provision. This requires a step-change in digital capability and connectivity, and has informed SCC's Digital Infrastructure Strategy which seeks to work with commercial providers and other partners to deliver a strategic programme of investment to maximise connectivity at 1GB+ and access to 5G mobile services to residents, businesses and communities across Surrey. A range of projects are being developed via a Digital Infrastructure Programme Plan, in conjunction with the Digital Infrastructure Steering Group which comprise highways, health, corporate infrastructure, IT&D and the economy. Project owners, timescales, performance indicators and resourcing and costs are being finalised for a report to Cabinet in Autumn 2021.
- 5.30 At a borough level, by 2027, housing and commercial growth will see Woking's population increase, and with more people using more complex online devices for watching High Definition TV, gaming, making video calls, doing business and accessing educational opportunities, the borough is going to need faster and more robust digital infrastructure. Woking's Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 recognises that connectivity and infrastructure are key factors in economic competitiveness, and supports the aspiration for ultrafast 100Mbps connectivity and enhanced 5G connectivity when rolled-out. An Economic Development Action Plan is currently being developed to respond to the post-pandemic recovery – an interim plan to 2023, when a new or updated economic development strategy will be adopted. New work patterns such as home-based and hybrid working compounds the need for efficient digital infrastructure.
- 5.31 A forthcoming Digital Strategy will recommend actions that will create a progressive digital platform to transform Woking into a digitally smart borough. The Economic

⁶ HM Treasury, [National Infrastructure Strategy](#) (November 2020)

⁷ DCMS, [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) (July 2018)

Development Action Plan and Digital Strategy will be adopted in Autumn 2021, after a period of consultation.

5.32 The 2018 IDP focused on the objectives of the Superfast Surrey Broadband Programme (aiming for download speeds of 30Mbps+), which has now concluded. The county now has one of the highest levels of superfast (30Mbps+) broadband coverage in England with 98% coverage; 73.1% of Surrey homes and businesses can access 100Mbps+ download speeds; but only 16.4% of Surrey premises can access gigabit (1000Mbps) download speeds, compared with a national average of 36.6%. Woking is broadly well connected, as the following figures⁸ demonstrate:

- Superfast coverage (at least 24Mbps download speed): **99.24%** (Government definition)
- Superfast coverage (at least 30Mbps download speed): **99.06%** (Ofcom and EU definition)
- Ultrafast coverage (more than 100Mbps download speed): **91.38%**

5.33 Since 2012, when the Superfast Surrey initiative was launched, extent of coverage has improved, and download speeds have significantly improved. See Table 2 and Figure 5 below. It should be noted that consumers often need to subscribe to specific packages in order to receive superfast speeds, so there may be a higher percentage of lines that are capable of receiving superfast speeds.

	Q1 2012	Q2 2021
% Superfast coverage (>30Mbps)	93.4	99.1
% Ultrafast coverage (>100Mbps)	86.3	91.3
Mean download speed (Mbps)	11.3	81.7
Mean upload speed (Mbps)	1.8	13.3

Table 2: Woking Superfast and Fibre Coverage, and Speed Test Results over time. Figures generated 1.8.21 using labs.thinkbroadband.com/local.

⁸ Thinkbroadband Woking Superfast and Fibre Coverage Data, updated weekly, accessed August 2021, available at:

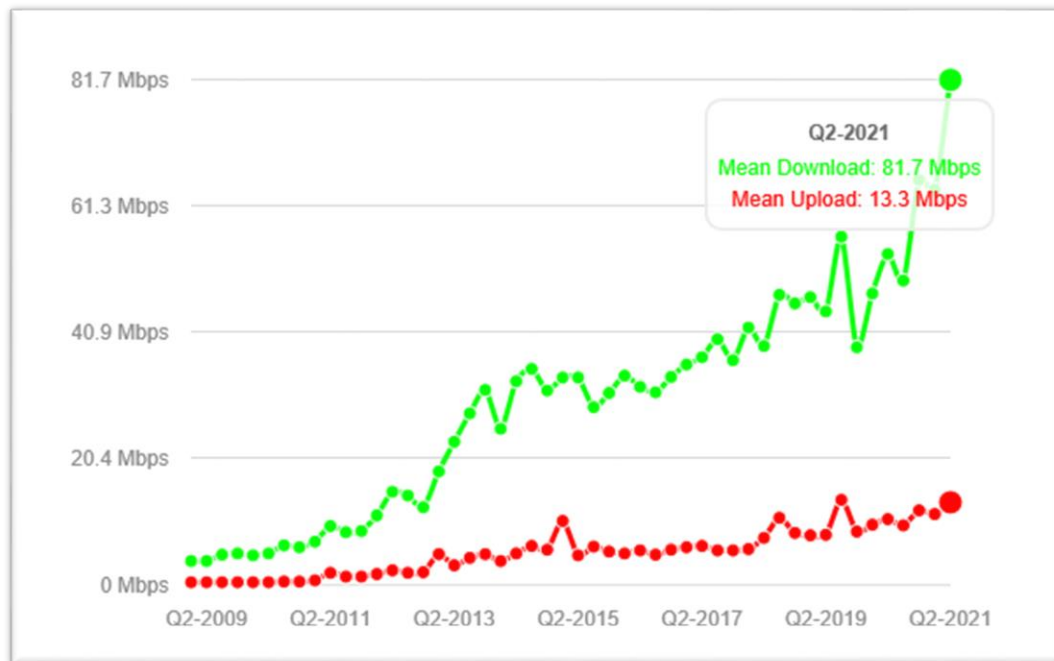


Figure 5: Woking Speed Test Results (Mbps) over time. Generated 01-08-2021 using labs.thinkbroadband.com/local

5.34 The following data demonstrates how Woking is performing in comparison to the UK as a whole – the analysis is based on Ofcom data collected between June 2020 and January 2021. It is considered that the most useful measure is that showing the premises 'unable to receive decent broadband' – those unable to receive 10Mbps download speed or 1Mbps upload speed, which Ofcom regards as necessary components of 'decent broadband'. This measure counts only premises that cannot receive the above speeds from fixed broadband, fixed wireless technologies, and mobile broadband, regardless of consumer choice. Only 0.2% of premises in Woking are unable to receive decent broadband, reflecting small rural pockets of the borough that are less well connected.

Area	Average download speed Mbps	Superfast availability	Gigabit availability	Unable to receive decent broadband	Receiving under 10 Mbps	Receiving over 30 Mbps
Woking	89.4	97.5%	3.7%	0.2%	7.2%	79.9%
South East	71.6	95.6%	23.2%	0.5%	8.7%	74.1%
UK	72.9	94.8%	36.4%	0.7%	9.3%	73.1%

Around 95% of the constituency's population lives in an area classified as urban

Which small areas overlapping the constituency have the best and worst connectivity?

Area name	Average download speed (Mbps)	Superfast availability	Gigabit availability	Unable to receive decent broadband	Lines receiving under 10 Mbps	Lines receiving over 30 Mbps
Byfleet	95.3	99.1%	0.0%	0.1%	10.3%	79.7%
Goldsworth Park	102.5	99.9%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%	88.7%
Hook Heath	81.5	99.5%	1.9%	0.0%	6.4%	83.1%
Horsell	90.6	97.6%	4.8%	0.2%	7.7%	78.8%
Knaphill	89.7	99.8%	0.0%	0.1%	4.5%	84.2%
Maybury Hill & Pyrford South	85.6	92.2%	0.0%	0.4%	10.3%	73.7%
Mayford & Brookwood	79.0	94.3%	5.5%	0.2%	6.2%	76.2%
Old Woking & Westfield	95.0	99.6%	9.0%	0.1%	7.8%	81.2%
Pirbright & Normandy	59.0	88.7%	4.2%	0.3%	11.4%	68.5%
Sheerwater	89.4	99.6%	0.8%	0.2%	6.0%	82.3%
St John's	99.2	99.9%	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	83.9%
West Byfleet & Pyrford North	91.3	96.4%	0.3%	1.1%	5.9%	74.2%
Woking Central	90.0	97.0%	13.0%	0.3%	3.2%	80.4%

Figure 6: Constituency statistics on broadband coverage and speeds in Woking. Data dashboard published May 2021, sourced from Ofcom.

5.35 Figure 6 shows that superfast connectivity is good across the majority of the borough, with areas such as Knaphill, Goldsworth Park and St John's benefitting from some of the best coverage and highest speeds. Woking Central benefits from good gigabit availability compared to some of its neighbouring towns (e.g. Guildford Town Centre at 0.6%, 4.6% in Camberley Town Centre), but there is scope for improvement (e.g. 52.7% in Bracknell Town Centre). In contrast, there are areas of the borough where coverage and speeds could be improved, including parts of Maybury Hill and Pyrford South, Mayford and Brookwood, Pirbright and Normandy (mostly falling in Guildford borough), and parts of West Byfleet and Pyrford North.

5.36 The Council's emerging Digital Infrastructure Strategy aims to ensure that groups living in the less well connected rural areas of the borough are not left behind, and that the highest quality digital connectivity is accessible and affordable to all residents and businesses across the borough.

- 5.37 The Government's target for gigabit rollout is being delivered through a combination of market led investment by broadband infrastructure providers (e.g. BT Openreach, Virgin etc) and programmes funded by Building Digital UK and SCC to upgrade areas of market failure by retrofitting superfast broadband provision into existing business and residential premises. Project Gigabit directs investment towards hard-to-reach places that would otherwise miss out on the national upgrade led by operators.
- 5.38 Surrey has not been included in the first phase of the Government's Project Gigabit, but is included in Phase 2 with contracts due to start in July 2023. To complement this work and to support pace of delivery there are several other elements to Project Gigabit including the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme to support people experiencing slow broadband speeds in rural areas and help cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband infrastructure to their premises.
- 5.39 It is essential that new build properties and commercial premises are able to access high quality and 'future proofed' broadband connectivity. Planning policies can facilitate this by ensuring that buildings are equipped with high-speed-ready in-building infrastructure. Until such a time that the proposed changes to Part R of the Building Regulations come into force⁹ (which aim to support the transition to gigabit capable broadband by 2025), policy DM22 of the Development Management Policies DPD continues to require development proposals, including for homes, employment and main town centre uses, to provide on-site infrastructure to allow for the 'latest broadband technology, including fibre optic broadband technology'. Now that the Superfast Surrey programme has concluded, the aims and objectives of Surrey and Woking's latest digital strategies should be taken into account. The importance of complying with this policy becomes particularly acute when development comes forward in areas of the borough which are less well connected, as identified in Figure 6 above. For gigabit-ready development, the aims of the policy would apply to all development coming forward in all areas of the borough, including that in the Town Centre, to facilitate a borough-wide rollout of appropriate infrastructure.

Summary of utility infrastructure requirements

The IDP Schedule in Chapter 2 has been updated with the latest infrastructure requirements to support growth in the Core Strategy and draft SA DPD, with indicative costs and funding sources where known. Funding opportunities for the delivery of digital infrastructure include the following:

- National productivity Investment Fund for Local Full Fibre Networks
- Challenge Fund
- Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme
- Better Broadband Voucher Scheme
- 'Duty to connect' provision
- Developer contributions through on-site provision or section 106/CIL.

⁹ MHCLG, Review of Part R (physical infrastructure for electronic communications) and Part 9A of the Building Regulations (May 2021), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-part-r-physical-infrastructure-for-electronic-communications-and-part-9a-of-the-building-regulations/review-of-part-r-physical-infrastructure-for-electronic-communications-and-part-9a-of-the-building-regulations>

6. Green Infrastructure

Summary of 2018 IDP

6.1 A summary of the 2018 IDP is provided below:

- The 2018 IDP assessed requirements in relation to natural and semi-natural space (including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace or SANG), children and teenage provision, parks, gardens, recreation grounds and amenity space, outdoor sports, allotments and green corridors.
- SANGs: additional capacity in the short-term to meet development needs would be provided via ongoing improvements at Horsell Common, White Rose Lane, Brookwood Country Park and Heather Farm SANGs. To meet long-term needs, additional SANG land would be allocated at Byfleet, Brookwood Farm, Westfield Common and Gresham Mill, as per the draft SA DPD.
- Children and teenage provision: alongside refurbishment and improvements to existing facilities across the borough, new provision would be required to meet a shortfall in existing areas, and to serve new development i.e. 6 LEAPs, 1 NEAP and 2 MUGA/Skateparks in accordance with Fields in Trust benchmark standards. Development coming forward on land at West Hall, at Egley Road and as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration scheme would be expected to contribute towards new play facilities to support the population stemming from that development.
- Parks, gardens, recreation grounds and amenity space: enhancements to existing provision would be required in parallel with new provision coming forward as part of new development proposals. Improvements to semi-natural green spaces through SANG delivery and flood alleviation schemes at Hoe Valley and Old Woking will increase access to green space for leisure and recreation; and key requirements have been incorporated into site allocations to deliver on-site measures to support the creation, protection and enhancement of green infrastructure, and to provide suitable levels of amenity space for residential units.
- Outdoor sports: requirements set out in detail in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Facilities Strategy (2017) and its Action Plan. This provides the evidence base for planning, investment and sports development decisions, and sets out additional provision required to meet growing demand generated by development. On-site provision will be delivered as part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme (2 adult and 1 junior football pitches and a 3G pitch at Bishop David Brown School) and on Nursery land adjacent to Egley Road (2 adult football pitches, a 3G pitch, and floodlit tennis courts) to meet increased demand.
- Allotments: 116 five-rod plots would be required at sites distributed across the borough to meet demand, as per National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) standards.
- Green corridors: ongoing improvements to the GI network would be required, with new development proposals identifying opportunities to connect to and enhance the network as per policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies DPD, and in accordance with key requirements incorporated into policies of the draft SA DPD.

Updated Position

6.2 The following sources have been used to populate this section:

Information Sources
Draft Site Allocations DPD and Schedule of Main Modifications (September 2020)
Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule, April 2018
Correspondence and meetings with the Council's Green Infrastructure team, local Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Forums.

Draft revised Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy (2021) (unpublished)
Woking Borough Council Natural Woking Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy (2016) and supporting documents, available at: https://www.woking.gov.uk/nature-and-sustainability/natural-woking
RSK ADAS Ltd, Improvement Plan for Great Crested Newts Westfield Common (January 2020), available at: https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Woking/NatureSustainability/Improvement%20Plan%20for%20Great%20Crested%20Newts%20-%203rd%20year%20review_Jan%202020.pdf
Basingstoke Canal Authority Conservation Management Plan (third edition, 2018-2028), available at: https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/basingstokecanal/canalauthority
Correspondence and meetings with the Basingstoke Canal Society
Fields in Trust Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play (November 2020), available at: https://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/guidance/Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England.pdf
Surrey Nature Partnership (September 2019) Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, Appendix 9: River Biodiversity Opportunity Area Policy Statements, available at: https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/appendix-9_river-biodiversity-opportunity-area-policy-statements.pdf
Planning application documents for Sheerwater regeneration area and Broadoaks Park, available at www.woking.gov.uk

Delivery Update

6.3 The benchmark standards put forward by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy, Fields in Trust guidance, and NSALG guidelines used in the 2018 IDP assessment have not changed, and in the main, the infrastructure requirements identified and summarised in the 2018 IDP Schedule remain valid. The Green Infrastructure team and SANG Officers have provided the following updates on progress with this infrastructure delivery since the publication of the 2018 IDP.

Natural and semi-natural green space, including SANGs

6.4 All residential development proposals are expected to mitigate against the impact of development on natural and semi-natural greenspace, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). New residential development is only permitted within 400m and 5km of an SPA on the condition that a contribution is made towards the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), in accordance with policy CS8 of the Core Strategy. Key requirements have also been incorporated into relevant site allocation policies in the draft SA DPD to reiterate this requirement.

6.5 SANGs are areas of semi-natural, open land which have been identified for enhancement so that they can be made more accessible to visitors for recreation and dog-walking, and in turn, lessen the impact on areas of the borough which are designated to protect the most seriously threatened habitats and species.

6.6 The location of operational SANGs in Woking has not changed since the publication of the 2018 IDP. However, SANG 'unallocated capacity' has decreased from 1,431 to 809 dwellings as new development has come forward. Table 3 provides an updated assessment of remaining unallocated capacity as at June 2021.

Name of SANG site	Size (ha)	Catchment (km)	Total SANG capacity (no. of dwellings)	Remaining unallocated capacity (no. of dwellings)	Remaining unallocated capacity (no. of dwellings)

				as at June 2017)	as at June 2021)
Brookwood Country Park	20	4	1036	425	288
White Rose Lane	8.2	2	425	37	47 ¹⁰
Horsell Common, Monument Road	28	5	1451	124	37
Heather Farm	24.63	5	1276	420	59
Gresham Mill (First SANG)	9.9	2	513	425	378
TOTAL				1,431	809

Table 3: Unallocated SANG capacity of existing sites, as at June 2021

- 6.7 The latest figures demonstrate that there is capacity to provide avoidance/mitigation for around 809 dwellings. This is equivalent to around 3 years' supply (based on an average of 292 dwellings per annum). This takes the Council up to mid-2024, after which, the Council will require additional SANG sites if it is to deliver the housing need towards the end of the Core Strategy period.
- 6.8 The following new SANGs have been identified to increase capacity, with an update on delivery indicated where available:
- **Byfleet SANG** – 15.43ha site (ref. GB12), which could provide access to semi-natural greenspace and SPA mitigation for approximately 799 dwellings. This would improve coverage to the east of the borough. This project ~~could be designed as part of the is identified for delivery as part of the~~ Sanway-Byfleet Flood Alleviation Scheme, ~~led by pending further discussion with~~ the Environment Agency, ~~which is due to begin in 2023 and complete in Autumn 2024 subject to funding~~. The site allocation policy identifies the need for a SANG Proposal and SANG Management Plan to address accessibility via the incorporation of pedestrian/cycle links. Community groups in the area have identified an opportunity to improve public access to the site via Murray's Bridge, subject to the necessary consents from the landowner.
 - **Brookwood Farm SANG** (ref. GB13) – the Council has extended the proposed SANG site (originally designed to serve the new development of 297 dwellings at Brookwood Farm) to 26ha, incorporating the wider landscape to the south of the site, and its intended capacity will increase to 1050 dwellings, subject to further advice from Natural England. It is intended that the SANG be delivered as part of a phased approach, ~~with the original SANG opening later in 2021 or early 2022.~~
 - **Westfield Common SANG** – 10.59ha site (ref. GB14) to provide capacity for around 549 dwellings, subject to Natural England advice.
 - **Second SANG at Gresham Mill** (ref. GB16) – 9.52ha site to provide around 493 dwelling SPA mitigation capacity, subject to Natural England advice.
 - **Horsell Common SANG extension** (not allocated as part of draft SA DPD) – it is proposed that additional land parcels alongside the existing Horsell Common SANG could be brought into use, providing capacity for 749 dwellings. A SANG design covering the whole site has been prepared, and associated costs are being estimated. The Council continues to work with Natural England and the Horsell Common Preservation Society to progress the scheme, with a view to deliver the project later this year.
- 6.9 The latest draft SA DPD (Main Modifications version, September 2020) identifies around 89.93ha of land which has the potential to be transformed into SANG. Together with the 14.49ha extension at Horsell Common, this amount of land is higher than the identified shortfall in capacity, and the Council is confident that the combination of existing and

¹⁰ An increase in capacity may reflect an unimplemented planning permission.

new sites will ensure that there is sufficient SANG land to meet the projected growth within the borough to 2027.

6.10 Existing and proposed SANGs are illustrated on the following map.

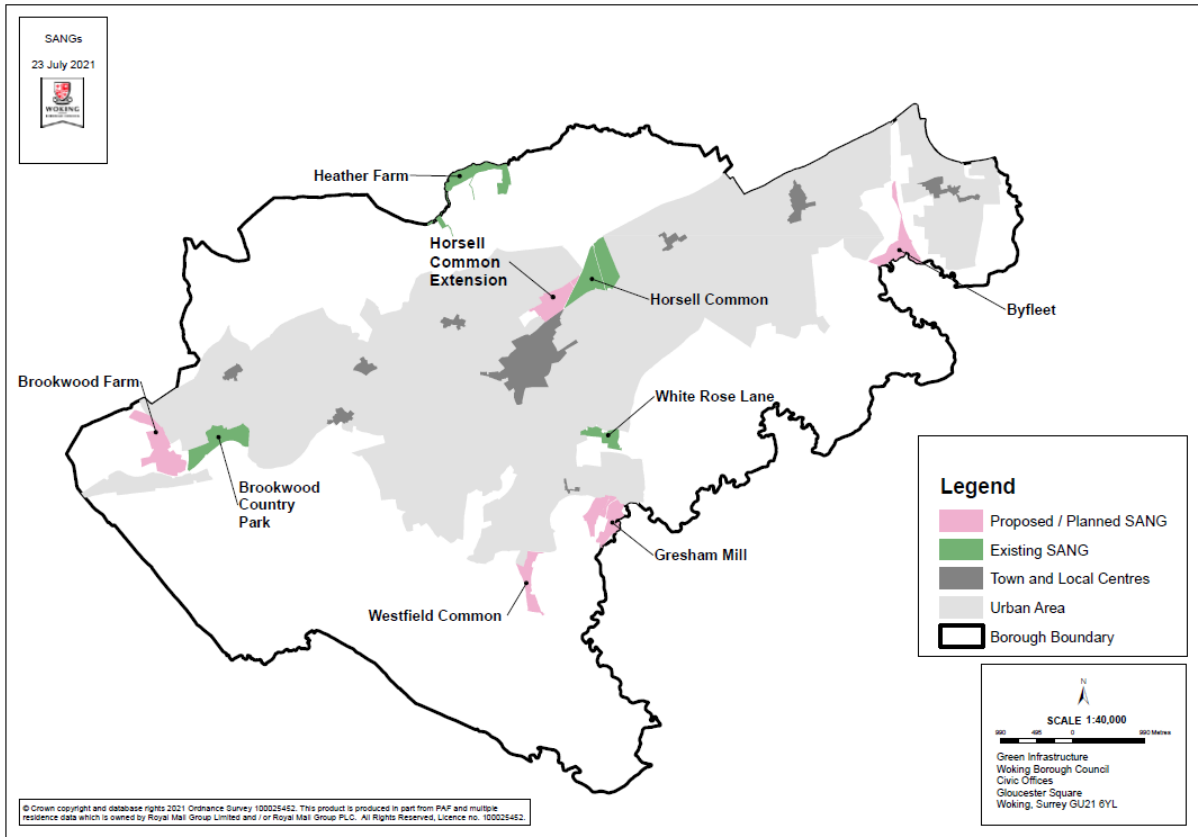


Figure 7: Existing and proposed/planned SANGs as at June 2021

6.11 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) continues to be the primary means of securing developer contributions towards SANG provision. The internal WBC SANG Officer Task Group continues to monitor SANG provision, as well as management and funding of SANG.

6.12 The IDP Schedule in Chapter 2 has been updated to reflect progress with SANG delivery, and with the Council's Great Crested Newt (GCN) pilot project. One of the main aims in Natural Woking, the Council's green infrastructure strategy, is to support the UK's achievement of 'favourable conservation status' for its protected habitats and species. To support this objective, WBC is working with Natural England to minimise the risk of GCN habitat loss to new development, and at the same time help the delivery of development by easing constraints on the layout and design of development land. To ensure any unavoidable losses are offset, the project creates new/improved habitat to provide strongholds for the local GCN population. It also seeks to minimise the risk of delays to development and associated cost implications through a streamlined GCN licensing process. Since the project began, new and improved habitat has been delivered at Westfield Common. The Council is working with Natural England to identify future opportunity areas to increase the capacity of the borough's green infrastructure to accommodate GCN populations.

Play Areas

- 6.13 Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy continues to require all proposals for new residential development (other than replacement dwellings) to contribute towards the provision of open space and green infrastructure, including children's play areas and outdoor recreational facilities for young people; and outdoor sports facilities. Developers will be expected to contribute to provision through CIL and/or S106, or through on-site provision on larger sites.
- 6.14 In order to increase the capacity of play areas to meet development needs, ~~The~~ Council continues to aim to meet the shortfall in play provision in areas of the borough identified in the 2018 IDP¹¹; continues to refurbish existing provision; ~~and continues to expect new developments to provide provision on-site where appropriate. The Fields in Trust benchmark standards have not changed since the 2018 IDP was published, and the findings in the 2018 IDP remain valid.~~
- 6.15 The number of play areas for younger and older children is similar to that presented in the 2018 IDP. The Council manages 42 play areas across the borough, including Cowshott Crescent which is just outside the borough:
- 5 LAPs;
 - 26 LEAPs (the Byfleet Recreation Ground LEAP has been removed as planned when the new play area was built – play provision in Byfleet remains at the recommended level as the new play area is a NEAP, which caters for younger and older children);
 - 11 NEAPs;
 - MUGAs at 10 locations (the 2no. MUGAs at Hoe Valley have now been delivered);
 - Skate parks at 5 locations (reduced from 6 locations, as the skate ramp was removed at Goldsworth Park);
 - Stand-alone equipment at 17 locations.
- 6.16 Improvements to existing play areas helps support more intensive use arising from population growth. ~~The Council's refurbishment programme is ongoing, and t~~The capacity and quality of play areas have been improved at the following locations since the 2018 IDP was published:
- West Byfleet Recreation Ground NEAP: refurbishment and expansion of the play area to increase capacity was completed in April 2019, at a cost of c.£65k from the Council's investment programme and Surrey County Council's Community Improvement Fund, facilitated by local residents.
 - Sanway Road LEAP: in 2021, additional equipment was provided using a combination of neighbourhood CIL funding and SCC's Community Improvement Fund (c.£9k).
 - Loop Road LEAP: works have commenced to bring the equipment in line with the latest regulations, and to increase the provision of inclusive, wheelchair accessible play equipment. The project will commence in September 2021, at a cost of c.£130k (identified in the Council's investment programme). Improvements at this play area will help accommodate needs arising from development on land allocated at Woking Football Club (ref. UA42), and meet the shortfall of provision at this location as identified in the 2018 IDP.
 - Borough-wide skate park refurbishments – in Spring/Summer 2020, £40k was invested in the refurbishment of skate parks across the borough. No significant works are anticipated to 2027, although ongoing maintenance and minor repairs will be required periodically.

¹¹ Children's play space was considered to be limited in Brookwood (Brookwood Lye Road area); parts of West Byfleet and Byfleet (e.g. north of Parvis Road); St John's Ward (St John's Road area); Mount Hermon Ward; and Pyrford Ward. Teenage provision was considered to be limited in Pyrford, Horsell, St John's Lye and Loop Road/St Peter's Recreation Ground.

6.17 The Council is currently reviewing its play area refurbishment programme, which will take into account how planned development might affect existing infrastructure – particularly those play areas serving the growth areas of the borough (see Figure 8 below). The refurbishment programme will identify priority play areas for investment, and these will be reflected in future updates to the IDP. The following existing play areas have been prioritised for investment over the plan period, subject to the identification of additional funding (including the availability of S106 and CIL funds):

- **First priority:** Horsell Moor LEAP, Oakfield LEAP, Sutton Green LEAP: improving play provision at Horsell Moor will help accommodate needs arising from growth via allocated sites in the Town Centre;
- **Second priority:** Alpha Road LEAP, Coresbrook Way LEAP, Cubitt Way LEAP, Percheron Drive LEAP, Vale Farm Road LAP, Hampton Close LAP, Walton Court LEAP, Waters Park LEAP and Wheatsheaf NEAP: improving play provision at Vale Farm Road LAP, Wheatsheaf NEAP and Walton Court LEAP will help accommodate needs arising from growth via allocated sites in the Town Centre.

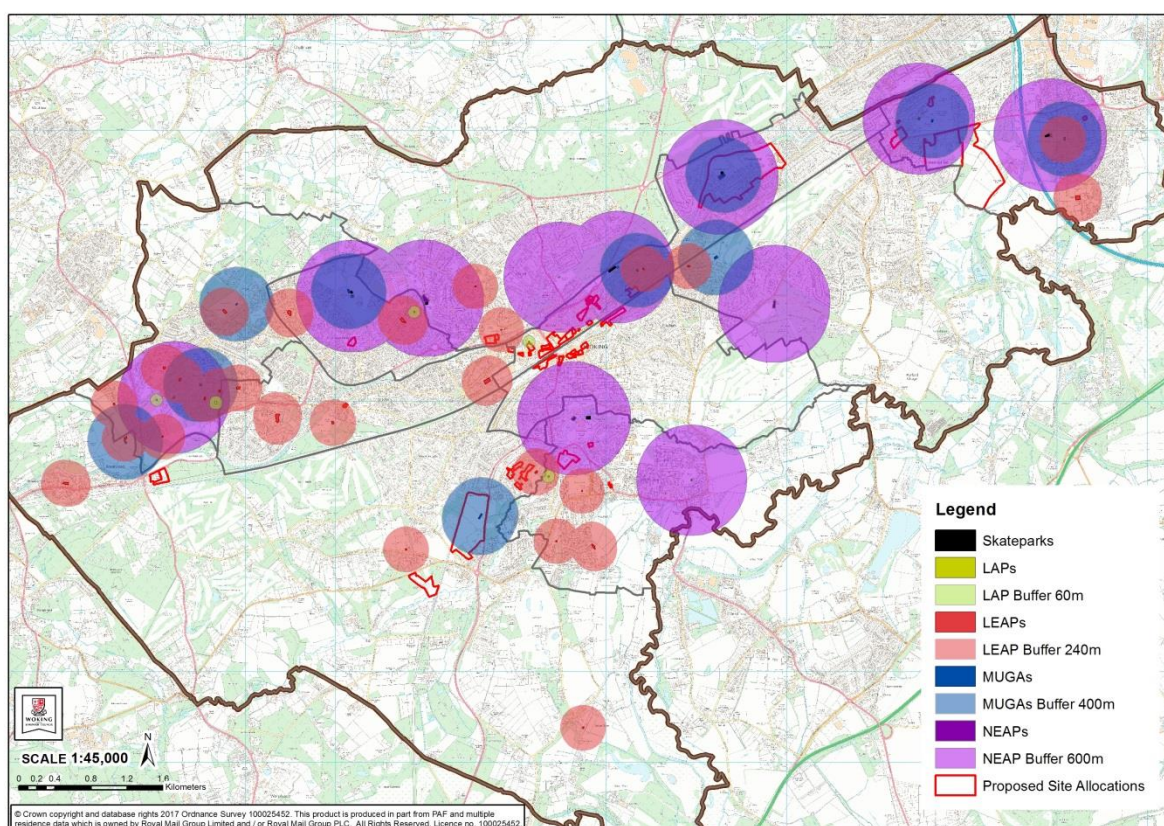


Figure 8: Existing Play Provision and Proposed Site Allocations

6.18 As per 2018 IDP findings, development coming forward on allocated sites at land surrounding West Hall (ref. GB9) and at Egley Road (ref. GB7) would be expected to provide play facilities in accordance with the Fields in Trust guidance, to support the population arising from new development.

6.19 Development coming forward on the following sites, which have achieved planning consent, will also increase the capacity of the borough's play areas to meet growing needs:

- **GB10 Land at Broadoaks, West Byfleet:** a community play area is being constructed which would deliver a LAP play area for use by new and existing residents in the area, to be maintained by the Estate Management Company.

- **UA24 Land within Sheerwater Priority Place, Albert Drive:** there is one formal play facility within the site which is located on the recreation ground. The proposed masterplan for the scheme includes a central linear park, which will provide a NEAP, LEAP, and 3no. LAPs. In addition, the neighbourhood green areas (parks and gardens (informal amenity areas)) will also include new play provision in the form of 2no. further LEAPs and 3no. LAPs. A further local area of play would also be provided within a separate communal area. A new, floodlit MUGA and BMX/skatepark is also proposed. This proposed play provision, catering for a range of ages, would represent a significant improvement above the existing limited provision. Distributed across the development area, the play spaces will maximise accessibility to children across the development and improve natural surveillance of these areas. Commencement of the next phase of development is due October 2022.

6.20 As well as formal play areas, development proposals coming forward on sites in the Town Centre will be expected to consider how play space could be incorporated into the public realm, through informal play trails and playable furniture/sculpture for example.

Parks, gardens, recreation grounds and amenity green space

6.21 The 2018 IDP reported that the focus to meet future development needs would be on improving the quality and accessibility of existing provision, supplemented by new green infrastructure coming forward on-site as part of new development proposals. The GI coming forward should also seek opportunities to connect to the wider GI network, in accordance with policy DM1 of the DMP DPD.

6.22 Preceding chapters report on progress with delivering improvements to semi-natural green spaces such as through SANG maintenance/establishment, and flood alleviation schemes, which will increase capacity for leisure and recreation. The Council will seek additional provision of parks and gardens (i.e. the creation of new spaces) where appropriate and when the opportunity arises. This will be facilitated by key requirements in the Site Allocations DPD which require development proposals to include proportionate on-site measures to support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure, which could potentially include parks, gardens, recreation grounds and amenity green space depending on the scale of each proposal.

6.23 In addition to the site allocations for SANG provision, as detailed above, the following site allocations have been identified where there is potential to significantly increase the capacity of the borough's green infrastructure for amenity, wildlife, leisure and recreation, and to improve the borough's GI network:

- **GB9 Land surrounding West Hall, West Byfleet:** there is estimated to be approximately 4.7ha developable area for public open space and new green infrastructure to be integrated into the site. A supporting statement should be submitted with any planning application setting out how the development addresses criteria for new and enhanced green infrastructure in accordance with policy DM1: *Green infrastructure opportunities*. There is potential for Green Belt land to the east of the site, which is within the same ownership, to provide additional green infrastructure to serve the development which would act as a buffer to the Wey Navigation corridor. Additional key requirements set out how large areas of woodland, protected trees, traditional orchard and parkland should be retained and strengthened where possible; and that the design and layout of the site should incorporate new or improved open space for leisure and recreation, other forms of green infrastructure and appropriate landscaping. Key requirements also emphasise how improved connection of GI assets within and surrounding the site should be achieved (such as Old Wood, Dodds Wood,

Tins Wood and private gardens), and how opportunities to achieve Biodiversity Opportunity Area objectives for priority habitats within and surrounding the site (such as habitats at the proposed Byfleet SANG, ref. GB13) should be embraced. Taking the latest Fields in Trust recommendations¹² into account, the following table provides an indication of requirements for informal outdoor space needs generated by this site allocation:

Open space typology	Quantity guideline (ha per 1000 population) ¹³	Walking guideline
Parks and gardens (formal green spaces including urban parks, country parks, forest parks, formal gardens)	1.1ha	710m
Amenity green space (informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces in and around housing, and village greens)	0.83ha	480m
Natural and semi-natural (woodland, scrub, grassland, wetland, open and running water, and open access land)	2.49ha	720m
Total	4.42ha	

This figure is broadly in line with the amount of land allocated by site allocation GB9 (4.7ha) for public open space and new green infrastructure to be integrated into the site. The figures are indicative and will vary once the nature of the proposed development is known, and once a detailed assessment of accessible green space within and surrounding the site is conducted as part of the development management process.

- GB10 Land at Broadoaks, West Byfleet:** approved plans for development at the Broadoaks site (ref. GB10) include a significant amount of open, green space (estimated to constitute 45% of the site). The scheme, which has commenced, includes formal landscaped gardens that run north to south throughout the site, offering residents the benefit of outdoor communal space. The proposal also retains a significant number of trees and a green corridor which connects the site to adjacent open spaces and residential gardens.
- UA24 Land within Sheerwater Priority Place, Albert Drive:** allocated for uses including open space, leisure and recreational facilities. Detailed planning consent has been achieved for the earlier phases of the scheme, and outline planning consent has been achieved for the scheme as a whole. The majority of the parks and gardens space (informal amenity space) would be relocated to the centre of the proposal site to create a large central park forming a significant east-west green corridor, connecting the canal towpath in the west to the sports facilities in the east of the site. Further green spaces/streets link the north to south from the central park to create a network of green infrastructure including tree lined streets, podium streets and pedestrian friendly shared streets. The central park would also extend northwards to link to one of the existing canal towpaths, and would contain an trim trail. The whole of the central park, classed as parks and gardens, would extend to some 2.848ha, which is larger than the existing parks and gardens space provided by the recreation ground (2.044ha). Every new dwelling will be within 300m of the closest part of the central park, satisfying the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) as per Core Strategy requirements. Outside of the central park there will be smaller areas for

¹² Fields in Trust (2015), Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play, available at: www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance.

¹³ Based on average household size for Woking of 2.49 persons per dwelling, and an indicative yield of 555 dwellings.

Parks and gardens (formal green spaces including urban parks, country parks, forest parks, formal gardens)	0.24ha	710m
Amenity green space (informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces in and around housing, and village greens)	0.18ha	480m
Natural and semi-natural (woodland, scrub, grassland, wetland, open and running water, and open access land)	0.53ha	720m
Total	0.95ha	

The figures are indicative and will vary once the nature of the proposed development is known, and once a detailed assessment of accessible green space within and surrounding the site is conducted as part of the development management process. The existing provision of a significant amount of formal recreation space on the site would also be taken into account.

- GB17 Woking Palace, Carters Lane:** the Council acknowledges the potential to create new heritage parkland/country park at this site, which would remain in the Green Belt and would be keen to work in partnership with the landowner and other key stakeholders to achieve this aim. The latest, modified SA DPD identifies the need for a development brief for the Woking Palace site to be produced by the Council, with the involvement of other landowners to address deliverability issues in bringing forward the site. The Council considers there to be an opportunity to bring the monument and its adjoining grounds into active use, which would encourage visitors and add vitality to the heritage asset. It would also increase the capacity and accessibility of the borough's open space to meet future needs.

Outdoor Sports Provision

6.24 The 2018 IDP pointed to the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Facilities Strategy and its Action Plan, 2017-2027, as the primary source of information regarding current and projected future need and how provision would be improved and increased accordingly. The strategy took into account the planned growth in the Core Strategy of 292 dwellings p.a, and assumed average household sizes of 2.49 persons per dwelling as per 2011 Census data. The strategy assesses in detail where there is enough accessible and secured community use provision to meet future demand to the end of the Plan period, and identifies specific infrastructure requirements to meet projected needs, summarised in the following table:

Type of pitch	Number required
Adult football	2
Junior 11v11	3
Junior 9v9	3
Mini 7v7	4
Cricket	0
Adult rugby	1
Full size 3G Football Turf Pitch	4
Full size Artificial Grass Pitch for hockey	1
Tennis	0
Bowls	0
Athletics	0

Table 4: Overall assessment of requirements to 2027 for playing pitches. Source: Playing Pitch & Outdoor Facilities Strategy 2017-2027

6.25 Meeting this demand would not always require provision of new pitches on new land. In the first instance, new pitches should be accommodated at existing sites either through increasing capacity of existing pitches, or providing new pitches on spare land at existing sites. Developer contributions for new provision should be assessed on this basis.

6.26 The following table provides an update since the 2018 IDP was produced, and describes how provision has been increased and improved in accordance with the strategy in order to meet growing needs from planned development in the Core Strategy and draft Site Allocations DPD.

Approach	Progress to date	Future plans
New pitches on new land, including on sites allocated in the Site Allocations DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UA24 Land within Sheerwater Priority Place – the first phase of the permitted regeneration scheme saw the development of new outdoor sports facilities for use by local community (including new residents generated by development) and the school. Due to open in September 2021, outdoor infrastructure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1no. 3G football pitch (floodlit with seating) • 1no. junior grass rugby pitch • 200m grass running track • 2no. grass football pitches (1no. under 16, 1no. under 13/14 11-a-side pitch) • 1no. artificial cricket square and 2no. cricket practice nets (available May 2022) • Loss of recreation ground (not formally set out as playing pitches) mitigated by re-provision at Egley Road (see below). • GB7 Nursery land at Egley Road – Woking Athletics Club facilities previously located in Sheerwater have now been re-provided as part of the new development at Egley Road, which opened in September 2018. This is an enlarged and improved facility. Infrastructure includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1no. eight lane all-weather track, with areas for track and field sports • 2no. grass sports pitches (1xadult, 1xjunior) accessible to community • 3no. all-weather 5-a-side artificial grass pitches accessible to community. 	<p>The new outdoor provision at Egley Road and Sheerwater have delivered some of the requirements identified in Table 4 above, and will meet needs generated by new housing at these sites. The new athletics facilities result in a 33% increase in available training space which caters for growth of the sport across the borough to 2027.</p> <p>The strategy identifies Land surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road, West Byfleet (ref. GB9) as having potential space for on-site pitch provision. A sequential test will be applied – if needs cannot be accommodated through increasing existing pitch capacity or through new pitches at existing sites, then new on-site provision will be sought.</p>
Increasing the capacity of existing pitches by improvements to pitch quality and/or changing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Summer 2019, 4no. refurbished 3G football pitches were installed at Woking Leisure Centre to replace the existing surfaces. • Improve 'standard' rated football pitches at Brookwood Country Park (improve drainage), Alpha Road, and at Goldsworth Park Recreation Ground. • Improve cricket pitch quality at Wheatsheaf, Brookwood and Byfleet Recreation Grounds, and Westfield & District Sports Club, to increase capacity. • Renovate all non-turf wickets at Waterers Park, West Byfleet, Brookwood, Byfleet and Wheatsheaf Recreation Grounds, St John's Lye, Goldsworth Park and Woking Park. • Improve changing facilities at Brookwood Recreation Ground, Byfleet Recreation Ground, Wheatsheaf Recreation Ground, St Peter's Recreation Ground. 	<p>West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum has identified a need to refurbish and maintain existing facilities at the recreation ground in order to meet needs arising from future development in the area, including the tennis courts, pavilion and cricket square. Facilities could be better accessed and connected by installing a perimeter path around the recreation ground, for use by all ages.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved kitchen/catering area for Goldsworth Park Clubs. • Improved changing facilities to serve rugby pitches at Byfleet Recreation Ground. • Enlargement of changing facilities at Woking Hockey Club. • Increasing usage and enhancing tennis courts in parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Woking Park tennis courts were identified by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) as having significant potential for upgrading to all-year round coaching and community tennis. All five courts have been refurbished with new surfacing, new fencing, key code entry, wheelchair access, and new nets at a total project cost of c.£235k, partly funded by the LTA and by WBC. The project contributes towards meeting the significant latent demand for tennis participation identified in the strategy. 	
<p>Securing access to existing pitches which do not have community use e.g. at secondary schools (pitches at primary schools often occur singly and as such are not viable options for community clubs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2015 planning permission for the Sheerwater Regeneration scheme includes public access to the six existing tennis courts within Bishop David Brown School grounds. • A new full size 3G ATP has been completed at Woking College, with a new pavilion near completion. The pitch will be managed by Cardinals in the Community, associated with Woking Football Club. The project, costing c£2m, was funded by S106 contributions, grant contributions from the Football Foundation and London Marathon Trust, and by borrowing. The project helps address the shortfall of 3G ATP identified in the strategy, and the need of local clubs for all weather surface training areas. Expected to complete mid-October 2021. 	

6.27 The Council continues to progress the actions in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Facilities Strategy, in partnership with local community groups.

Allotments

6.28 Since publication of the 2018 IDP, the number of allotments sites and plots available has remained largely static, but the number of people on waiting lists indicates an increase in demand (from a total of 53 people in August 2017 to 282 people in August 2021). There has been a consistent increase in waiting list numbers since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, which reflects national trends: a survey conducted by The Association of Public Service Excellence¹⁶ showed that demand for allotments is high, and almost 90% of members reported that the pandemic had caused an increase in demand.

6.29 The Council will continue to monitor demand, as numbers are expected to decrease during the Autumn period (waiting lists are typically highest during the summer period) and as Covid 19 restrictions ease. Having delivered the allotment site at Carthouse Lane in Horsell, there are currently no plans to introduce new or additional allotment plots directly by the Council, but the Council will continue to support community groups and developers in contributing to an increase in allotment capacity to meet demand, be this

¹⁶ APSE (September 2020) 'State of the Market Survey 2020: Local Authority Allotment Services, available at: <https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/members-area/briefings/2020/20-79-allotments-state-of-the-market-survey-2020/>

through reconfiguration of existing plots, designing in opportunities for on-site food-growing via development proposals, through off-site provision through S106 agreement or CIL funding, or through other initiatives such as community garden schemes.

- 6.30 As part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme (SA DPD ref. UA24), outline proposals include the redevelopment of existing areas of amenity grassland to provide a series of 'pocket parks' that combine opportunities for play and community productive growing. The proposal includes podium gardens which could include raised planting beds. Detailed design of the scheme is ongoing.
- 6.31 The 2018 IDP assessed that planned growth in the borough to 2027 would lead to a requirement for 63.5 additional standard-size plots or 127 five-rod plots at sites distributed across the borough to meet demand, at a cost of approximately £319,151 (excluding any land acquisition costs). Open Spaces, which can include allotments, community gardens and urban farms, continue to be identified as a priority type of infrastructure intended to be funded through CIL receipts on the latest Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2020). New development coming forward will continue to be expected to contribute to Open Space infrastructure on-site or via CIL or S106 contributions where relevant.
- 6.32 The 2018 IDP highlighted opportunities for future allotment provision at the following areas, which remains accurate:
- Horsell East and Woodham
 - St John's and Hook Heath
 - Mount Hermon West
 - Kingfield and Westfield
 - Mayford and Sutton Green
 - Pyrford.

Green Corridors

- 6.33 The NPPF defines Open Space as "all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity" (NPPF glossary).
- 6.34 The 2018 IDP identifies Basingstoke Canal, the River Wey and Hoe Valley stream as three of the most important open spaces/green corridors in the borough, because they provide opportunities for relaxation, social interaction, sport and recreation, which in turn contribute to mental and physical wellbeing. They are also critical for wildlife, help maintain water and air quality and reduce flood risk.
- 6.35 The importance of these green corridors has been brought into focus during the Covid 19 pandemic, with Basingstoke Canal Authority reporting a significant increase in use of the waterway and the towpath. The nature conservation, recreation and amenity value of the canal is described in detail in the Basingstoke Canal Authority's Conservation Management Plan 2018-2028¹⁷. It also describes how towpath usage – which can increase due to pressure from new housing – is less influential on the channel ecosystem. High visitor numbers are not considered to be a major factor in conservation management of the SSSI. Locally, areas associated with very high recreational use for angling or dog walking are associated with water's edge vegetation damage and eroded banks, so that maintenance and strengthening are required. However, most erosion

¹⁷ Available at: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/ccbs/basingstoke-canal/conservationmanagementplan.pdf>

comes from wind-created wave action and boat wash and the protected vegetation planting measures used to arrest this can be equally employed for local damage from the landward side. A 2016 survey of wetland flora of the canal concluded that there is no single overriding factor causing the reduction of species in the canal, but potential factors which may contribute towards the SSSI's unfavourable condition include leaf litter from tree growth, lack of light reaching the surface (caused by tree growth, bankside vegetation and aspect), and resuspension of silt from the canal bed caused by quantity and different types of siltation and continued use by powered boats. The Management Plan identifies a series of actions to reverse the declining condition and diversity of the waterway – the majority of which would be undertaken by the Basingstoke Canal Authority and/or Surrey County Council, drawing on a range of funding streams from partner contributions to grants.

- 6.36 Notwithstanding this finding, various infrastructure schemes have been identified in previous chapters which will contribute towards the enhancement of the borough's green corridors, and accessibility to them, including new and improved SANGs, flood alleviation schemes and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan schemes.
- 6.37 There will also be opportunities for direct enhancement of existing provision through development coming forward on the following allocated sites, as expressed in key requirements included in the site allocation policies:
- UA19: Timber Yard, Arthurs Bridge Road/Horsell Moor – opportunity to support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of local biodiversity and green infrastructure, with particular regard to the canal;
 - UA24: Land within Sheerwater Priority Place – opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility to the canal towpath, and to enhance existing biodiversity and green infrastructure assets, which includes the canal;
 - UA27: Monument Way West Industrial Estate – opportunity to support the creation, protection, enhancement and management of local biodiversity and green infrastructure, with particular regard to the canal;
 - UA40: Camphill Tip, West Byfleet – opportunity to improve the environmental quality of the adjacent Rive Ditch and Basingstoke Canal;
 - GB9: Land surrounding West Hall, Parvis Road – opportunity for land adjacent to the site, which is within the same ownership, to act as a buffer to the Wey Navigation corridor and contribute towards BOA objectives (BOA R04: River Wey (& tributaries)¹⁸).
- 6.38 Development at these and other relevant sites should also pay regard to detailed analysis of existing open space, and opportunities to enhance these spaces, set out in locally adopted Neighbourhood Plans.
- 6.39 As a form of open space, the borough's green corridors/blue infrastructure should continue to be considered a priority form of infrastructure which can attract CIL funding should enhancements be required as a result of the impacts caused by cumulative development and associated population increase. This is particularly the case where green corridors are situated in proximity to the growth areas of the borough, such as the Town Centre and Sheerwater (potential impacts on Basingstoke Canal); and the Byfleets (potential impacts on the Wey Navigation, Basingstoke Canal and Rive Ditch).

¹⁸ Surrey Nature Partnership (September 2019) Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, Appendix 9: River Biodiversity Opportunity Area Policy Statements, available at: <https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/appendix-9-river-biodiversity-opportunity-area-policy-statements.pdf>



Woking Borough Council

Local Development Documents

Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Draft

December 2021



Produced by the Planning Policy Team

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1.0 Introduction and Policy Context

1.1 This document sets out guidance on achieving suitable outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight in new residential developments whilst safeguarding those attributes of adjoining residential areas.

1.2 This guidance supplements Policy CS21: *Design* and CS24: *Working's townscape and landscape* of the Core Strategy, the design and housing policies of the Development Management Policies DPD (2016) including DM7: *Noise and Light Pollution*, DM10: *Development on Garden Land*, DM11: *Sub-divisions, Specialist Housing, Conversions and Loss of Housing* and DM17: *Public Realm*. It should also be read alongside the urban design principles set out in the Design SPD (2015). Applicants and developers should consider this guidance document before submitting planning applications for residential development, including extensions and alterations which require formal permission. Applicants should demonstrate how the relevant criteria have been addressed through Design and Access Statements as well as Daylight and Sunlight Assessments where relevant. The Council will use this guidance to help determine planning applications, but will apply it flexibly, having regard to the individual circumstances and other material planning considerations of each case, ~~such as development within dense urban locations or the historic environment.~~

1.3 The following matters have been addressed:

- Outlook: ensuring that the close proximity of another building (or other controlled works) does not adversely affect accommodation by diminishing the visual enjoyment of a dwellings immediate setting.
- Amenity: the provision of landscaped space or other high quality outdoor amenity surrounding dwellings usually forming; private amenity space (private realm), and the landscaped frontage to the development (public realm).
- Privacy: the protection of habitable rooms and intimate areas of private outdoor amenity from being directly overlooked.
- Daylight: the amount of natural daylight required to illuminate internal rooms. Reference is also made to providing access to sunlight, and the safeguarding of access to sunlight for solar energy generation.

General Points

1.4 Appendix 1 recommends a number of dimensions to achieve the minimum level of outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight in residential layouts. However these dimensions are for advice only and evidence of design quality and compatibility with local context will be of overriding importance. Context means the setting of a proposed development, which must be well integrated with and complement the adjacent buildings and the wider street scene in terms of character, appearance, scale, density, layout and access.

1.5 Compliance with the criteria set out in Appendix 1 will usually provide most of the layout requirements for achieving satisfactory outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight for conventional dual aspect family dwellings. However, developments designed to control aspect or which use adequate screening, as well as those located in the Borough's main high density centres, may allow closer spacing but plans will require sufficient detailed information to justify

any relaxation. The design and layout of all forms of residential development must ensure that the principal areas of accommodation achieve a satisfactory level of outlook and natural daylight.

1.6 Dwellings designed for family accommodation will need to provide a suitable area for private outdoor amenity, normally in the form of an enclosed garden to the side or rear of the dwelling. Dwellings designed for high density developments in Woking Town Centre, West Byfleet District and some Local Centres may not be able to achieve the same levels of privacy or amenity as those in lower density developments and alternative methods of provision are suggested.

1.7 Care should be taken over the siting of buildings, especially those close to existing dwellings and common boundaries, as their proximity may result in an unacceptable overbearing impact even though all other amenity requirements have been achieved.

1.8 When preparing development proposals in established residential areas with a defined character (such as by infilling) it will be equally important to retain sufficient spacing around the existing dwellings to maintain amenity as it will to achieve high standards for the new dwellings, whilst ensuring the overall arrangement is compatible with the character of the local context.

2.0 Outlook

2.1 Outlook is the visual amenity afforded accommodation by a dwelling's immediate surroundings, which can be adversely affected by the close siting of another structure or the incompatible treatment of adjoining land. Special care is needed when dealing with the outlook requirements of single aspect dwellings as they have no alternative provision. However, this consideration does not extend to the protection of a person's particular view from a property as this is not a material planning consideration.

2.2 Making the best use of site characteristics, e.g. open views, changes in level, retention of mature trees and shrubs, and making a positive relationship with an interesting street scene, will greatly assist the potential for achieving satisfactory outlook. In the case of single aspect developments, such as blocks of flats, it will be equally important to consider the outlook from both frontages.



(1) Making the best use of site characteristics will assist in achieving a satisfactory outlook

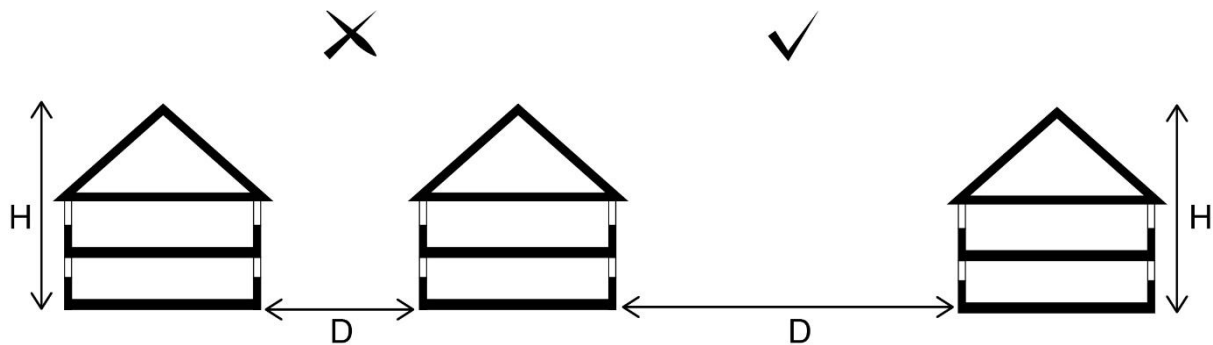


(2) Unsatisfactory distances between buildings and trees can cause overshadowing problems and root damage.

2.3 Developments which retain existing mature trees should ensure they are of sufficient distance away from principal windows so as not to overshadow accommodation as this may result in pressure for the trees' removal. Guidance on how to calculate the effect of trees and hedges on skylight and sunlight is set out in Appendix H of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice (2011) (BRE).

2.4 Trees have high amenity value and many are protected by Tree Preservation Orders in which case works cannot be undertaken without consent. Specialist arboricultural advice should always be sought when considering trees in relation to new development. Information such as whether a tree is protected can be sought from the Council's Arboricultural Officers.

2.5 Outlook from a principal window will generally become adversely affected when the height of any vertical facing structure exceeds the separation distance from the window. When a structure is placed too close to a window so that it completely dominates the outlook it will have an overbearing impact (as shown below).



(3) Outlook may become adversely affected when the height of the building 'H' exceeds the separation distance 'D'. Differences in ground level need to be taken into account.

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

2.6 Outlook from a principal window may also become adversely affected where a dwelling is sited in close proximity to an incongruous feature, or treatment of the land which impairs visual amenity. Conversely, care must be taken when siting new features or uses which have an incongruous appearance adjacent to existing dwellings. Particular care should be taken when siting bin stores, utility cabinets, and similar domestic structures, to ensure a satisfactory residential environment is achieved. Outlook onto areas such as those used for the storage of plant materials, commercial vehicles or similar incongruous features, is unlikely to be acceptable without the provision of a landscaped buffer zone of sufficient depth to screen them from view. Similarly it may be unacceptable to site grouped areas of residential parking immediately in front of a dwelling's principal elevation without the inclusion of a landscaped margin to provide a visual buffer. This would be particularly important in the case of principal windows to single aspect dwellings.



(4) An unsatisfactory residential environment is achieved due to the lack of a landscaped buffer/boundary treatments to provide a visual buffer to the highway and off-street car parking

3.0 Amenity

3.1 Amenity space generally comprises the open undeveloped land or other space surrounding a dwelling which creates the setting for the development, and provides space for the more private domestic and leisure uses of residents. Together these areas create the public and private realm and their different attributes are further discussed in detail below. This document recognises that different standards of amenity provision will be appropriate, depending on the type of accommodation proposed and the geographic location of the site. The recommended minimum garden amenity area requirements are also set out in Appendix 1.

The Public Realm

3.2 New housing developments should be designed with a coherent street layout which reflects the characteristic pattern of development in the local area (local context). In particular, the incorporation of any landscaped margins between the property and the road should reflect the characteristic depth of frontage and incorporate similar landscape elements such as trees and hedges, where they contribute to the character of the street scene.

3.3 Where there is no identifiable local context, emphasis will be placed on creating a high quality public realm with a distinctive sense of place. The creation of tree-lined streets and landscaped squares can make a significant contribution to public amenity. In developments which involve single aspect dwellings which face the road frontage, the treatment of the public realm will be particularly important as it will provide the principal amenity for this part of the accommodation.



(5) New developments should create a high quality public realm with a distinctive sense of place such as through structural landscaping

3.4 In the Town Centre and where relevant in other centres, as defined by the hierarchy of centres, the Council may seek a contribution towards the creation or improvement of areas of the public realm in lieu of any amenity space provision reasonably required by the development, where there is limited scope or need to provide this provision on site. The contributions will be sought through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and or by Section 106 Agreement.

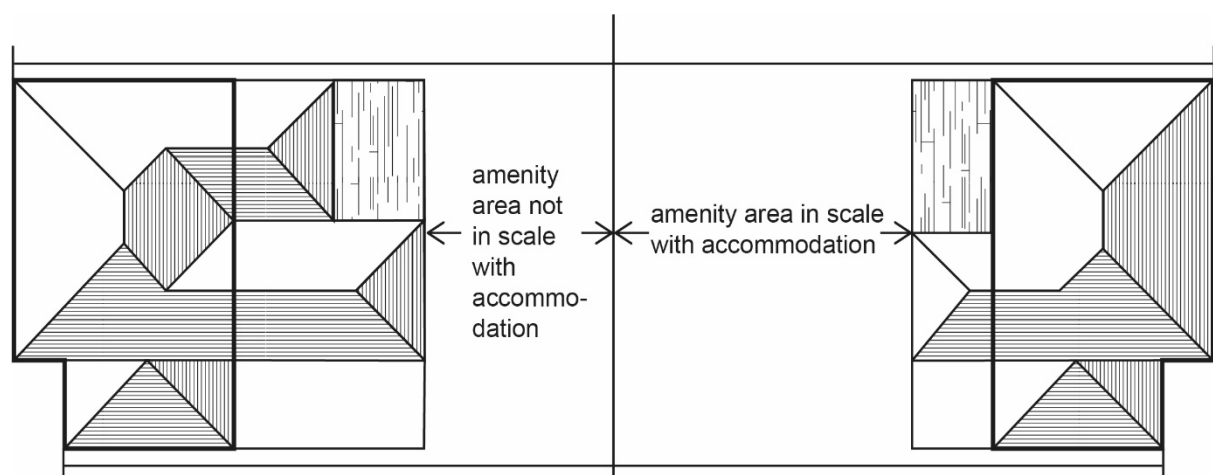
The Private Realm – Private Amenity Space

Family Accommodation

3.5 For the purposes of this document, family accommodation will be taken to mean all houses with two bedrooms or more and exceeding 70 sqm. gross floor space, and all flats or duplex apartments with two bedrooms or more and exceeding 61 sqm. gross floor space.

3.6 All dwellings designed for family accommodation need to provide a suitable sunlit area of predominantly soft landscaped private amenity space, appropriate in size and shape for the outdoor domestic and recreational needs of the family it is intended to support. For example, this will include space for sitting out, children’s play, drying clothes and plant cultivation. Private amenity space is best provided as an enclosed garden to the rear or side of the property where it is clearly separate from more public areas of the site. Such areas should be overlooked by the accommodation and have secure boundaries to allow children to play in safety.

3.7 In established residential areas, where the existing pattern of development has a well defined character, the size, shape and position of the garden will need to reflect the existing context and be in proportion to the size of dwelling proposed. In addition, where the plot has been formed by the sub-division of an existing family dwelling, sufficient land will need to be retained to provide for the private amenity needs of the host dwelling.



(6) Garden size must be in scale with the dwelling, including extensions, an area at least as big as the building footprint is advised

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

3.8 The overall size, shape and quality of the space is of more importance in providing a useful area for family amenity than achieving a particular depth of garden. Long narrow gardens and wide shallow gardens may not be acceptable as they have little amenity value compared to more regular shaped areas. Private gardens should also be reasonably flat, open and enjoy adequate sunlight, with not more than 25% of the area prevented from receiving sunlight (measured on 21st March). Heavily treed areas, such as those protected by TPOs, or areas in perpetual shade from adjoining structures will have little private amenity value. Where appropriate, the area of private garden should approximate with gross floorspace of the dwelling but it is advised that it should generally be as large as the building footprint of the dwelling house. This principle will be subject to the existing character of the local context.

3.9 Private amenity space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places. Front gardens therefore are not normally considered to contribute towards the provision of on site private amenity space.

3.10 In the densest urban locations such as Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre, where multi storey developments including flats, duplex apartments and townhouses are intended for family accommodation, alternative forms of on-site amenity provision may be permitted in lieu of a conventional private garden. Use of a communal amenity space or, where it is safe to do so, a suitable area of landscaped roof garden or terrace, may be acceptable for this purpose, although care is needed in siting to avoid problems of overlooking and noise disturbance other dwellings. Where communal amenity space is being provided it should accommodate a range of uses to provide variety. Where communal outdoor amenity space is proposed, its retention and maintenance for the lifetime of the development (as well as a management plan) should be secured by planning condition.

3.11 However, where little or no such provision can be achieved, the developer will be expected to contribute to the cost of landscape or other local improvements to offset the lack of on-site provision reasonably required by the development, by raising the quality and amenity value of the adjacent public realm. This will be secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and or a Section 106 Agreement.



*(7) Alternative forms of amenity provision such as roof gardens and balconies may be acceptable in the most dense urban locations –~~Example from Saffron Square, London (HTA Design)~~
(Podium landscaping on the Sheerwater redevelopment scheme)*

[Replaces an alternative photograph]

Non Family Accommodation

3.12 Non family accommodation will be taken to mean studio and one bedroom flats and any other forms of dwellings of less than 61sqm. internal floorspace together with specified forms of accommodation such as older persons accommodation and specialist care units.

3.13 Whilst generally dwellings specifically designed not to be used for family accommodation do not require any specific area to be set aside for each as private amenity space, applicants will be encouraged to do so where it is feasible.

3.14 Whilst there is no specific requirement for private amenity provision, sufficient space will be required around all dwellings to provide for shared amenity and to provide an appropriate setting for the building as detailed below. However, all forms of dwelling should seek to incorporate some modest private sunlit area for sitting outside. At ground floor level a small semi-enclosed patio area would be beneficial, and at higher levels, particularly in the case of flats, a simple terrace or balcony might be incorporated. Access to private amenity space should not be provided from a bedroom.



(8) Balconies and terraces provide suitable levels of private amenity space within flatted developments

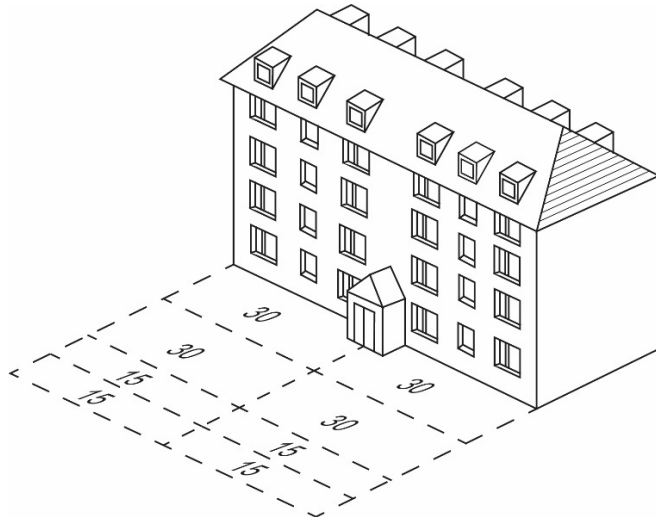
3.15 Balconies should be designed so that they can be adequately used as private amenity space, including with respect to outlook, privacy, daylight, microclimate and noise and air pollution. In order to ensure that it can accommodate some modest outside seating and circulation space, a balcony should generally be at least 1.5m deep along the entire length. When positioned close to noise sources, solid parapets and absorptive soffit materials should be considered for their acoustic benefits. In addition to clothes drying, balconies tend to be used for storage of household items, and for this reason, solid balustrades may be preferable. More detailed balcony guidance is set out in the Woking Design SPD (2015).

3.16 Whilst a Juliette balcony can provide some amenity value, they are not considered as amenity space as they do not add useable space to the development.

3.17 In the case of sheltered accommodation, the incorporation of a glazed conservatory or loggia, preferably on an east or west elevation, will enable residents to enjoy a degree of private amenity whilst being sheltered from the weather.

Communal Amenity Space

3.18 All forms of dwelling need to have sufficient space around them for general amenity purposes, which should also meet the requirements of outlook, privacy and daylight and integrate the building within its context. It is ~~suggested~~expected that an area of approximately 30 sqm. for dwellings up to two storeys high and 15 sqm. for each storey thereafter up to four storeys high, and additional amenity space as proportionate for any tall buildings, would be sufficient for this purpose. A specific area is not suggested for sheltered accommodation as long as the area surrounding the building is in scale with the size of the building. However, it is ~~suggested~~expected that there should be at least one significant area of shared amenity space such as adjoining the main day room.



(9) Suggested amount of communal amenity space provision (up to 4 storeys)
[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

3.19 All land surrounding the building which is not required for private amenity should be treated in an appropriate manner to contribute to general amenity. The emphasis should be placed on

providing soft landscaped areas using tree and shrub planting for seasonal colour and interest. Special regard should be paid to the suitable planting of margins closest to principal rooms, and the use of structural tree planting to enclose the space, for example, along boundaries, using tree species which contribute to the architecture of the surrounding treescape.

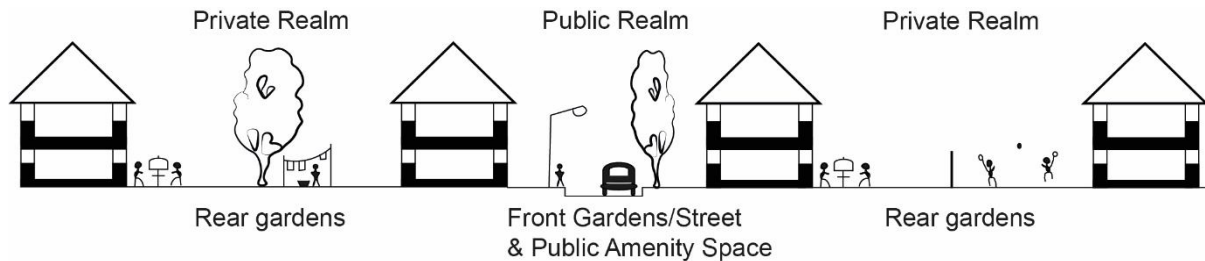
3.20 Hard surfaced areas can be designed to contribute to communal amenity. However, they will only be considered to help mitigate against a deficiency in provision of amenity space where it is demonstrated that they have been designed as a high quality hard landscape composition rather than dominated by engineering geometry. This would include the careful use of surface elements such as edge restraints, gravel and block paving, which have been selected for colour and texture, and used in a landscaped composition interspersed with structured tree planting and other vertical elements. Whilst car parking is not considered as communal amenity space, its provision should not undermine block structure or dominate the street scene.

3.21 In some cases there may be a requirement to provide children's play areas in accordance with standards of provision. Although play provision is not dealt with in this guidance, these areas can also contribute towards overall landscaped amenity and should not be considered in isolation.

4.0 Privacy

4.1 New developments should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings. This primarily covers accommodation forming habitable rooms (bedrooms and living areas) although consideration should also be given to the most intimate private areas of amenity both within and closely related to the dwelling (e.g. dining and patio areas).

4.2 Generally housing layouts are best arranged so that dwellings form a traditional street frontage where the building itself defines the public and private realms as this will most likely result in achieving satisfactory levels of privacy for accommodation. Where 'tandem' forms of development are proposed special care needs to be placed on preventing new dwellings looking into the rear private areas of existing dwellings.



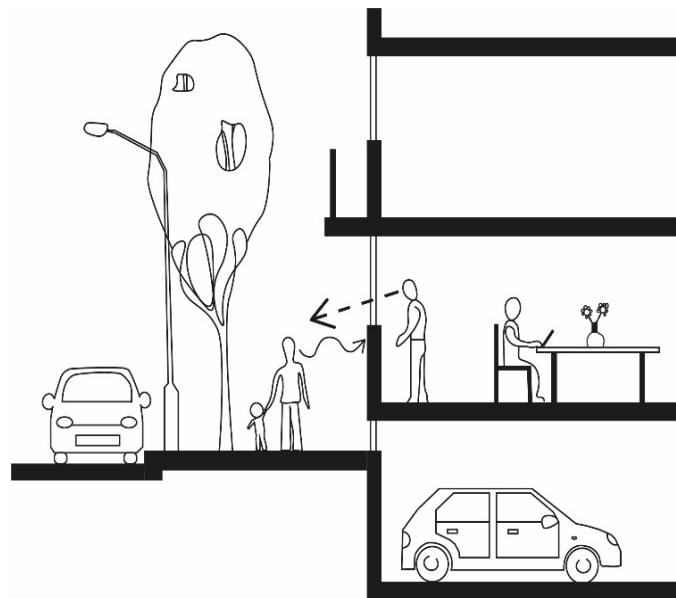
(10) Traditional separate of public and private realm (amenity areas)

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

The Public Realm

4.3 Traditionally, for dual or multiple aspect dwellings, there is a lower expectation of achieving privacy at the front of a dwelling, where rooms face the street, compared to accommodation located at the rear. Where possible, accommodation should be arranged to best suit this circumstance by placing main habitable rooms to the rear of the dwelling and careful use of materials and boundary treatments.

4.4 As there is a much lower expectation of privacy for rooms facing the street, separation distances between the front elevations of dual or multiple aspect dwellings need only achieve the minimum distance required for outlook and daylight (approximately the height of the buildings opposite) except in 'tandem' forms of layout. However, the privacy of single aspect dwellings facing the street will be protected.



(11) Raising the ground floor level 300-400mm using undercroft parking can be effective

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

4.5 Where there is scope for planting, shrubs and hedges can also help to provide a degree of privacy for forward facing rooms. In more urban locations it may be possible to raise the ground floor level by 300-400mm using undercroft parking, as this can effectively stop views into accommodation.

4.6 There is an expectation that rooms at the rear of a dwelling will achieve high levels of privacy, particularly where they abut a private amenity area.

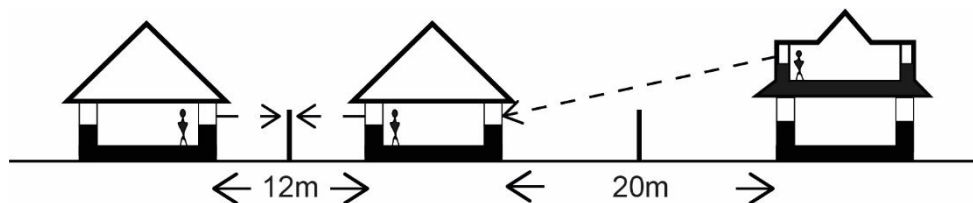
4.7 Traditionally, privacy is achieved by remote separation between dwellings, although it is also possible to achieve acceptable levels of privacy through design, such as the careful siting of windows in an elevation, or through some form of permanent visual barrier. These are discussed further below. However, where no satisfactory alternative method of preventing overlooking is demonstrated, the advised minimum separation distance between dwellings (as set out in Appendix 1) will be used as the main determining criteria.

The Private Realm

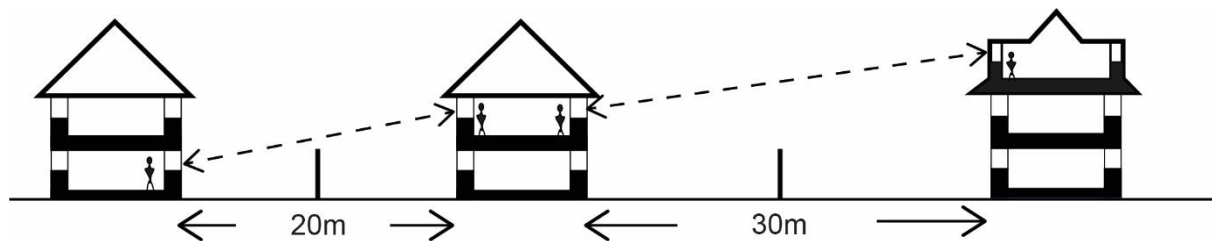
Privacy through Separation

4.8 As privacy is eroded through overlooking of accommodation, any significant change of ground levels between buildings can alter the effect of the separation distance. In these circumstances it will be important to provide a cross section to demonstrate the relative height between opposing accommodation.

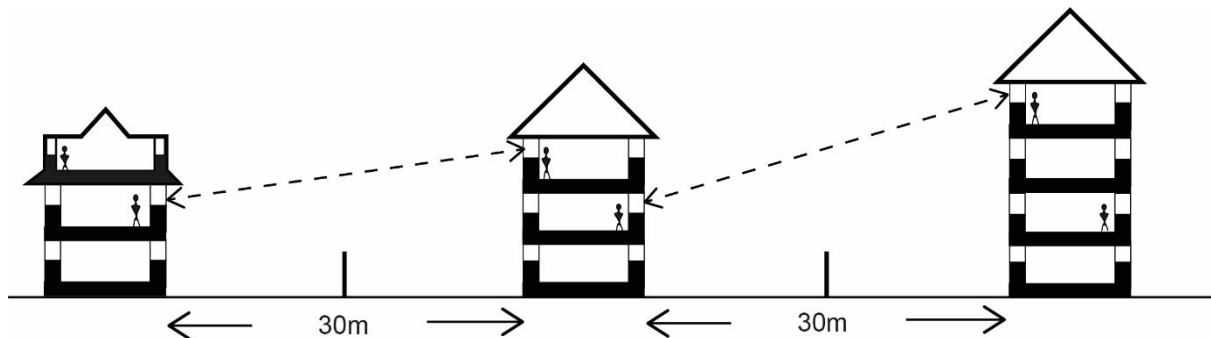
4.9 Single storey to single storey dwellings are largely unaffected as privacy can normally be achieved by the erection of a panelled fence between them, as long as there is sufficient space to achieve adequate outlook, amenity and daylight. Generally dwellings of this scale should not have any principal elevation (except a flank elevation) sited closer to a common boundary than the height of the structure, which is typically about 6m.



4.10 For two storey accommodation (including dwellings with first floor dormer windows), a separation distance of approximately 20m will be adequate to prevent overlooking of dwellings of a similar or lesser height.

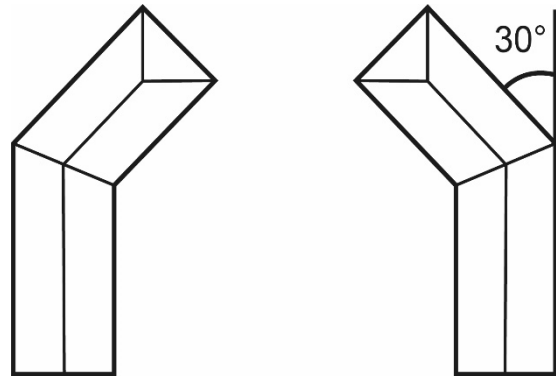


4.11 For three storey or taller accommodation (including dwellings with second floor dormer windows), a separation distance of approximately 30m will be adequate to prevent overlooking of dwellings of a similar or lesser height.



(12) Suggested separation distances to maintain privacy between different height dwellings
[Images replace previous digital diagrams]

4.12 Separation distances may be relaxed by about one quarter where there is a significant change of angle of orientation between the siting of dwellings opposite (over 30 degrees).

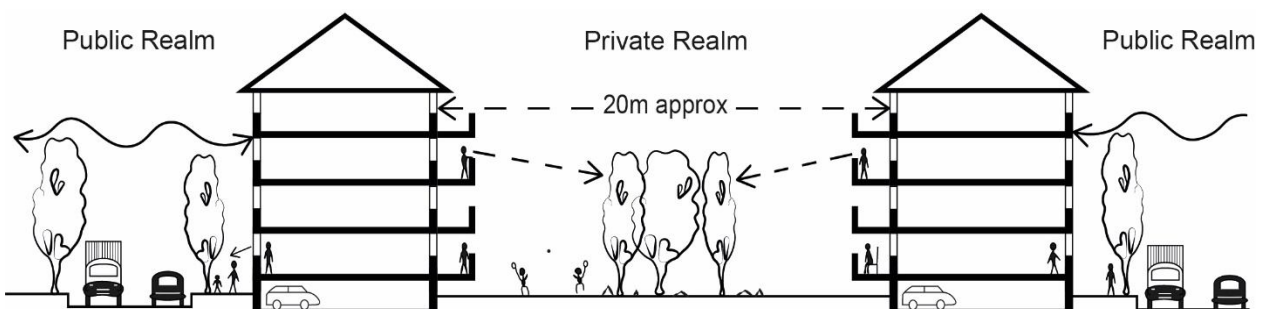


(13) Change in angle of orientation may mitigate privacy concerns for dwellings that do not meet the prescribed separation distances

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

Privacy through screening

4.13 The incorporation of screening between respective elevations can help to reduce overlooking between conventionally designed dwellings, where this can be achieved in a manner compatible with their character. In particular, where evidence of satisfactory screening is demonstrated, it may be possible to reduce separation distances below the dimensions recommended above providing adequate daylighting and amenity provision is met. All proposals which incorporate screening to reduce separation distances will be assessed on their own merits, but accurate cross sections will need to be provided with the application to demonstrate how privacy is achieved within the layout as this is not a matter which can be dealt with by planning condition.



(14) *Effective screening can be used to achieve privacy at reduced separation distances*
[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

4.14 The retention of existing established evergreen trees and shrubs, such as holly or yew, adjacent to a common boundary can be particularly useful in screening out inter-visibility, although they may also cause overshadowing in gardens with North - South orientation. Some deciduous species also have screening properties, for example, beech and hornbeam, as they hold their leaves in winter. Any suitably sized trees and shrubs retained for the purpose of screening would need to be controlled through a planning agreement or condition. The introduction of new planting can also achieve a similar effect but will need to be planted at sufficient size to provide a screening effect until mature, using species appropriate to the area's character. All new planting should be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following first occupation of the buildings or completion of the development (whichever is sooner). Any trees or other plants which die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development shall be replaced during the next planting season with specimens of the same size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Privacy through Control of Aspect

4.15 The selective position of window openings to habitable rooms on facing elevations, such as moving window openings from a front elevation to a flank elevation, particularly at the first floor level, can stop any direct overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling. The use of this type of 'controlled aspect' design can often enable specially designed dwellings to be sited much closer to each other than would normally be allowed. The use of specially designed dwellings can be very helpful in creating pinch points which can help to achieve enclosure in court yard developments.



*(15) Use of a controlled aspect design to avoid overlooking of adjacent dwellings
- Example from Godson Street, London (Edgley Design)*

4.16 This form of design can also enable a dwelling to be sited much closer to a common boundary than normal without affecting the privacy of neighbouring dwellings, although site planning will normally require amenity areas to be arranged to reflect the position of main window openings. However, care must be taken to ensure the proximity of buildings does not result in any adverse overbearing or overshadowing effects.

4.17 It may also be possible to design individual window openings to control the direction of view both into and out of the accommodation, whilst allowing sufficient natural daylight to enter the room. The use of high level windows has been traditionally used for this purpose, although care needs to be taken when incorporating them in an elevational design. Velux type roof lights can be used for accommodation in the roofspace without affecting overlooking as long as they are 1.7m above floor level and do not prejudice Building Regulations requirements for means of escape.

4.18 Although obscured glazed windows (frosted glass) are useful for achieving privacy of bathrooms and toilets they will not normally be permitted as the sole method of daylighting a habitable room. However, it may be possible to combine obscured glazing and conventional glazing to restrict the line of sight into and out of a room, either through height or direction. Creatively designed oriel windows can also be employed to change the direction of view by 45° or 90° for rooms in awkward positions, although they should only be employed where there is no feasible alternative.

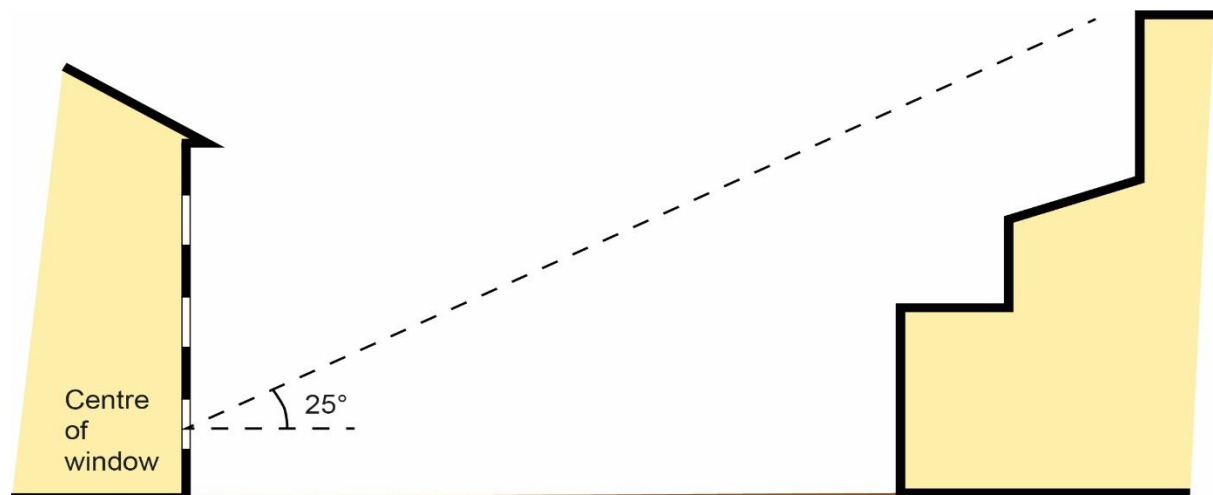
5.0 Daylight and Sunlight

5.1 Daylight is the volume of natural light which is required to illuminate internal accommodation from dawn to dusk. Daylight will be impaired by the siting of a structure which obstructs daylight directly in relation to its size, positioning and distance away. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) is the Government advisor on sunlight and daylight in residential developments. The BRE makes a number of recommendations in its report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice (2011)'. Although these recommendations are not mandatory they are clear indicators of achieving design quality in residential development schemes.

New Dwellings

5.2 The Building Research Establishment report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2011)' recommends that suitable daylight to a dwelling is achieved where an unobstructed vertical angle of 25° can be drawn at the centre of the lowest window where daylight is required.

5.3 Where the vertical angle is between 25° and 45° , it is recommended that very large windows are used to provide adequate daylight provided there is no significant harm to local character. This will always be the preferred requirement.



(16) Recommended Daylight Criteria
[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

5.4 In exceptional circumstances the Council would consider the BRE. However, if this test is not satisfied, the BRE has a second test; that the centre of the window achieves a 'vertical sky component' (VSC) of 27% or more, if a case can be made. The VSC can be found using the BRE Skylight Indicator or Waldram diagram (both can be found within *Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice* (BR 209, 2011 edition)).

5.5 Where space is restricted it may be possible to improve the daylighting of rooms in a number of ways. Increasing the size and number of windows will assist, particularly if the window head height is raised for lower floors, such as the method used for Georgian houses. However, window size must be considered against the appearance of the overall elevation design and the character of buildings in the area. Use of light colours for external building materials may help to reflect light but weathering will reduce the effects in time. The use of light coloured external building materials should therefore not be used as the sole means of improving the daylighting of rooms that fall below the standards set out above.

5.6 Building depth will always be a factor in achieving good interior lighting. Rooms over 5m deep will always be difficult to light adequately from a single elevation, which will limit most conventional double aspect dwellings to around 10m in depth. Clearly some non-habitable rooms, such as bathrooms, may be selectively positioned to have poorer daylight. Very deep floor plates are unlikely to achieve acceptable levels of daylighting without some form of supplementary light capture, such as the use of a light well, internal courtyard or atrium.

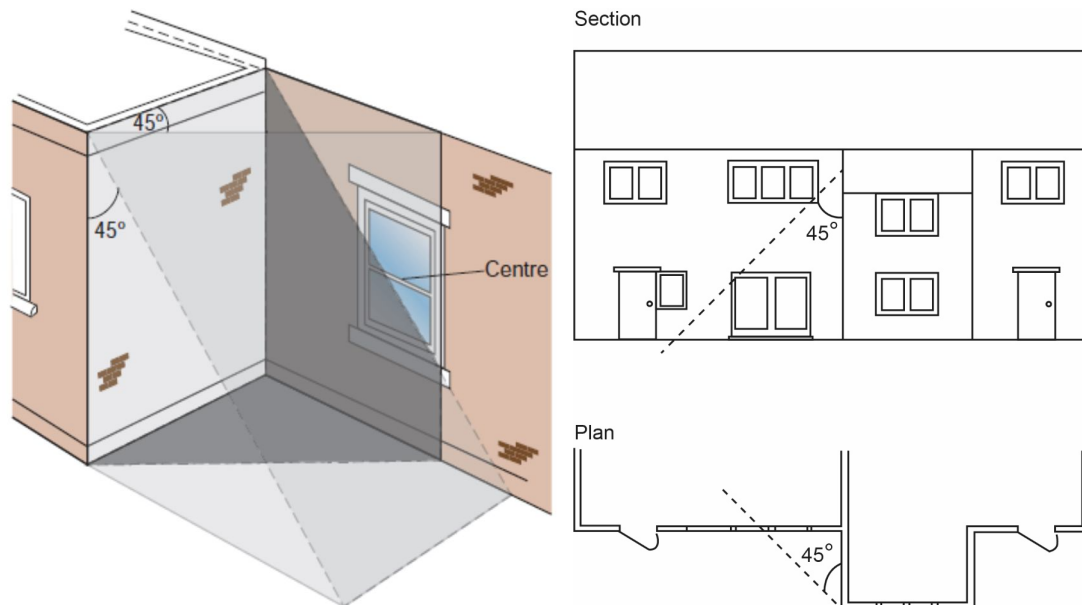
5.7 Balconies can significantly reduce light entering windows below them. Detailed balcony guidance is set out in the Woking Design SPD (2015).

Existing Dwellings

5.8 Development proposals will need to demonstrate how daylighting of existing dwellings is safeguarded. Although primarily intended to be used for dwellings, the guidance should also be applied to assess the impact on other non-domestic buildings where occupants have a reasonable expectation of receiving daylight, which would normally include buildings such as schools, hotels, hostels, small workshops and offices.

5.9 A similar test to that of achieving daylight for new dwellings can be applied to existing dwellings as above, in that the 25° measurement must be taken from the middle of each of the existing window openings. Alternatively the same test as described above can be applied to assess the criteria for achieving a 27% sky component for existing dwellings (and measure not less than 0.8 of the window's previous VSC).

5.10 Where two storey extensions are added to the front or rear of a dwelling (i.e. they project at 90° to the main elevation) they may affect the daylighting of an adjoining dwelling if they project beyond 3 metres of the building elevation, especially if positioned close to a common boundary. Significant loss of daylight will occur if the centre of the affected window (or a point 1.6m in height above the ground for floor to ceiling windows/patio doors) lies within a zone measured at 45° in both plan and elevation. In the case of narrow fronted semi detached or terraced houses there may be little scope to extend the property in this way unless adjoining properties are extended at the same time to create a linked form of development.



(1) Application of the 45 approach to a domestic extension. Daylight is affected if the centre of the window lies within a 45 zone measured in both plan and elevation. Extensions to dwellings which are located close to a boundary should also be assessed for impact. For example it may not be possible to extend a terraced house without harming the daylight of the neighbouring dwelling unless the extensions are undertaken together (i.e. back to back).

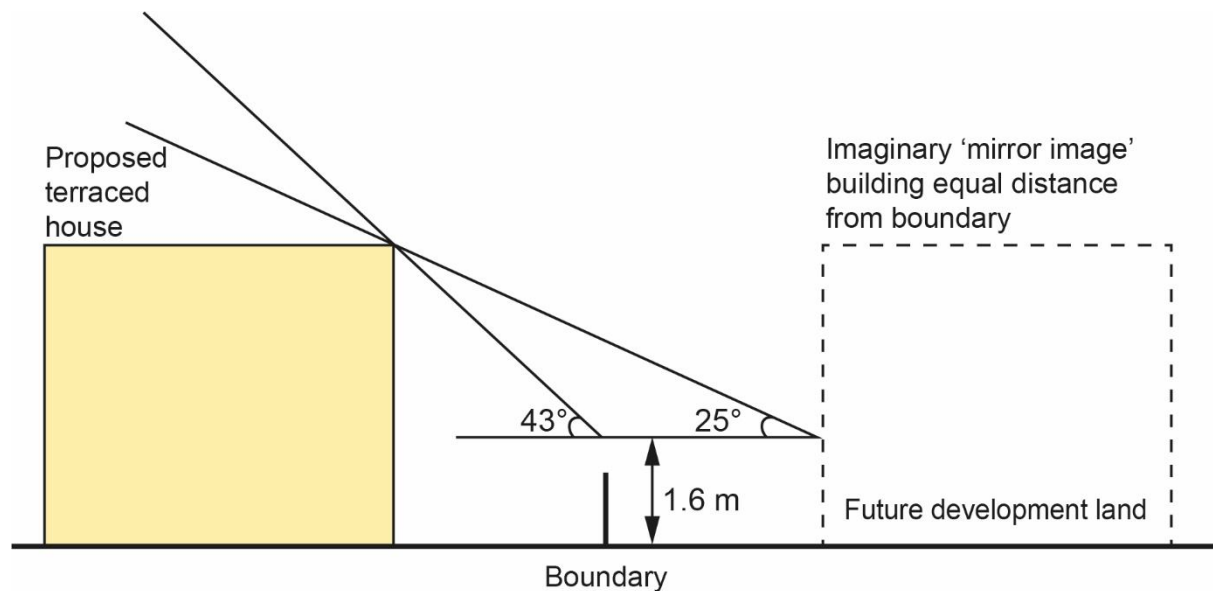
(2) The proposed extension has a pitched roof so a point halfway along the roof slope is used as the start point of the 45 line on the elevation. The affected window is a patio door so a point 1.6 m above the ground has been taken. This point is within the 45 angles on both plan and elevation, so a significant reduction of light is likely.

Adjoining Land

5.11 When considering development proposals it is important not to prejudice future daylight requirements by building too close to the boundary. There are some exceptions, such as adjoining land forming part of the highway or amenity land which cannot be developed (such as common land), where a close relationship may be beneficial. In addition, development proposals should be carefully designed to ensure that open spaces such as gardens, parks, playing fields and sitting out areas including public squares receive adequate amounts of sunlight. For these areas, a detailed sunlight study such as a sun path indicator or shadow plotting should be carried out. Further guidance on this for tall buildings is set out in the Design SPD.

5.12 A suitably designed development will site buildings sufficiently well back from any boundaries to allow future development of adjacent land to receive adequate access to daylight. This will also ensure that it retains sufficient space for daylighting its own accommodation which faces the boundary, should the adjoining land become developed. The latter point will be of critical importance when considering single aspect accommodation. This provision applies to both residential and non residential developments, but does not normally apply to side boundaries next to a windowless flank wall.

5.13 To check suitability, it is suggested that applicants draw a scaled section through the tallest part of the proposed development showing the accurate position of the boundary with the adjoining land. If a line projected from a point 1.6 metres above the boundary to the highest point of the proposed development is less than 43° then there will normally be potential for achieving good levels of daylight on the adjoining land (as shown in Figure 17). If a road separates the two sites then the centre of the road should be used for the assessment.



(17) Ensuring daylight on adjacent land for future development - It may be appropriate to check suitability by using an imaginary 'mirror' form of development
[Image replaces previous digital image]

5.14 Buildings or individual elements extending beyond the 43° line may still be acceptable if they are narrow enough to allow adequate light around the sides. This can be quantified by calculating the vertical sky component at a series of points 1.6m above the boundary towards the proposed building using the BRE Skylight indicator. Every point should be within 4m of a point with a vertical sky component of 17% or more to achieve adequate daylight. This corresponds to the value of a continuous obstruction subtending a 43° angle already mentioned above.

5.15 An alternative method of checking that daylight will not be prejudiced is to test a hypothetical mirror form of development on the adjoining site, showing a building of equal height and set back an equal distance from the boundary. If the normal 25° test set out above is achieved for both 'developments' then acceptable levels of daylight will be met.

5.16 It is important that this test is not used to generate the profile of a development by use of a stepped form of building as this will result in dwellings placed in close proximity to the common boundary and cause overlooking difficulties. As a rule of thumb, any building elevation with windows to habitable rooms should be no closer to the common boundary than the overall height of the building.

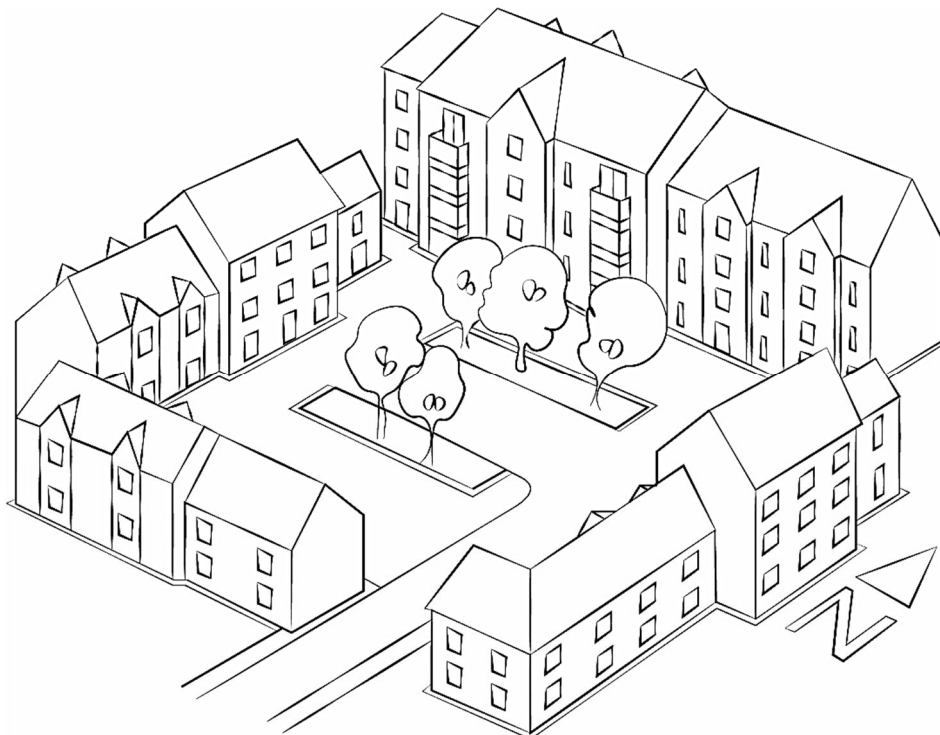
Sunlight

5.17 The B.R.E. guidance advises that accommodation which has access to sunlight has an uplifting effect which can be health giving. With the increasing requirement for dwellings to provide a proportion of their energy needs through renewable forms of energy generation, greater reliance is also likely to be placed on dwellings having access to sunlight as a power source in the future.

5.18 All dwellings should have a main window to a habitable room within 90° of due south if they are to be sufficiently sunlit. This will be a particular concern for single aspect dwellings which should be sited so that their habitable rooms face as close to east or west as possible. Developments that propose a significant number of single aspect dwellings which have all their accommodation facing north may not be acceptable.

5.19 Access to sunlight in new developments can be improved if the layout is designed to avoid overshadowing by considering the following:

- Make best use of south facing slopes;
- Site taller buildings on the north side of the development and lower rise buildings on the southern side;
- Place terraced dwellings on east-west roads and detached, semi-detached and single aspect dwellings on north-south roads;
- Open up courtyards to the southern end and enclose to the northern end;
- Use low-pitched roofs on taller buildings; and
- Make best use of winter sunlight avoid overshadowing of buildings within 30° of due south.

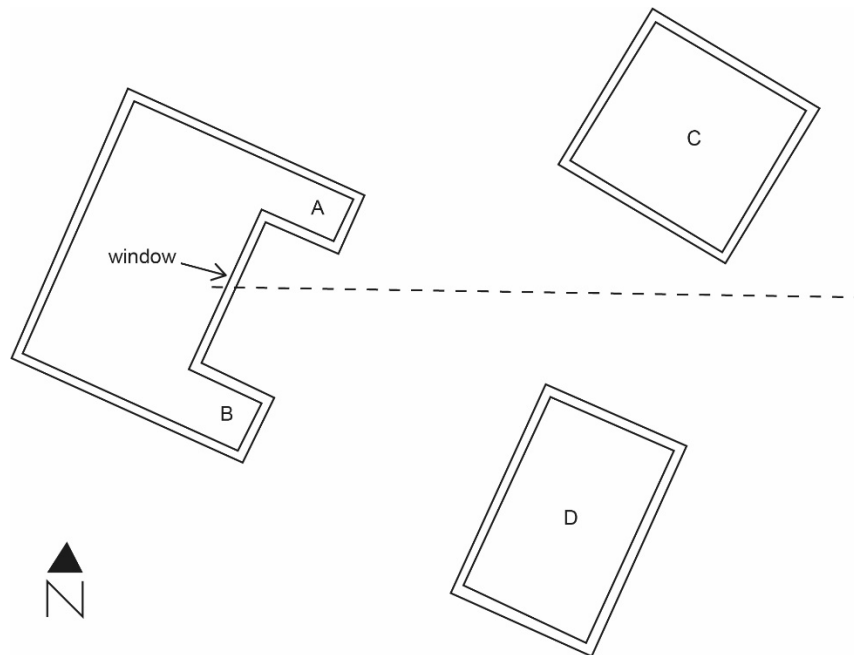


(18) Place taller buildings towards the northern section of the site and lower buildings towards the south to maximise passive solar gain and avoid overshadowing of properties and public realm

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

5.20 New development proposals and extensions to existing buildings need to safeguard access to sunlight for all existing dwellings. Shadow path diagrams may assist assessment of developments over 6 storeys and will be required for all developments over 10 storeys or equivalent height. Obstruction to sunlight will become an issue when:

- Some part of the new development (including extensions) is situated within 90° of due south of a main elevation (windowed) to an existing dwelling; and
- The height of the development extends beyond a line drawn at 25° to the horizontal measured in section from the centre of the window.

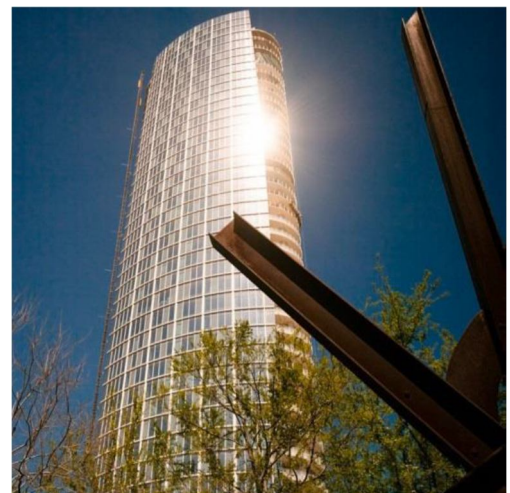


(19) When considering sunlight impact on a window it is only those proposed developments to the south of the window which need to be checked i.e. extension 'B' and new building 'D'. The proposal to the north of the window (extension 'A' and new building 'C') will not affect sunlight.

[Image replaces previous drawn diagram]

Solar Dazzle / Glare

5.21 Glare or solar dazzle can occur when sunlight is reflected from a heavily glazed façade or a large area of metal cladding. This can affect road users line of sight as well as occupants of adjacent buildings. Where glare is likely to have an adverse impact on the micro-climate then further assessments should be carried out including identifying key junctions and windows of nearby buildings and working out the number of hours of the year that sunlight can be reflected to these points. The impact of glare can be mitigated by reducing the areas of glazing, reorienting the building or replacing areas of tiled glass with either vertical or nearly horizontal glazing.



(20) Glare reflected from a heavily glazed façade

Appendix 1

Recommended Minimum Layout Dimensions For Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight

The following Table sets out guidance on layout dimensions which should achieve the minimum level of outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight in residential developments. **However, these dimensions are for advice only and evidence of design quality and compatibility with context will be of overriding importance.**

- Higher standards may be required to maintain the well defined character of existing residential areas, such as those within or adjacent to conservation areas or older residential areas with an established character.
- Standards of amenity may be relaxed for housing in Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre which are close to a range of facilities although the Council ~~may~~ will normally seek a contribution towards improvements to the public realm in lieu of on site amenity provision.
- Dimensions for achieving adequate outlook and daylight should always be maintained as they can affect the health and well-being of occupants. Maintaining a separation distance between main elevations equal to the height of the opposing structure will normally satisfy requirements. An imaginary 'mirror' form of development can be used to assess any vacant land adjoining the development site.

Recommended Minimum Separation distances for achieving privacy

Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
One	Front to front elevation	6
	Rear to rear elevation	12
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	6
	Side to boundary	1
Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
Two	Front to front elevation	10
	Rear to rear elevation	20
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	10
	Side to boundary	1
Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
Three and over	Front to front elevation	15
	Rear to rear elevation	30
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	15
	Side to boundary	2

- Dimensions are based on conventional dual aspect accommodation with main habitable rooms facing towards the rear.
- Dimensions for both front and rear elevations of single aspect dwellings should be treated as other rear elevations. Where a proposed development would result in

residential and commercial or mixed use buildings being adjacent to each other, the commercial or mixed use building should be treated in the same way as a residential building for the purposes of this assessment.

- Proposals which involve front and rear elevations facing each other are not generally encouraged. In cases where they are considered to be otherwise acceptable, the privacy implications will be assessed on a case by case basis, using the recommended distances above as appropriate.
- Dimensions may be reduced where some form of effective screening has been demonstrated where separation will be judged on its merits.
- Dimensions do not apply to controlled aspect dwellings as long as all other attributes of outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight are demonstrated.

Recommended Minimum Garden Amenity Area

Type of Dwelling	Type of provision
Large family dwelling house – e.g. over 150 sqm gross floorspace	A suitable area of private garden amenity in scale with the building. E.g. greater than the gross floor area of the building.
All other dwelling houses two bedrooms or more and 70 sqm or more gross floorspace	A suitable area of private garden amenity in scale with the building but generally no smaller than the building footprint (depending on existing context).
Flats or duplex apartments with two bedrooms or more and 61 sqm or more gross floorspace	A suitable area of private garden amenity as a first priority – recommended minimum of 30 sqm for each dwelling. However a <u>A</u> shared amenity space, roof garden or balcony/terrace <u>will only</u> may be acceptable if it has equal provision for family amenity.
One bedroom houses, flats or apartments, studio flats, other houses of less than 70sqm gross floorspace, other flats of less than 61 sqm gross floorspace, dwellings otherwise not suitable for family accommodation including retirement (non-sheltered) accommodation	An area of shared garden amenity to provide a setting for the building – recommended 30 sqm for each dwelling up to two storeys and 15 sqm thereafter up to four storeys only. Some small private sitting out area such as patios or balconies are encouraged.
Older people sheltered accommodation (including extra care units), managed hostels, student accommodation, micro-apartments and cluster flats	An area sufficient to provide a setting to the building which is in scale with its mass.

In all cases evidence of quality of amenity provision and compatibility with the character of the local context will be of greater importance than dimensional compliance with the table above. In calculating amenity space, footpaths, car and cycle parking areas, servicing areas, refuse storage areas, driveways and shared surfaces should not be taken into consideration.

The outdoor amenity standards above will be applied irrespective of a proposed dwelling's compliance or otherwise with the nationally described space standards.

Appendix 2

Review of privacy separation distances used by other Local Planning Authorities

A review was carried out of other Local Planning Authorities' extant Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, with respect to the use of specified separation distances between dwellings for the protection of privacy. The authorities selected were those in Surrey and nearby parts of Hampshire, Berkshire and London (as well as the London Plan). The results of the review are illustrated in the table below.

Before reading the table, it should be borne in mind that it shows only whether separation distances are featured at all in a given authority's extant planning documents – not the weight each authority gives to those distances. Some documents appear to treat these distances as strict minima to be applied at all times, while many more describe them as 'guidelines', 'rules of thumb' or similar, or specify various situations in which they can be departed from.

The review has been carried out strictly for the purposes of policy development at Woking Borough Council and the information shown should not be used for any other purpose.

Local Planning Authority	Back to back distances (slash indicates different standards for 2 and 3 or 3+ storey development)	Back to side distances	Distances for flats specifically	Distances for street facing rooms specifically
Croydon LBC	12-18m	-	-	-
Mayor of London	18-20m	-	-	-
RB Windsor and Maidenhead, Surrey Heath BC	20m	15m	-	-
Basingstoke and Deane BC	20m/28m	-	-	-
Richmond upon Thames LBC	20m	-	-	-
Epsom and Ewell BC	21m	-	-	-
Runnymede BC	22m	-	22m	-
Elmbridge BC	22m	-	-	-
Waverley BC	21/26m	-	-	-
Spelthorne BC	21m/30m	13.5m/21m	-	-
Bracknell Forest BC	22m/30m	-	22m	12m
Guildford BC, Reigate and Banstead BC, Tandridge DC, Rushmoor BC, Hart DC, Slough BC, Hounslow LBC, Surrey Design Guide (2002)	No set distances (although in some cases there is detailed guidance on design for privacy)	-	-	-

Other sources of information

Planning Policy and Guidance

Whilst this supplementary planning document provides guidance on outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight, it is important that development also complies with the other policies and guidance of the Local Development Plan. In particular,

- The Woking Core Strategy (2012):
 - Policy CS20: Heritage and conservation
 - Policy CS21: Design
 - Policy CS24: Woking's landscape and townscape
- The Development Management Policies DPD (2016):
 - Housing and Economic Policies DM9 to DM16
 - Design Policies DM17 to DM20
- The Design SPD (2015)
- Relevant Neighbourhood Plans

All of the Council's Planning Policy documents can be found at www.woking2027.info.

Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice (BRE, 2011) also provides detailed technical information relating to daylight, sunlight and glare.

Pre-application advice

If you have any planning questions or queries or would like to submit for pre-application advice, then initial contact should be made with Development Management on 01483 743843 or alternatively email developmentmanagement@woking.gov.uk. For the latest information on pre-application advice including the cost of the service please visit the Council's website www.woking.gov.uk/planning/service/preapp.

Building Regulations

Building regulations are a national set of regulations that new development is required to comply with to ensure that buildings are designed and constructed safely, conserve energy and promote access for all. Development that requires Building Regulation approval include the erection of a building, an extension to an existing building, most external and internal alterations, conversion of a roof space and replacement windows and doors. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

More information on Building Regulations and details on how to contact the Council's Building Control Team can be found at www.woking.gov.uk/planning/building or by calling 01483 743841.

Extracts from *Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice* (BR 209, 2011 edition) have been reproduced with permission of IHS Markit, © 2011



Woking Borough Council

Local Development Documents

Updated Thames Basin Heath Avoidance Strategy

January 2022



Produced by the Planning Policy Team

For further information please contact:

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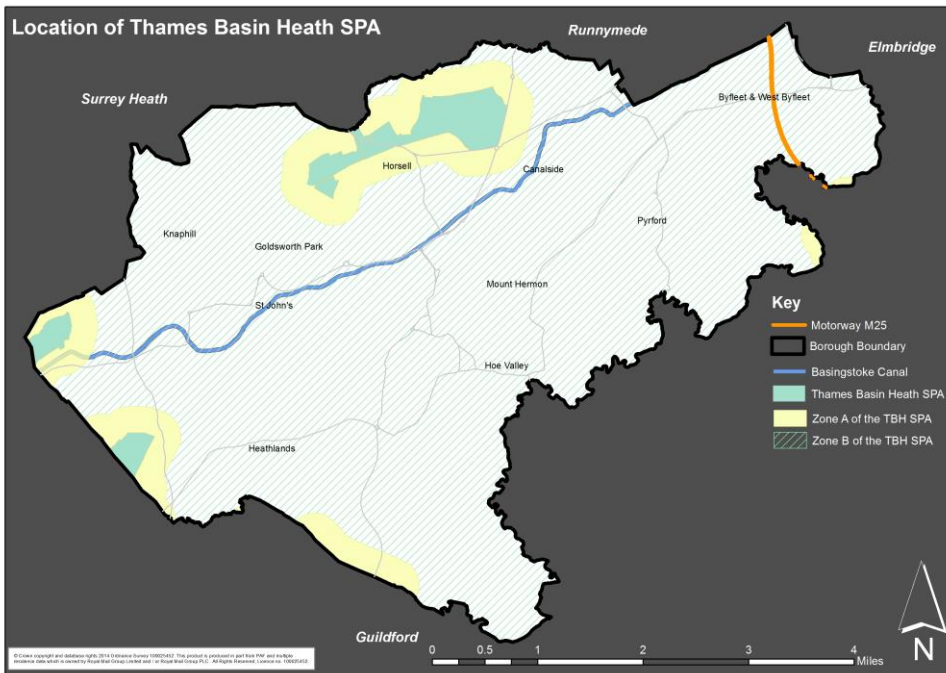
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Avoidance Strategy supersedes the former strategy dated 2010-2015. It provides guidance for the avoidance and mitigation measures that are in place to prevent the impacts of residential development on the Thames Basins Heaths (TBH) Special Protection Areas (SPA).
- 1.2 The European Council Directive¹ on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC) (the 'Birds Directive') requires member states to identify and designate Special Protection Areas for the conservation of rare and vulnerable species of birds. These birds are vulnerable to specific changes in their habitat and rare because of small populations or restricted local distribution that require special attention for reason of the specific nature of their habitat. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas was designated on 9 March 2005 under the EU Directive to specifically protect nightjars, woodlarks and Dartford warblers, which are listed to be protected in the Birds Directive. All three are ground nested birds or at low level and are easily disturbed by human activity, in particular, recreational activity such as dog walking. Also predation by domestic cats and fly tipping into the heathland are potential threats. The Birds Directive requires member states to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of their habitats and any disturbance to the protected birds. Accordingly, the TBHSPA is considered as sites of European significance. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 provides for the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of such European significant sites.
- 1.3 The TBH SPA extends over 11 Local Authorities in Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire and comprises a network of 13 sites. There are two European sites which fall within Woking Borough – the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (TBHSPA) and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (which overlaps with the SPA). The Special Area of Conservation (SAC) component is entirely contained within the TBHSPA.
- 1.4 The SAC and TBHSPA consist of a number of fragments of lowland heathland. The predominant habitats are dry and wet heath but the designations also include areas of deciduous woodland, gorse scrub, acid grassland and mire, as well as associated conifer plantations. Around 75% of the SPA has open public access being either common land or designated as open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The component Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) of the SPA, Horsell Common SSSI, and Ash to Brookwood Heaths SSSI lie within or partly within Woking Borough, whilst Whitmoor Common SSSI, Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI lie adjacent to it. Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath SSSI intersects the Woking Borough boundary and Unit 15 of the SSSI (Sheets Heath) lies within the boundary. Ash to Brookwood Heaths SSSI and Colony Bog and Bagshot Heaths SSSI also form part of the SAC designation. The designated SPAs zones within Woking are shown on Map 1 on page 7.

¹ The EU Referendum took place on 23 June 2016, resulting in the decision to leave. The EU provides a number of strong legislative protections to the UK environment including the Birds Directive. The Environment Audit Committee has recommended that the Government should introduce a new Environmental Protection Act to maintain and enforce environmental standards after we leave ('The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU referendum' published in December 2016).

- 1.5 After extensive research, Natural England and its partners produced the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework which made recommendations for accommodating development while also protecting the interest features of the European site. This included the recommendation of implementing a series of zones within which varying constraints would be placed upon development. The zones relating to recreational pressure extended to 5km from a SPA (as this was determined from visitor surveys to be the principal recreational catchment for this European site).
- 1.6 The geography of Woking means that recreational pressure presents a significant potential pathway of impact. Given the proximity of the majority of Woking Borough to the TBHSPA, all development would occur within 5km of the SPA. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy developed by Woking Borough in accordance with the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework has identified that between 400m and 5km of the SPA boundary, development will only be possible if it can demonstrate adequate avoidance or mitigation of significant adverse effects. In accordance with recent European Court ruling 'People Over Wind' (2018) an Appropriate Assessment will be required for relevant development in this zone.
- 1.7 The location of the TBHSPA means that levels of development in surrounding authorities has led to potential for recreational pressure and disturbance arising from other authorities. Therefore the implications of this are possible cross boundary impacts of surrounding authorities' development on the SPA. An Appropriate Assessment of the implications for a site, in view of the site's conservation objectives will be taken into account in combination with other plans or projects. Natural England published a Draft Delivery Plan for the SPA in May 2006, partly in response to the European Court of Justice ruling of October 2005². This is updated by the 'Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Delivery Framework' published by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategy Partnership Board in January 2009. These documents aim to allow a strategic approach to accommodating development by providing a method through which local authorities can meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations through avoidance and mitigation measures. Please visit the Thames Basin Heath Partnership [website](#) for more information. Natural England has prepared a revised Guidance for the provision and management of SANGs, which can be found [in Appendix 2 here](#). Its provisions should be taken into account.
- 1.8 In the United Kingdom the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) implements the EU Directives by providing protection to the European sites. The Habitats Regulations require Local Planning Authorities to satisfy themselves that before granting planning permission, the proposed development will not adversely impact on the integrity of the SPA.

² In 2005, the European Court of Justice ruled that the UK had failed to correctly transpose the provision of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive into national law.



Map 1 showing the location of the SPAs within Woking

Background

1.9 Natural England considers that the impact of net new residential development within 5 kilometres of the SPA may harm the protected bird populations in the TBHSPA unless objective evidence establishes that there is no risk that new development within 5 kilometres of the SPA will have a significant effect. Appropriate avoidance and mitigation is therefore required of any net increase in housing development within 5 kilometres of the TBHSPA. Developers are therefore required to address their development impacts by contributing towards the measures in the Delivery Framework to avoid harm to the SPA.

1.10 Natural England has advised of the measures that may be used to avoid any significant effect of new residential development on the SPA. This approach is supported by the Joint Strategic Partnership Board³ (JSPB). The three pronged approach include:

- The provision and maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) to attract people away from the SPA;
- Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) to monitor and manage the impact of people using the SPA; and
- Habitat management of the SPA to improve the habitats of the protected birds.

This document focusses on the SANG and SAMM, the third measure relates to longer term management of the SPA and is the duty of the landowner. Where the SPA is on local authority owned land, the Council will continue to have a duty of care to effectively manage and maintain the land. It will also proactively work with its partners and other landowners to manage and maintain other land which are not in its ownership.

- 1.11 Whilst the Council already has an established Avoidance strategy, which has been in operation since June 2006, this updated strategy reflects current circumstances and provides a most up to date policy position. In particular, the updated National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Case Law of The European Court of Justice judgement in 'People Over Wind' (2018) and 'Cron dall Parish Council V Secretary of state and Others' (2019) in terms of Appropriate Assessment and Wealden Judgement and Dutch Nitrogen judgment in terms of air quality, also the Council's adoption of its Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 1.12 The Council has also sought to clarify its approach to the avoidance and mitigation of the SPA for other uses where the occupants are likely to have similar level of recreational access need to those in conventional housing (those that fall under the C3 use class) for example Houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) or elderly accommodation. See table 7.
- 1.13 In general, the level of recreational access need for non-residential developments is not likely to be significant, however each proposal will be treated on their individual merits. An Appropriate Assessment will be required of any development which is perceived to have potential impacts on the SPA and adequate mitigation put in place to deal with any potential adverse impacts.

Policy Context

- 1.14 The South East Plan (2009) was partially revoked in 2013. Policy NRM6 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area remains in place as a saved policy. This sets out the principle of the protection of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in the South East. The Delivery Plan and planning issues affecting the Special Protection Area (SPA) have been integrated into Woking's Local Development Documents (LDD). The Core Strategy contains Policy CS8 Thames Basin Heaths SPA which is in general conformity with the requirements of Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan. Policy CS8 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states, 'that any proposal with potential significant impacts (alone or in combination with other relevant developments) on the

³ The JSPB are a board comprising of the TBH local authorities and other relevant partners including Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust, established to plan for the long term protection of the SPA

TBHSPA will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the need for 'Appropriate Assessment'.

- 1.15 Following recent European Court of Justice rulings, 'People Over Wind' there is now an established legal principle that 'it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of pre-determined measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on designated sites.' This is supported by a most recent Crondall ruling which the Parish Council challenged the decision of the inspector not to subject the proposals to an appropriate assessment of potential effects under Article 6 (3) of the Habitats directive. The Secretary of State conceded that the Inspector had unlawfully screened out an Appropriate Assessment on the basis of pre-determined mitigation measures, namely the SANG and SAMM contributions. The Council is therefore now required to carry out a full Appropriate Assessment of relevant plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on a European site. A significant effect is likely to undermine the conservation objectives. The Habitats Regulations state that appropriate assessments of plans and projects must be undertaken 'in the view of that site's conservation objectives.' These objectives differ depending on the site. For SACs the conservation objectives are to 'ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying feature'. SPAs are different, the qualifying features are the bird population for which the site has been classified. The conservation objectives are to 'ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directives'. The SPA and the SACs has a long list of core attributes which form part of the sites integrity, the attribute most likely to be undermined is the 'structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying species'. In the aforementioned legal case the Advocate General's opinion indicated that, a plan or project involving 'some strictly temporary loss of amenity which is capable of being fully undone' would not be an adverse effect on integrity. By comparison, the 'lasting and irreparable loss' was ruled to be an adverse effect on integrity. A full and precise analysis of the measures capable of avoiding or reducing any significant effects on European sites must be carried out at an 'Appropriate Assessment' stage rather than taken into consideration at screening stage, for the purposes of the Habitats Directive. Furthermore, there is a statutory requirement for the Council to formally consult Natural England for the purposes of an appropriate assessment.
- 1.16 Policy CS8 of Woking Core Strategy (2012) requires new residential development beyond a 400m threshold, but within 5 kilometres of the TBHSPA boundary to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), to avoid impacts of such development on the SPA. The SANG and landowner payment elements of the SPA tariff are encompassed within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), however the SAMM element of the SPA tariff is collected outside of CIL. The relevant proportions of the CIL contribution is ring fenced for the provision and maintenance of SANGs.
- 1.17 Government policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (~~(NPPF 202119)~~) has been updated and states in Para ~~182477~~ "[The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site \(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects\), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.](#)~~The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined~~". The Council will take a precautionary approach to the protection and conservation of the SPA and development will only be permitted where the

Council is satisfied that this will not give rise to a significant adverse effects upon the integrity of the SPA. New residential development will not be permitted within the inner 400m exclusion zone. Net new residential development beyond the 400m zone will be required to make appropriate contribution towards SANG⁴ and SAMM.

- 1.18 Under the Habitats regulations it is a statutory requirement for local authorities to undertake an assessment of land use plans to ensure the protection of the integrity of sites designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). In order to meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulation, the Council undertook Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) to screen the Core Strategy policies to evaluate whether they have any significant effect on the SPA and/or SAC. The HRA found there to be no significant effect on the SAC or SPA.
- 1.19 The adoptedemerging Site Allocations DPD has been subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The HRA report concluded, in consultation with Natural England, that no likely significant effects would occur on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA or other European sites under consideration as a result of the policies (proposal sites) in the DPD, as appropriate measures have been incorporated into the Development Plan to avoid or mitigate adverse effects. The HRA considered recreational pressure, proximity effects (urbanisation), effects on hydrology/hydrogeology, invasive species introductions, reduction in air quality and trans-boundary/cumulative effects in reaching this conclusion. As clarified earlier, all relevant proposals will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment to determine the specific effects and the appropriate measures of mitigation.
- 1.20 It is important to note that the Avoidance Strategy does not address all possible effects of development on the SPA but only those resulting from recreational visits arising from residential development (including unconventional residential). Therefore any development not directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of the SPA, which could have other (non-recreational) likely significant effects upon the SPA would still require an Appropriate Assessment. This will be determined on a case by case basis.
- 1.21 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) consists of nutrient poor heathland, which is vulnerable to the effects of a number of air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), ammonia (NH₃) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂). Deposition of pollutants can damage the interest features in protected sites which are notified for their plant communities. Road traffic is a significant source of NO_x emissions, meaning that increases in traffic can contribute to the exceedance of critical levels for sensitive vegetation. Road traffic emissions can have an effect up to 200m from the road side.
- 1.22 The Wealden Judgement (Wealden District Council v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and others (2017), related to the assessment of nitrogen deposition impacts from increased traffic flows on European Nature Conservation sites and the potential for in-combination effects. The implication of this judgement is that assessments of the air quality effects on European Sites will need to take account of plans and projects within as well as outside of Woking Borough. The developer will be required to submit air quality information where relevant to determine the development impact on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Areas and the SAC.

⁴ SANG contributions now collected through CIL liable schemes, where the contributions are ring fenced.

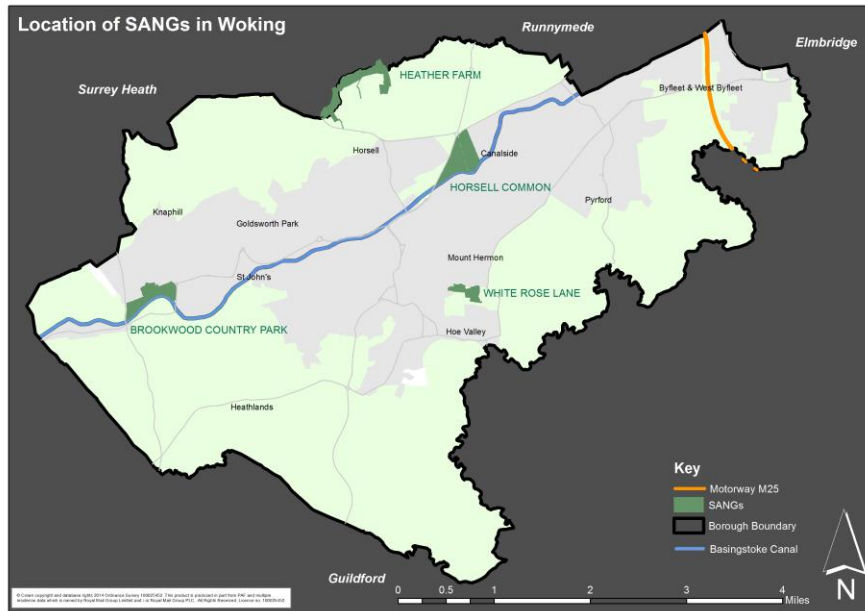
- 1.23 The Dutch Nitrogen Judgement (Cooperate Mobilisation for the Environment UA and Vereniging Leefmilieu v College Van gedeputeerde staten van Limburg and other) (2018) states "it is only when it is sufficiently certain that a measure will make an effective contribution to avoiding harm to the integrity of the site concerned, by guaranteeing beyond all reasonable doubt that the plan or project at issue will not adversely affect the integrity of that site, that such a measure may be taken into consideration in the 'Appropriate Assessment' within the meaning of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive". Therefore the assessment must be complete, precise and definitive findings with conclusions capable of removing all reasonable scientific doubt as to the effects of the plans or the projects proposed on the protected site concerned.
- 1.24 The Development Management Policies DPD also contains measures that aim to maintain good air quality associated with new development. Policy DM6 'Air and water quality' states that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures must be provided where an assessment of impacts demonstrates that an SPA and/or SAC is likely to be affected through deteriorating air quality. These should include measures which will assist in reducing overall emissions and increase the use of sustainable transport measures to combat any impacts on air quality on the roads within close proximity to the SPA and/or SAC, including integration of new development with local facilities and opportunities.
- 1.25 Natural England has produced detailed advice on the procedure for air quality assessment. Should the developer wish to explore options for avoiding or mitigating the effects described above we advise they seek advice with Natural England.

2.0 The Avoidance Strategy - Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG)

- 2.1 Natural England considers that any net new residential development within 5km of the SPA could have a likely significant effect upon it, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, especially because of the potential impact of additional recreational use of the land in the SPA.
- 2.2 Within 400m of a designated site, Natural England considers that it is not possible to avoid the possibility of adverse effects of residential development on the SPA, therefore there should be a presumption against development within Zone A, as shown on the Proposal Map. In the case of applications within 400m, this means that, other than in exceptional circumstances, they should be refused.
- 2.3 In the case of proposals for development between 400m and 5km from the SPA, Zone B, an Appropriate Assessment is required to determine the potential effects under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The avoidance strategy requires the developer to make a contribution towards the provision of a SANG or provide a bespoke SANG and in addition contribute to SAMM to mitigate against the potential recreational pressures of residents of the scheme, causing disturbance and deterioration to the SPA.
- 2.4 The Council has a number of identified SANG sites, the provision of these sites form part of the avoidance measures for the SPA. These Council owned/managed sites are capable of providing avoidance measures to a substantial quantum of residential development. The capacity of SANGs is calculated based on the standard of a minimum of 8 hectares per 1000 population.
- 2.5 The existing operating SANG sites are listed in Table 1 and shown spatially in Map 2. The Heather Farm SANG and Horsell Common SANG are owned by Horsell Common Preservation Society and the remaining SANG sites are owned by the Council.

Site	Size (ha)
Brookwood Country Park	20
White Rose Lane	8.2
Horsell Common, Monument Road	28
Heather Farm	24.63

Table 1 List all the operating SANGs in Woking



Map 2 The location of SANGs located within the borough

2.6 Some of these sites have been operating for several years now and therefore had provided avoidance measures for a number of completed residential schemes and current residential schemes under construction, thereby reducing their capacity to provide avoidance for new residential schemes. The capacity figures in Table 2 does not take into account capacity that has already been used.

2.7 The total capacity⁵ of each of the SANGs are as follows:

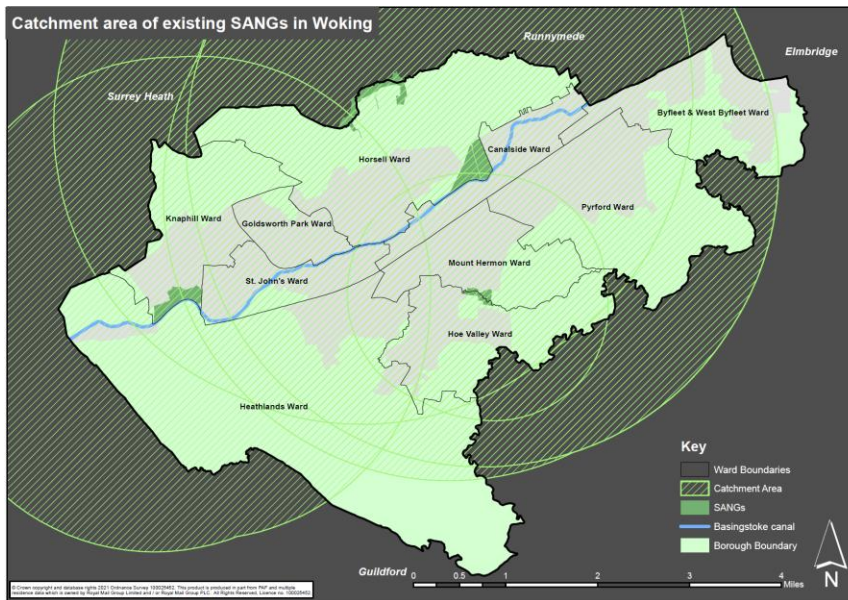
Site	Capacity to provide avoidance (No of dwellings)
Brookwood Country Park	1036
White Rose Lane	425
Horsell Common, Monument Road	1451
Heather Farm	1276

Table 2 showing the capacity of each SANG site

⁵ See page 28 to see how SANG capacity is worked out

2.8 The established SANG sites are well distributed within the Borough. They are as follows:

- *Brookwood Country Park* - This site is to the west of the Borough. It was a former hospital grounds transformed into a semi-natural open space. The SANG has been operational since 2011. The extent of its catchment is 5km.
- *White Rose Lane* - This site is owned by the Council and is part of a Local Nature Reserve. It is one of the busiest SANGS in the Thames Basin Heath area. The SANG has been operational since 2008. The extent of its catchment is 2 km.
- *Horsell Common, Monument Road* – This SANG site comprises of two parcels of land, intersected by Monument Road. It is registered Common Land owned by Horsell Common Preservation Society (HCPS). HCPS receive payments from the Council to carry out maintenance on the site. The SANG has been operational since around 2007. The extent of its catchment is 5 km.
- *Heather Farm*- This is the newest established SANG site in the Borough which opened on 9 Jan 2016. It is located to the northern part of the Borough, where part of the land falls outside the Borough boundary into Surrey Heath. It was a former mushroom production facility. The site is owned by Horsell Common Preservation Society (HCPS) but has been leased to the Council for a minimum of 125 years for the purpose of using the land as a SANG. The Council has leased back the SANG to HCPS to manage on its behalf. HCPS received payments from the Council to carry out capital works and will continue to receive annual maintenance payments to manage and maintain the site on behalf of the Council. The extent of its catchment is 5 km.



Map 3 The location of SANGs and the extent of their catchment area within the Borough

2.9 The TBH Delivery Framework states that the catchment of SANG will depend on the individual site characteristics and location, and their location within a wider green infrastructure network. As a guide, it is assumed that:

- SANG of 2-12ha will have a catchment of 2km
- SANG of 12-20ha will have a catchment of 4km
- SANG of 20ha+ will have a catchment of 5km

2.10 Map 3 (page 143) and map 4 (page 165) shows each of the SANG sites and the extent of their catchments across the Borough. As can be noted, the catchment zones extend beyond the Borough boundary into neighbouring local authorities. The Council will assign development proposals to a relevant SANG according to the catchment zones.

2.11 Some areas of the Borough fall within a number of catchment zones. This means that proposals for residential developments located in any of the overlapping catchment zones can make a financial contributions to works at any of the sites as avoidance/mitigation measure provided there is available capacity on the SANG site. It is also important to note that development proposals of fewer than 10 dwellings are not required to be within a specified distance of a SANG land (i.e. within a catchment area of a SANG) but avoidance can be assigned to any operational SANG provided there is sufficient capacity for that site to cater for the consequence of the dwellings upon the SPA.

Proposed new SANG sites

2.12 ~~The Site Allocation DPD was adopted by the Council on the 14th October 2021. The Council is in the process of identifying has identified potential~~ new SANG sites in its ~~emerging adopted~~ Site Allocation DPD. ~~these are:~~ Sites being considered in the Site allocations DPD include:

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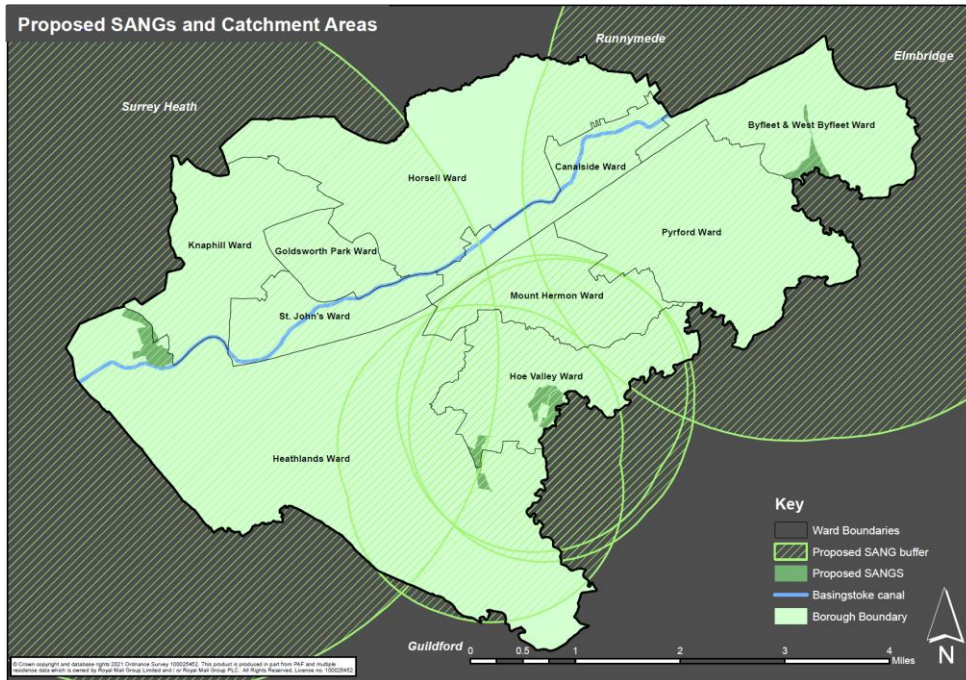
- Land south of Parvis Road in Byfleet
- Brookwood Farm
- Gresham Mill
- Westfield Common

~~The Site Allocations DPD is going through Independent Examination. The Council is waiting for the Inspector's Final Report. The DPD is given significant weight for the purposes of managing development.~~ The capacity and size of the sites are shown in Table 3 below. This demonstrates that sufficient sites have been identified to meet the projected housing requirement over the Core Strategy period.

Site	Size	Capacity (No of dwellings)
Land south of Parvis Road in Byfleet	15.43	799
Brookwood Farm	24.8	987
Gresham Mill 1	9.9	425
Gresham Mill 2	9.52	493
Westfield Common	10.59	570

Table 3 The size and capacity of proposed SANG sites

2.13 Map 4 below shows each of the proposed SANG sites and the extent of their catchments areas within the Borough.



Map 4 The location of proposed SANGs and the extent of their catchment area within the Borough.

How will contributions be made towards the provision of SANG?

- 2.14 As set out in this Strategy, any development that will result in a net additional dwelling within 400m-5km of the SPA is likely to have a significant effect on the purpose and the integrity of the SPA and therefore avoidance/mitigation measures need to be put in place to account for each additional dwelling. The avoidance measures identified in this Strategy includes contribution towards SANG provision and maintenance and contribution towards SAMM. In the majority of cases applicants have made/will make a contribution towards Council operating SANGs rather than providing their own.
- 2.15 Prior to April 2015, the Council applied a tariff for SANG and SAMM for any scheme which resulted in a net additional dwelling. The council has introduced CIL as the primary mechanism for securing developers contributions. Given that SANGs are deemed as a form of infrastructure contributions are now secured as part of CIL. These changes are reflected diagrammatically in Figure 1.
- 2.16 It is important to note that whilst CIL was introduced on 1 April 2015, outstanding permissions with signed legal agreements securing contributions towards SANG will be honoured until such time that permissions lapse without commencement. Therefore there will be a transitional period in which monies will continue to be received via the old SANG tariff shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.

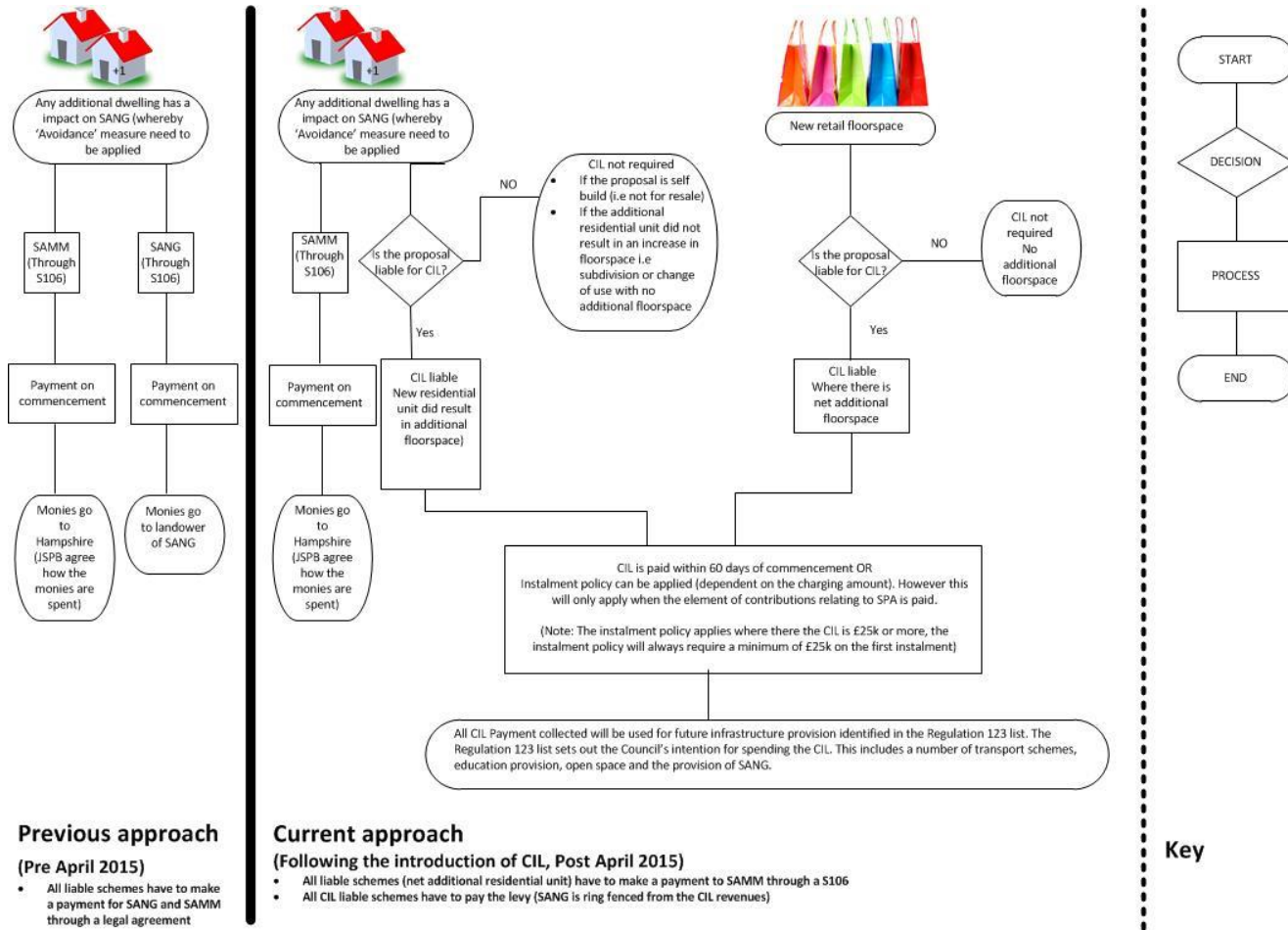


Figure 1 Process map showing how contributions towards SANG and SAMM are collected before and after the adoption of CIL by Woking Borough Council. (Please refer to current CIL Legislation to determine whether a proposal is CIL liable or not.)

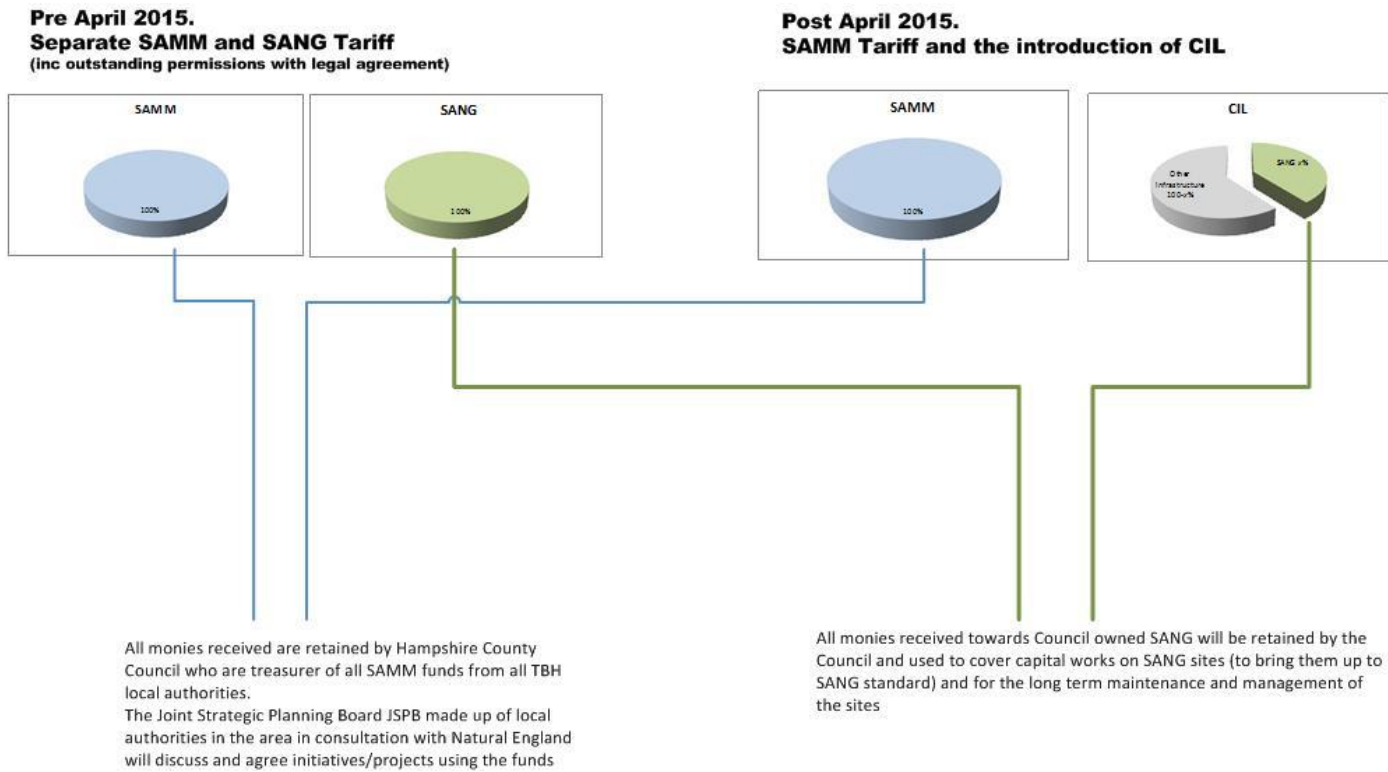


Figure 2. Diagram to show the source of funds for SANG and SAMM collected by the Council pre and post April 2015. Note there will be a transitional period in which SANG is still collected through the SANG tariff on outstanding permissions with legal agreements.

3.0 The Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.1 Contribution towards SANG provision will need to be addressed regardless of the method by which contributions are collected. The Council had set out in its Regulation 123 List and currently in its Infrastructure Funding Statement and the CIL Charging Schedule that the provision of SANGs is a priority infrastructure and critical to support future residential development.
- 3.2 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced by The Planning Act 2008 as a new mechanism to enable infrastructure requirements arising from growth to be funded through developer contributions. It is a standardised, non-negotiable charge applied to all qualifying schemes and offers a clear and consistent mechanism to pool multiple infrastructure contributions. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy came into effect from 1 April 2015. The charge is applied by pounds per square meter on net additional floor space. The charging schedule is as follows:

Type of development	Charging Schedule
Residential (Town Centre, Sheerwater and Maybury)	£75 per m ²
Residential (rest of the Borough)	£125 per m ²
Retail (all types)	£75 per m ²
All other commercial and non-residential uses	Nil (£0 per m ²)

Table 4. Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule

- 3.3 Not all types of development are subject to the charge. Proposals for commercial use (not including retail) and non-residential use is subject to a nil charge. There are also exemptions including residential extensions of less than 100 m² of net internal floorspace (unless this will comprise of one or more dwellings), self build dwellings and new affordable housing (for more info see the Council's webpage: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/service/contributions>). The charging schedule is index linked to the BCIS CIL Index, which is applied annually.
- 3.4 In establishing the charging schedule for the CIL the Council had to comply with relevant legislation and set a charge at a level that it considered to be a reasonable charging schedule that reached an appropriate balance between helping to fund necessary new infrastructure and the potential effects on economic viability.
- 3.5 The Council prepared a Regulation 123 List which is essentially a list of types of infrastructure/projects that the Council intends to be funded in whole or partly by CIL. This has been replaced by the Infrastructure Funding Statement, but with the same infrastructure priorities. The list has been summarised in table 5 and shows the funding gap for SANG infrastructure. The list was informed by various documents including the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

Infrastructure	Funding gap
<i>Thames Basin Heath SPA avoidance (SANG)</i> Future Improvements to green areas to deliver SANG for future growth (excluding existing Planning permission)	5,492,090
<i>Transport</i> New roads, improved junctions, crossings, cycle improvements	25,250,000
<i>Education</i> 19 primary school classrooms and ancillary spaces. 13 secondary school classrooms and ancillary spaces Early year provision	16,088,227
<i>Open Space</i> Outdoor Sports	5,474,000
<i>Allotments</i>	151,304
<i>Child Play Space and Teenage Play Space</i>	1,120,000
	53,575,621

Table 5 Summary of the Council's priority infrastructure contained in the Regulation 123 list

How will CIL income be ring-fenced for the provision and maintenance of SANG?

3.6 The Council has calculated the SANG element based on an overall percentage, taking into consideration all potential development schemes coming forward. This has already been estimated for the next 10 years in the Regulation 123 list, therefore using the proportion of estimated income from SANG over the estimated income of CIL. The calculations are as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Estimated income SANG}}{\text{Total estimated Income CIL}} \times 100 = \text{Proportion of SANG income against the CIL income}$$

$$\frac{\underline{\pounds 5,492,090}}{\pounds 13,900,175} \times 100 = \mathbf{39.5\%}$$

3.7 Therefore the Council will set aside about 39.5% of all CIL contributions to be paid upfront⁶ to cover provision towards SANG. At the end of each financial year the Council will calculate all the income collected from CIL and ring fence 39.5% of this towards the provision of SANG. Normally, the Council will forward fund the provision of SANGs and secure contributions over time to recover the cost.

⁶ In relation to CIL qualifying schemes that wish to take advantage of the CIL instalment policy. The SANG element needs to be paid upfront.

3.8 The diagram below (Figure 3) shows how CIL income can be broken down into sections and SANG ring fenced.

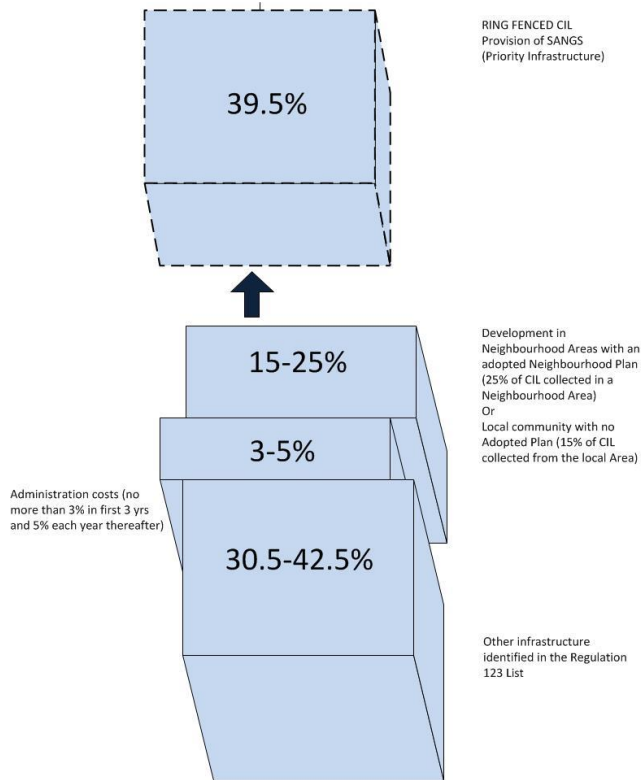


Figure 3 Diagram showing how CIL income can be broken down and SANG ring fenced

3.9 The Council has formed an internal project team to make sure that there is sufficient SANG capacity to meet housing provision and SANGs are appropriately maintained.

The provision of bespoke SANGs and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.10 Developers can provide their own bespoke SANGs for their development. The Council may receive offers of land and avoidance measures accompanying a development proposal. In such cases the applicant should refer to the SANG criteria by Natural England (Appendix 2) and consult with Natural England at an early stage in the development process. It is not likely that many schemes will provide their own SANG land but there is always a possibility. CIL Regulation allows payment in kind by way of a land payment. This will be looked at on a case by case basis depending on the proposal. The Council may use a Grampian condition to secure the SANG (to ensure SANG is provided prior to first occupation). However, this is dependent on Natural England agreeing to the SANG site, ensuring the SANG site has sufficient capacity to address the impacts of the development, meets all SANG criteria, the right size, the SANG has planning permission in its own right and has written permission from the land owners.
- 3.11 The Council considers that enhancing biodiversity and SANG function can be mutually compatible. The Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) to be achieved on most developments. BNG can be achieved through habitat restoration and/or creation on-site. Where the fully required net gain cannot be achieved on a development application site, the deficit/shortfall may be achieved outside the development site as an 'off-set', either by the developer or by a third party. The Council would support BNG realisation on SANG land; however only habitat creation or enhancement that is demonstrably additional, over and above the minimum requirements of the SANG can be attributed to BNG. Natural England has produced guidance on BNG and SANGs which can be found [here](#). Should the developer wish to explore or meet BNG requirements of a SANG land, it is advised that they have early engagement with [Natural England](#) and [Woking Borough Council](#).

4.0 Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)

- 4.1 In addition to contribution towards SANG, Natural England requires that all Local Authorities affected by the SPA designation collect a Tariff (per dwelling) to implement an identified programme of works to manage and monitor visitors use of the SPA. This is the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Tariff (SAMM).
- 4.2 Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project involves a wardening scheme, which monitors and manages access to the SPAs and encourage people to use the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space SANG (avoidance/mitigation land) rather than Special Protection Areas. SAMM measures include management projects of these sensitive sites such as warden patrols, leaflets, signage and educational material. Bird and visitor surveys are regularly undertaken and the information used to monitor the effectiveness of the avoidance/mitigation measures.
- 4.3 SAMM funds are collected and paid directly to Hampshire County Council who act as treasurer of all the SAMM funds from all the TBH local authorities. The Joint Strategic Partnership Board (made of a member from each authority) work closely with Natural England to determine how the SAMM funds should be spent.
- 4.4 The SAMM tariff is a separate payment from CIL which is secured by a S106 Agreement. This approach was agreed by Council on 15 July 2010. The basic SAMM tariff remains unchanged although is indexed linked year on year in accordance to the Retail Price Index (RPI)⁷, Table 6 shows what the tariff is as of April 2021.
- 4.5 When calculating the number of bedrooms in a dwellinghouse, any room at first floor level and above with an external window (excluding bathrooms) and with a floor area greater than 6.5 square metres that can realistically be used as a bedroom will be counted as a bedroom for the purposes of calculating the tariff. To clarify any room shown as a study, nursery or other name, but which could effectively be considered as a bedroom shall be regarded as a bedroom.
- 4.6 All qualifying schemes (development proposals that will result in a net additional dwelling) will be subject to a SAMM charge. The contributions will be secured by a legal agreement. Under the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) any development which is likely to have a significant effect upon a Special Protection Area cannot proceed unless the Council has given written approval under the Habitats Regulations 2017. This is particularly relevant in relation to applications for Prior Approval. To clarify, a Prior Approval notice does not constitute approval under the Habitats Regulations and a separate application under Regulation 75 of the Habitats Regulations is required. Therefore, before development can proceed the owners of the land will need to enter into a unilateral undertaking/legal agreement to make these contributions.

⁷ The RPI is published by ONS
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/czbh/mm23>

Size of dwelling (number of bedrooms)	Average Occupancy rate	SAMM contributions per dwelling (£)
Studio	1.4	552
1	1.4	552
2	1.9	748
3	2.5	985
4 +	2.9	1143

Table 6 SAMM tariff contribution as of 1 April 2021 – 30 March 2022. Occupancy rates based on Census 2001 data.

5.0 Types of Development Covered

5.1 Whilst this Strategy focuses on the impacts of conventional housing on the SPA, there are other types of development that are likely to have a similar recreational access needs to residents in C3 dwellings and therefore, where relevant, these should contribute towards the avoidance and mitigation measures.

Development type	Explanation for contributions
Dwellings (C3)	<p>Proposals for one or more net units should provide avoidance/mitigation in the form of contributions towards SANG- however as SANG is now part of CIL, contributions will be ring fenced from CIL income (derived from CIL qualifying schemes).</p> <p>Proposals for one or more net units including affordable housing will be required to contribute to the SAMM.</p>
Replacement dwellings	Replacement dwellings are not considered to increase recreational pressure on the SPA and therefore no contributions are required.
Change of use/ redevelopment of dwelling to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO)	<p>If the facilities have individual lockable rooms, and have the ability to house a family, then each individual room should be treated as a separate dwelling and mitigated accordingly. If however, the rooms are small and can only fit a single bed (this could be conditioned). Then the number of rooms can be compared to the average occupancy rate of a dwelling to calculate the contributions required.</p> <p>Example Conversion: Conversion to 6 bedroom HMO from a 3 bedroom house. The average occupancy rate is 2.5 people per dwelling.</p> <p>Proposed Occupancy rate of the HMO = 6 people</p> <p>Net Occupancy Rate requiring mitigation is $6 - 2.5 = 3.5$ additional people to mitigate. 2×2.5 contributions covers the 3.5 requirement and this is what the developer would pay.</p> <p>If there is any net increase in residents or residential units within 400m, then Natural England would continue to object.</p>
Gypsy or Traveller pitches (including temporary planning permission)	If the proposal results in the net increase of residential dwellings mitigation is required as usual.
Camping and Caravans	<p>It does depend on the permanency of the pitch. If it will be someone's permanent address then the usual contributions will be required. However, if it is more a holiday caravan park/pitch, then no contribution is required.</p> <p>In terms of the amount of SAMM contributions this will be based upon the number of bedrooms of each caravan. This will determine on a case by case basis.</p>

Residential institutions (C2)	<p>Developments within Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions) may need to provide avoidance/mitigation as they may be considered to give rise to likely significant effect to the SPA. Applications for C2 development will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in reaching a decision the Council will take into consideration how the development will be used, the likely activity levels of the residents and the level of care and the likelihood of pet ownership. For example:</p> <p>Residents which will never or very rarely visit the SPA such as residents who are blind, in a coma or limited mobility and do not leave the compound. Mitigation would not be required for these residents.</p> <p>One key indicator on how mobile the residents would be relates to the facilities on site such as swimming pool, gym, car parking and bike stores. This would also be assumed in facilities where residents are in self-contained accommodation and therefore live reasonably independently, even if there is a level of care required. In these cases avoidance and mitigation will be required.</p> <p>Natural England will normally be consulted on such applications.</p>
Hotels (C1)	<p>It is unlikely that C1 development (hotels, boarding and guest houses) would have a significant adverse effect on the SPA in the absence of a significant long-stay tourist economy in the borough. However, residential staff in such establishments will need to be considered as being likely to have a significant adverse effect in combination with other long term residents and will be required to contribute to avoidance measures. For example if the hotel was to become the full time address for a person then contributions would be required.</p> <p>Proposals will be assessed on a case by case basis under advice from Natural England.</p>
Student Housing (Sui Generis)	<p>Developments which are considered students accommodation may need to provide avoidance/mitigation as they may be considered to give rise to likely significant effect to the SPA. Applications for student accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in reaching a decision the Council will take a number of factors into consideration such as: how the development will be used and the likely activity levels of the residents, size of the development, what type of students undergraduates for a year or postgraduates for a number of years with family? Car provision and pets, will the dwelling be sold on the open market at a later date?</p> <p>Natural England will normally be consulted on such applications.</p>

Staff Accommodation	<p>Applications for staff accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in reaching a decision the Council will take into consideration how the development will be used i.e. will it be their permanent full time address for that staff member. For example if it is a dwelling attached to a pub for a landlord to live permanently then it should be considered a new dwelling and treated accordingly. If it is a nursing facility and the staff only sleeps whilst completing their shift, before going home, then no contributions will be required.</p> <p>Natural England will normally be consulted on such applications.</p>
Permitted Development	<p>Permitted Development applications are not exempt from the Habitats Regulations. Avoidance and mitigation will still be required in the form of SAMM as per usual.</p>

Table 7: Types of development and the required contributions towards SAMM.

The scenarios outlined above explain the general approach of the Council to SPA avoidance/mitigation in relation to certain types of development. However there will be circumstances where schemes will be considered on a case by case basis of the advice of Natural England.

Other Forms of Development

Other applications for planning permission for developments in the vicinity of the SPA for example significant commercial developments can also negatively impact on the SPA. This is on account of the proposed use, scale, location and nature of the proposal. The proposal will be screened to assess whether they will have a likely significant effect (individually or in combination with other plans or projects) and where necessary a full Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken. Where it is deemed that a development will have a potential impact on the SPA, Woking Borough Council will work with Natural England to agree the appropriate measures of mitigation/avoidance.

6.0 The Council's Monitoring Procedures

SANG Capacity

6.1 The Council has a number of existing SANG sites and have identified new sites in the [emerging-adopted](#) Site Allocations DPD to address future housing needs. The standard for SANG is a minimum of 8 ha per 1000 population. Using this as a baseline and applying a simple formula the Council calculates the capacity of each SANG site to provide avoidance/mitigation.

8 ha of SANG per 1000 people is the equivalent of 0.008ha of SANG for 1 person

The average household size is 2.41 (based on 2001 census)

Therefore, on average each new household will need to make provision for 0.0193 ha of SANG.

$$\text{SANG Capacity} = \text{Area} / 0.0193$$

6.2 If the site is a new open space (i.e. there are no existing users) then no further adjustment is needed. For upgraded sites the existing users must be taken into account and discounted from the overall capacity in order to establish the true capacity of the SANG site. For sites with minimal use and substantial improvement programmes the whole site can potentially be counted towards the SANG area, however for sites which are used more frequently the additional number of people who can be accommodated is limited. It may be necessary for visitor survey to be undertaken to establish the current level of use of the site.

Monitoring SANG Capacity

6.3 The Council will monitor the SANG capacity every quarter to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet the housing delivery identified in the Core Strategy. Recent calculations of operational SANGs demonstrate that there is still capacity to provide avoidance/mitigation for 818 dwellings (March 2021). This is the equivalent of just under 3 years supply (based on an average of 292 per annum). This takes the Council up to 2023-2024. After which, the Council will require additional SANG sites if it is to deliver the housing need towards the end of the plan period. Therefore the Council [has identified is in the process of identifying potential](#) new SANG sites in its [emerging-adopted](#) Site Allocations DPD. See section 2.128 for more information.

6.4 The Council monitors when development schemes commence and are occupied as this is when contributions towards CIL (including SANG) and SAMM are triggered. The Council then adjusts the SANG capacity accordingly to ensure it has an up to date understanding of the supply of SANG land and its capacity to address SPA avoidance/mitigation.

Monitoring of SAMM

6.5 SAMM funds are collected and paid directly to Hampshire County Council who act as treasurer of all the SAMM funds from all the TBH local authorities. JSPB meetings are held regularly to consider how SAMM funds should be appropriately spent to achieve the best outcomes and to report back on ongoing measures/projects that have been agreed. This would involve a wardening scheme, to monitor and manage access to the SPAs and

encourage people to use SANGS land rather than the SPA's. It would include bird and visitor surveys to be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

7.0 The process of identifying SANG Sites

Step 1: Initial identification of Appropriate Sites for Avoidance Measures

7.1 Natural England has produced guidance for the creation of SANG sites, please see Appendix 2-(p34) for more information on identifying suitable sites. [Its provisions should be taken into account.](#)

~~The Guidance is being reviewed, and should be taken into account when approved.~~

Step 2: Identification of a Programme of Works

7.17.2 Each SANG will be required to prepare a SANG Proposal and SANG Management Plan, which should be prepared in consultation with Natural England. This is to demonstrate that the proposed SANG meets the required criteria and can provide avoidance/mitigation. In order for sites to meet the specified criteria set out by Natural England they will most likely have to undergo a substantial programme of works. This will include capital works to get the site to an appropriate SANG standard and then further phased works to manage and maintain the site in perpetuity⁸. The costs of each improvement should be estimated to allow a calculation of total capital costs and future maintenance costs, for example see the Heather Farm SANG Proposal (taken to the 18 July 2013 Executive meeting)- Appendix 1.

7.27.3 The work programmes also include some non-ecological work to ensure people are attracted to these alternative sites. For example, the promotion of sites through leaflets sent to occupants of new dwellings to ensure they are aware that they have a quality open space to use close by.

7.37.4 Although visitor surveys have no direct mitigating responsibility they are necessary to monitor the success of the proposed access improvements, and therefore, a visitor survey before and after completion of work should be undertaken to show current use of the site and to monitor the impacts of improvements, or new provision.

7.47.5 The maintenance and management of the sites should be considered and a breakdown of the costs of maintenance and replacement of assets for each site is included. Calculations are based on estimates that assets will need to be replaced due to wear and tear.

7.57.6 This information will also inform any future reviews of the CIL Charging Schedule and any ring fencing towards SANG.

Step 3: Calculation of the capacity (number of dwellings the SANG can provide avoidance to)

7.67.7 The calculation to determine the capacity of a SANG site to provide avoidance/mitigation is necessary to estimate how much SANG land would be needed to support planned development.

⁸ In perpetuity is recognised as the lifetime of the development to ensure the SANG is maintained and remains attractive to the public to act as a sufficient draw away from the SPA to achieve avoidance and mitigation.

7.77.8 The capacity of the ~~potential~~ new SANG sites identified in the ~~draft~~ adopted Site Allocation DPD has been calculated based on the site area. The actual capacity may be reduced to discount the existing level of use. SANG sites should be operational before any residential development is assigned to it to provide avoidance measure. This means that any capital works to bring the site to SANG standard needs to be undertaken before occupation of assigned dwellings.

Step 4: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and SAMM contributions

7.87.9 When submitting an application for residential development the applicant will be required to make a contribution towards SAMM through a legal agreement and payment towards CIL on qualifying sites (this will then be ring fenced).

Step 5: Allocate capacity to the SANG site

7.97.10 Once work on the site has commenced (as per Building Control notification) the SANG capacity is allocated for that proposal and is monitored.

Glossary

Appropriate Assessment: An assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 of the implications of a development proposal on the SPA.

Delivery Framework: Guidance on Thames Basin Heaths SPA avoidance and mitigation methods, produced and endorsed by the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board.

Habitats Regulations: The legal instrument that translates the obligations of the European Directives into UK law. Plans or projects, including planning applications that may adversely affect a European Site must pass a series of tests under the Habitats Regulations before they can proceed.

Avoidance Strategy: Woking Borough Council's strategy that identifies how new residential development within the borough can avoid potential effects upon the SPA, through financial contributions to provide either new open space or improvements to existing open space.

Local Development Framework (LDF): A portfolio of documents that provides the framework for delivering the spatial strategy of the area. The LDF will replace the existing Local Plan.

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

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM): tariff, where the monies are used to monitor access and management projects of these sensitive sites. Natural England are co-ordinating the project.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): An area of land or water notified by statutory conservation agency under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of national importance for nature or geological conservation.

South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy, revoked July 2010.

Special Protection Area (SPA): A statutory protected habitat for wild birds under EC Regulations.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGS): land that is accessible for public recreation and meets the requirements of visitors who would use the SPA.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): To replace Supplementary Planning Guidance. Non-statutory documents that expand upon policies and proposals in the Local Development Framework.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: It covers an area of some 8400ha, consisting of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) scattered from Hampshire in the West, to Berkshire in the North through to Surrey.

APPENDIX 1: Heather Farm Proposal- Work Programme Costs (extract from the SANG Proposal)

Set Up Costs – Year 1

Description	Unit Cost (£)	Quantity	Cost	Replacement Period	Cost in year
Land Value	696,000	1	696,000	n/a	1
SDLT on land	41,683	1	41,683	n/a	1
Site survey – ecology and access management	2229	1	2229	n/a	1
Design of path and landscaping scheme	5,000	1	5,000	n/a	1
Additional land	137,650	1	137,650	n/a	1
Enhancement work to HF land	340,000	1	340,000	n/a	1
Heather Farm Car Park – tarmac cap and edging kerbs	34,100	1	34,100	20 (see separate section below)	1
Layout of new unsurfaced routes		1	22,000	n/a	1
Topsoil and seeding of Heather Farm landscaped area	96,923	1	96,923	n/a	1
Heather Farm Footbridge Foundations	4,800	1	4,800	n/a	1
Footbridge from HF car park	54,158	1	54,158	20 (see separate section)	1
Fencing to SPA boundary	16.5 (per linear meter)	376mx2	12,408	10 (see separate section)	1
Tree clearance	1830	1	1830	n/a	1
Western Boundary Clearance	1915	1	1915	n/a	1
Ditch Clearance	1375	1	1375	n/a	1
Recycled plastic boardwalk in wettest areas	150,000	1	150,000	27 years	1
Additional raised paths and river crossing	79,275	1	79,275	n/a	1
Tractor and mower	24,000	1	24,000	15 years	1
Fencing for dog training area	4,500	1	4,500	10 years	1
Year 5 works to be done in year 1	10,010	1	10,010	5 years	1
TOTAL SET UP COSTS			1,719,856		

Maintenance Costs – Annual

Description	Unit Cost (£)	Qty	Cost	Replacement Period	Cost in year
Bridge inspection & maintenance	1100	1	1,100	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Path Maintenance	2.2 /m	3,000	6,600	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Litter/ dog waste bins servicing	550	3	1,650	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Biodiversity monitoring	1,650	1	1,650	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Wardening salary & on costs of ½ ranger	22,000	1	22,000	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Transport costs for ranger (vehicle & fuel)	4,400	1	4,400	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Car Park Maintenance	550	1	550	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Land maintenance	9,000	1	9,000	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
Contingency fund	2000	1	2000	1	Year 1 and every 1 year
			48,950		

Replacement Costs – Various

Description	Unit Cost (£)	Quantity	Cost	Replacement Period	Cost in year
Waymarking	55	6	330	5	Year 5 and every 5 years
Litter/Dog waste bins	660	3	1,980	5	Year 5 and every 5 years
Improvements to entrances including off site signage	1,100	1	1,100	5	Year 5 and every 5 years
Site leaflet	3,300	1	3,300	5	Year 5 and every 5 years
Visitor Survey	3,300	1	3,300	5	Year 5 and every 5 years
Gates	550	3	1,650	10	Year 10 and every 10 years
Signage & interpretation panels	4,950	3	4,950	10	Year 10 and every 10 years
Fencing for dog control	24,310	1	24,310	10	Year 10 and every 10 years
Fencing to SPA boundary	12,408	1	12,408	10	Year 10 and every 10 years
Fencing to dog training area	4500	1	4,500	10	Year 10 and every 10 years
Tractor and mower replacement	24,000	1	24,000	15	Year 15 and every 15 years
HF car park re-surface	34,100	1	34,100	20	Year 20 and every 20 years
New footbridge from Heather Farm car park	59,574	1	59,574	20	Year 20 and every 20 years
Recycled plastic boardwalk in wettest areas	165,000	1	165,000	27	Year 1, 27 and every 27 years thereafter
Bourne Field Footbridge Foundations	4,800	1	4,800	n/a	Year 5
Bourne Field Footbridge	15,224	1	15,224	20	Year 5 and every 20 years thereafter



APPENDIX 2: Natural England SANG guidance

Guidelines for Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) – August 2021

Introduction

'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANG) is the name given to green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as avoidance within the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone.

Its role is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). SANG are intended to provide avoidance measures for the potential impact of residential development on the SPA by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. The effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon the location and design. These must be such that the SANG is more attractive than the SPA to users of the kind that currently visit the SPA.

This document describes the features which have been found to draw visitors to the SPA, which should be replicated in SANG. It provides guidelines on

- the type of site which should be identified as SANG
- measures which can be taken to enhance sites so that they may be used as SANG

It also covers the outputs of the recent Thames Basin Heaths Project 2021.

These guidelines relate specifically to the means to provide mitigation for significant impact arising from new housing within the Thames Basin Heaths Zone of influence. They do not address nor preclude the other functions of green space. Other functions may be provided within SANG, as long as this does not conflict with the specific function of mitigating visitor impacts on the SPA.

SANG may be created from:

- existing open space of SANG quality with no existing public access or limited public access, which for the purposes of mitigation could be made fully accessible to the public
 - existing open space, which is already accessible, but which could be changed in character so that it is more attractive to the specific group of visitors who might otherwise visit the SPA
 - land in other uses which could be converted into SANG
-

Guidelines for the creation of Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS)

Introduction

'Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space' (SANGS) is the name given to green space that is of a quality and type suitable to be used as mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone.

Its role is to provide alternative green space to divert visitors from visiting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). SANGS are intended to provide mitigation for the potential impact of residential development on the SPA by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. The effectiveness of SANGS as mitigation will depend upon the location and design. These must be such that the SANGS is more attractive than the SPA to users of the kind that currently visit the SPA.

This document describes the features which have been found to draw visitors to the SPA, which should be replicated in SANGS. It provides guidelines on

- the type of site which should be identified as SANGS
- measures which can be taken to enhance sites so that they may be used as SANGS

These guidelines relate specifically to the means to provide mitigation for housing within the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone. They do not address nor preclude the other functions of green space (e.g. provision of disabled access). Other functions may be provided within SANGS, as long as this does not conflict with the specific function of mitigating visitor impacts on the SPA.

SANGS may be created from:

- existing open space of SANGS quality with no existing public access or limited public access, which for the purposes of mitigation could be made fully accessible to the public
- existing open space which is already accessible but which could be changed in character so that it is more attractive to the specific group of visitors who might otherwise visit the SPA
- land in other uses which could be converted into SANGS

The identification of SANGS should seek to avoid sites of high nature conservation value which are likely to be damaged by increased visitor numbers. Such damage may arise, for example, from increased disturbance, erosion, input of nutrients from dog faeces, and increased incidence of fires. Where sites of high nature conservation value are considered as SANGS, the impact on their nature conservation value should be assessed and considered alongside relevant policy in the development plan.

The Character of the SPA and its Visitors

The Thames Basin Heaths SPA is made up of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and consists of a mixture of heathland, mire, and woodland habitats. They are essentially 'heathy' in character. The topography is varied and most sites have a large component of trees and some contain streams, ponds and small lakes. Some are freely accessible to the public and most have a degree of public access, though in some areas this is restricted by army, forestry or other operations.

A recent survey showed that more than 83% of visitors to the SPA arrive by car, though access points adjacent to housing estates showed a greater proportion arriving on foot (up to 100% in one case). 70% of those who visited by car had come from within 5km of the access point onto the SPA. A very large proportion of the SPA visitors are dog walkers, many of whom visit the particular site on a regular (more or less daily) basis and spend less than an hour there, walking on average about 2.5km. Almost 50% are retired or part-time workers and the majority are women. Further detailed information on visitors can be found in the reports referenced at the end of this document.

Guidelines for the Quality of SANGS

The quality guidelines have been sub-divided into different aspects of site fabric and structure. They have been compiled from a variety of sources but principally from visitor surveys carried out at heathland sites within the Thames Basin Heaths area or within the Dorset heathlands. These are listed as references at the end of this document.

The principle criteria contained in the Guidelines have also been put into a checklist format which are contained in Appendix 1.

Accessibility

Most visitors come by car and want the site to be fairly close to home. Unless SANGS are provided for the sole use of a local population living within a 400 metre catchment around the site, then **the availability of adequate car parking at sites larger than 10 ha is essential.** The amount and nature of parking provision should reflect the anticipated use of the site by visitors and the catchment size of the SANGS. It should provide an attractive alternative to parking by the part of SPA for which it is mitigation. **Car parks should be clearly signposted and easily accessed.**

New parking provision for SANGS should be advertised as necessary to ensure that it is known of by potential visitors.

The identification of SANG should seek to avoid sites of high nature conservation value which are likely to be damaged by increased visitor numbers. Such damage may arise, for example, from increased disturbance, erosion, input of nutrients from dog faeces, and increased incidence of fires. Where sites of high nature conservation value are considered as SANG, the impact on their nature conservation value should be assessed and considered alongside relevant policy in the development plan. These sites may require an ecological discount of their proposed SANG area.

SANG continue to need to be delivered in advance of any associated housing stock being occupied. They should also be funded for in perpetuity as is the current process.

The Character of the SPA and its Visitors

The Thames Basin Heaths SPA is made up of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and consists of a mixture of heathland, mire, and woodland habitats. They are essentially 'heathy' in character. The topography is varied, and most sites have a large component of trees and some contain streams, ponds and small lakes. Some are freely accessible to the public and most have a degree of public access, though in some areas this is restricted by army, forestry or other operations.

Survey effort in 2005 showed that more than 83% of visitors to the SPA arrive by car, though access points adjacent to housing estates showed a greater proportion arriving on foot (up to 100% in one case). 70% of those who visited by car had come from within 5km of the access point onto the SPA. A very large proportion of the SPA visitors are dog walkers, many of whom visit the particular site on a regular (more or less daily) basis and spend less than an hour there, walking on average about 2.5km. Almost 50% are retired or part-time workers and the majority are women. Further detailed information on visitors can be found in the reports referenced at the end of this document. These figures have been supported in further SPA wide surveys, the most recent being in 2018.

Guidelines for the Quality of SANG

The quality guidelines have been sub-divided into different aspects of site fabric and structure. They have been compiled from a variety of sources but principally from visitor surveys carried out at heathland sites within the Thames Basin Heaths area or within the Dorset heathlands. These are listed as references at the end of this document.

The principle criteria contained in the Guidelines have also been put into a checklist format which are contained in Appendix 1.

Accessibility

Most visitors come by car and want the site to be fairly close to home. Unless SANG are provided for the sole use of a local population living within a 400-metre catchment around the site, then **the availability of adequate car parking at sites larger than 4 ha is essential.** The amount and nature of parking provision should reflect the anticipated use of the site by visitors and the catchment size of the SANG. It should provide an attractive alternative to parking by the part of SPA for which it is mitigation. **Car parks should be clearly signposted and easily accessed.**

New parking provision for SANG should be advertised as necessary to ensure that it is known of by potential visitors.

Target groups of Visitors

This should be viewed from two perspectives, the local use of a site where it is accessed on foot from the visitor's place of residence, and a wider catchment use where it is accessed by car. **Most of the visitors to the SPA come by car and therefore should be considered as a pool of users from beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.** All but the smallest SANG should therefore target this type of visitor.

It is apparent from access surveys that a significant proportion of those people who visit the sites on foot, also visit alternative sites on foot and so this smaller but significant group look for local sites. **Where large populations are close to the SPA, the provision of SANG should be attractive to visitors on foot.**

[In addition to Natural England's SANG guidance, the Council will seek improved connectivity to SANGs by bike and encourage the use of bikes as a means of travel to SANGs when appropriate. In preparing a SANG Proposal to bring land to the standard of a SANG, consideration should be given to the provision of cycle parking.](#)

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Networks of sites

The provision of longer routes within larger SANG is important in determining the effectiveness of the authorities' network of SANG as mitigation. The design of routes within sites will be critical to providing routes of sufficient length and attractiveness for mitigation purposes.

Though networks of SANG may accommodate long visitor routes and this is desirable, they should not be solely relied upon to provide long routes.

Paths, Roads and Tracks

The findings suggest that **SANG should aim to supply a choice of routes of around 2.3 - 2.5km in length** with both shorter and longer routes of at least 5km as part of the choice, where space permits.

Paths have to be of a width acceptable to visitors.

Paths should be routed so that they are perceived as safe by the users, with some routes being through relatively open (visible) terrain (with no trees or scrub, or well spaced mature trees, or wide rides with vegetation back from the path), especially those routes which are 1-3 km long.

The routing of tracks along hill tops and ridges where there are views is valued by the majority of visitors.

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Artificial Infrastructure

Little or no artificial infrastructure is found within the SPA at present apart from the provision of some surfaced tracks and car parks. Generally, an urban influence is not what people are looking for when they visit the SPA and some people undoubtedly visit the SPA because it has a naturalness about it that would be marred by such features.

However, **SANG would be expected to have adequate car parking with good information about the site and the routes** available. Some subtle waymarking would also be expected for those visitors not acquainted with the layout of the site.

Other infrastructure would not be expected and should generally be restricted to the vicinity of car parking areas where good information and signs of welcome should be the norm, though discretely placed benches or information boards along some routes would be acceptable.

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Target groups of Visitors

This should be viewed from two perspectives, the local use of a site where it is accessed on foot from the visitor's place of residence, and a wider catchment use where it is accessed by car. **Most of the visitors to the SPA come by car and therefore should be considered as a pool of users from beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.** All but the smallest SANGS should therefore target this type of visitor.

It is apparent from access surveys that a significant proportion of those people who visit the sites on foot, also visit alternative sites on foot and so this smaller but significant group look for local sites. **Where large populations are close to the SPA, the provision of SANGS should be attractive to visitors on foot.**

Networks of sites

~~The provision of longer routes within larger SANGS is important in determining the effectiveness of the authorities' network of SANGS as mitigation, because a large proportion of visitors to the SPA have long walks or run or bicycle rides.~~ The design of routes within sites at the smaller than about 40 ha will be critical to providing routes of sufficient length and attractiveness for mitigation purposes.

Where long routes cannot be accommodated within individual SANGS it may be possible to provide them through a network of sites. However, networks are inherently likely to be less attractive to users of the type that visit the SPA, and the more fragmented they are, the less attractive they will be, though this is dependent on the land use which separates each component. For example, visitors are likely to be less put off by green areas between SANGS than by urban areas, even if they restrict access to rights of way and require dogs to be kept on leads.

Though networks of SANGS may accommodate long visitor routes and this is desirable, they should not be solely relied upon to provide long routes.

~~In addition to Natural England's SANG guidance, the Council will seek improved connectivity to SANGs by bike and encourage the use of bikes as a means of travel to SANGs when appropriate. In preparing a SANG Proposal to bring land to the standard of a SANG, consideration should be given to the provision of cycle parking.~~

Landscape and Vegetation

SANG do not have to contain heathland or heathy vegetation to provide an effective alternative to the SPA.

Surveys clearly show that **woodland or a semi-wooded landscape is a key feature** that people appreciate in the sites they visit, particularly those who use the SPA. This is more attractive than open landscapes or parkland with scattered trees.

A **semi-natural looking landscape with plenty of variation** was regarded as most desirable by visitors and some paths through quite enclosed woodland scored highly. There is clearly a balance to be struck between what is regarded as an exciting landscape and a safe one and so some element of choice between the two would be highly desirable. The semi-wooded and undulating nature of most of the SPA sites gives them an air of relative wildness, even when there are significant numbers of visitors on site. SANG should aim to reproduce this quality.

Hills do not put people off visiting a site, particularly where these are associated with good views, but steep hills are not appreciated. **An undulating landscape is preferred to a flat one.**

Water features, particularly ponds and lakes, act as a focus for visitors for their visit, but are not essential.

Restrictions on usage

The bulk of visitors to the SPA came to exercise their dogs and so it is imperative that **SANG allow for pet owners to let dogs run freely over a significant part of the walk. Access on SANG should be largely unrestricted, with both people and their pets being able to freely roam**

along the majority of routes. This means that sites where freely roaming dogs will cause a nuisance or where they might be in danger (from traffic or such like) should not be considered for SANG.

Assessment of site enhancement as mitigation

SANG may be provided by the enhancement of existing sites, including those already accessible to the public that have a low level of use and could be enhanced to attract more visitors. The extent of enhancement and the number of extra visitors to be attracted would vary from site to site. Those sites which are enhanced only slightly would be expected to provide less of a mitigation effect than those enhanced greatly, in terms of the number of people they would divert away from the SPA. In order to assess the contribution of enhancement sites in relation to the hectare standards of the Delivery Plan, it is necessary to distinguish between slight and great enhancement.

Methods of enhancement for the purposes of this guidance could include enhanced access through guaranteed long-term availability of the land, creation of a car park or a network of paths.

SANG which have not previously been open to the public count in full to the standard of providing 8ha of SANG per 1000 people in new development. SANG which have an appreciable but clearly low level of public use and can be substantially enhanced to greatly increase the number of visitors also count in full. The identification of these sites should arise from evidence of low current use. This could be in a variety of forms, for example:

- Experience of managing the site, which gives a clear qualitative picture that few visitors are present
- Quantitative surveys of visitor numbers
- Identified constraints on access, such as lack of gateways at convenient points and lack of parking
- Lack of easily usable routes through the site
- Evidence that the available routes through the site are little used (paths may show little wear, be narrow and encroached on by vegetation)

Practicality of enhancement works

The selection of sites for enhancement to be SANG should take into account the variety of stakeholder interests in each site. Consideration should be given to whether any existing use of the site which may continue is compatible with the function of SANG in attracting recreational use that would otherwise take place on the SPA. The enhancement should not result in moving current users off the SANG and onto the SPA. The specific enhancement works proposed should also be considered in relation not only to their effects on the SANG mitigation function but also in relation to their effects on other user groups.

Specific guidance on individual SANGS is summarised in Appendix 2. An information sheet for individual SANGS can also be found in Appendix 4.

Paths, Roads and Tracks

The findings suggest **that SANGS should aim to supply a choice of routes of around 2.5km in length** with both shorter and longer routes of at least 5km as part of the choice, where space permits. The fact that a considerable proportion of visitors were walking up to 5km and beyond suggests **the provision of longer routes should be regarded as a standard**, either on-site or through the connection of sites along green corridors.

Paths do not have to be of any particular width, and both vehicular-sized tracks and narrow PRoW type paths are acceptable to visitors.

The majority of visitors are female and safety is one of the primary concerns of site visitors. **Paths should be routed so that they are perceived as safe by the users**, with some routes being through relatively open (visible) terrain (with no trees or scrub, or well spaced mature trees, or wide rides with vegetation back from the path), especially those routes which are 1-3 km long.

The routing of tracks along hill tops and ridges where there are views is valued by the majority of visitors.

A substantial number of visitors like to have surfaced but not tarmac paths, particularly where these blend in well with the landscape. This is not necessary for all paths but **there should be some more visitor-friendly routes built into the structure of a SANGS, particularly those routes which are 1-3 km long.**

Artificial Infrastructure

Little or no artificial infrastructure is found within the SPA at present apart from the provision of some surfaced tracks and car parks. Generally an urban influence is not what people are looking for when they visit the SPA and some people undoubtedly visit the SPA because it has a naturalness about it that would be marred by such features.

However, **SANGS would be expected to have adequate car parking with good information about the site and the routes** available. Some subtle waymarking would also be expected for those visitors not acquainted with the layout of the site.

Other infrastructure would not be expected and should generally be restricted to the vicinity of car parking areas where good information and signs of welcome should be the norm, though discretely placed benches or information boards along some routes would be acceptable.

TBH SPA Mitigation Project – January 2021

The Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath Councils worked together with Natural England to complete a project reviewing the approach to mitigation within the Thames Basin Heaths. The work analysed eleven potential alternative options when it comes to delivering SPA mitigation. The report concluded that the role and design of SANG could be clarified further.

To be made very clear from the outset. There remains a hierarchy of SANG provision. Great weight will be given to those SANGS meeting all the existing quality criteria (shown in Appendix 1) which should be delivered in the first instance. Only if this is **not possible, for clearly established reasons**, should the delivery of the options outlined in the section below be considered. If any proposed SANGS do not meet all of the Appendix 1 quality criteria, then these SANGS will continue to be assessed on a case by case basis and should be **agreed** with both the competent authority and Natural England. The proposal will need to demonstrate equivalent effectiveness of mitigation being provided to ensure a robust, consistent approach continues. Any shortfall in SANG criteria should be offset by other complementary means, such as an elevated provision rate, size or high-quality features.

The evidence shows that the use of SANG networks, linear orientated sites and small sites of no smaller than two hectares have potential to provide effective mitigation where traditional SANG is unavailable. These SANG areas will be linked and/or in proximity to an already established SANG. If effectiveness can be demonstrated of small or linear SANGs working alone, then we will assess this on a case by case basis, taking in to account the site's context amongst the wider greenspace network.

Historically Natural England have apportioned significant weight to the requirement for a 2.3 – 2.5km circular walk, which is less likely to be achievable in a small or linear SANG. These guidelines do not remove weight from the requirement but do accept that in specific circumstances the walk doesn't have to be included within every single SANG unit. It is however desirable to provide the full Appendix 1 criteria across a local SANG network or on another SANG.

Natural England would urge all Local Planning Authorities to take note, that this approach **could** enable sites previously deemed unacceptable to Natural England, to now qualify as valid avoidance measure. Please come and speak to us if you feel that is the case.

Landscape and Vegetation

SANGS do not have to contain heathland or heathy vegetation to provide an effective alternative to the SPA.

Surveys clearly show that **woodland or a semi-wooded landscape is a key feature** that people appreciate in the sites they visit, particularly those who use the SPA. This is considered to be more attractive than open landscapes or parkland with scattered trees.

A **semi-natural looking landscape with plenty of variation** was regarded as most desirable by visitors and some paths through quite enclosed woodland scored highly. There is clearly a balance to be struck between what is regarded as an exciting landscape and a safe one and so some element of choice between the two would be highly desirable. The semi-wooded and undulating nature of most of the SPA sites gives them an air of relative wildness, even when there are significant numbers of visitors on site. SANGS should aim to reproduce this quality.

Hills do not put people off visiting a site, particularly where these are associated with good views, but steep hills are not appreciated. **An undulating landscape is preferred to a flat one.**

Water features, particularly ponds and lakes, act as a focus for visitors for their visit, but are not essential.

Restrictions on usage

The majority of the people using most of the SPA sites come to walk, with or without dogs. At two or three sites there were also a significant number of cyclists and joggers. A small amount of horse riding also occurs at some sites.

The bulk of visitors to the SPA came to exercise their dogs and so it is imperative that **SANGS allow for pet owners to let dogs run freely over a significant part of the walk. Access on SANGS should be largely unrestricted, with both people and their pets being able to freely roam along the majority of routes.** This means that sites where freely roaming dogs will cause a nuisance or where they might be in danger (from traffic or such like) should not be considered for SANGS.

It may be that in some areas where dog ownership is low or where the cultural mix includes significant numbers of people sensitive to pets, then the provision of areas where dogs are unrestricted can be reduced. It should also be possible to vary restriction over time according to the specific needs of a community, providing effective mitigation is maintained. SANGS proposals which incorporate restrictions on dogs should be in the minority of SANGS and would need to be considered on a case by case basis in relation to the need for restrictions.

Appendix 1: Site Quality Checklist – for a SANG

This guidance is designed as an Appendix to the full guidance on Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) to be used as mitigation (or avoidance) land to reduce recreational use of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Must haves

- For all sites larger than 4ha there must be adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use, i.e. within easy walking distance (400m) of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking space should be determined by the anticipated use of the site and reflect the visitor catchment of both the SANG and the SPA.
- Possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANG.
- Car parks must be easily and safely accessible by car and should be clearly sign posted.
- The accessibility of the site must include access points appropriate for the visitor use the SANG is intended to cater for.
- The SANG must have a safe route of access on foot from the nearest car park and/or footpath/s
- All SANG with car parks must have a circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.
- SANG must be designed so that they are perceived to be safe by users; they must not have tree and scrub cover along parts of the walking routes.
- Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming to urban in feel.
- SANG must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
- All SANG larger than 12 ha must aim to provide a variety of habitats for users to experience.
- Access within the SANG must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.

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Assessment of site enhancement as mitigation

SANGS may be provided by the enhancement of existing sites, including those already accessible to the public that have a low level of use and could be enhanced to attract more visitors. The extent of enhancement and the number of extra visitors to be attracted would vary from site to site. Those sites which are enhanced only slightly would be expected to provide less of a mitigation effect than those enhanced greatly, in terms of the number of people they would divert away from the SPA. In order to assess the contribution of enhancement sites in relation to the hectare standards of the Delivery Plan, it is necessary to distinguish between slight and great enhancement.

Methods of enhancement for the purposes of this guidance could include enhanced access through guaranteed long-term availability of the land, creation of a car park or a network of paths.

~~SANGS which have not previously been open to the public count in full to the standard of providing 8ha of SANGS per 1000 people in new development in zone B. SANGS which have an appreciable but clearly low level of public use and can be substantially enhanced to greatly increase the number of visitors also count in full. The identification of these sites should arise from evidence of low current use. This could be in a variety of forms, for example:~~

- Experience of managing the site, which gives a clear qualitative picture that few visitors are present
- Quantitative surveys of visitor numbers
- Identified constraints on access, such as lack of gateways at convenient points and lack of parking
- Lack of easily usable routes through the site
- Evidence that the available routes through the site are little used (paths may show little wear, be narrow and encroached on by vegetation)

- [Access by bike \(additional must have added by Woking Borough Council\)](#)

- SANG must be free from unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works smells etc).

Should have

- SANG should be clearly sign-posted or advertised in some way.
- SANG should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential users. It would be desirable for social media to be used as well, with the goal of reducing paper use. Although a leaflet for a new home is desirable. It could advertise the TBH Partnership website at <https://www.tbhpartnership.org.uk/greenspace/>

Desirable

- It would be desirable for an owner to be able to take dogs from the car park to the SANG safely off the lead.

- Where possible it is desirable to choose sites with a gently undulating topography for SANG
 - It is desirable for access points to have signage outlining the layout of the SANG and the routes available to visitors.
 - It is desirable that SANG provide a naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. The provision of open water is encouraged and desirable on sites. However large areas of open water cannot count towards capacity.
 - Where possible it is desirable to have a focal point such as a viewpoint, monument etc within the SANG.
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SANGS with no evidence of a low level of use should not count in full towards the Delivery Plan standards. Information should be collected by the local planning authority to enable assessment of the level of increased use which can be made of the SANGS. The area of the site which is counted towards the Delivery Plan standards should be proportional to the increase in use of the site. For example, a site already used to half of its expected capacity should count as half of its area towards the standards.

Staging of enhancement works

Where it is proposed to separate the enhancement works on a site into separate stages, to deliver incremental increases in visitor use, the proportion of the increase in visitor use arising from each stage should be estimated. This would enable the granting of planning permission for residential development to be staged in parallel to ensure that the amount of housing permitted does not exceed the capacity of SANGS to mitigate its effects on the SPA.

Practicality of enhancement works

The selection of sites for enhancement to be SANGS should take into account the variety of stakeholder interests in each site. Consideration should be given to whether any existing use of the site which may continue is compatible with the function of SANGS in attracting recreational use that would otherwise take place on the SPA. The enhancement should not result in moving current users off the SANGS and onto the SPA. The specific enhancement works proposed should also be considered in relation not only to their effects on the SANGS mitigation function but also in relation to their effects on other user groups.

References

CLARKE, R.T., LILEY, D., UNDERHILL-DAY, J.C., & ROSE, R.J. (2005). Visitor access patterns on the Dorset Heaths. *English Nature Research Report*.

LILEY, D., JACKSON, D., & UNDERHILL-DAY, J. C. (2006) Visitor access patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths. *English Nature Research Report*.

LILEY, D., MALLORD, J., & LOBLEY, M. (2006) The "Quality" of Green Space: features that attract people to open spaces in the Thames Basin Heaths area. *English Nature Research Report*.

Appendix 2: Further clarification on the TBH Project 2021

Reliance on the length of circular walk could be given less weight in specific circumstances on individual SANG sites. A circular route is still required. This will be agreed on a case by case basis by Natural England and the relevant Local Planning (Competent) Authority and only where equivalence can be effectively demonstrated. Sites will also only be accepted where most of the other criteria from Appendix 1 are met, either individually or as part of a group of sites.

Small SANG – This will be no smaller than 2 hectares in size. Where possible all other Appendix 1 criteria should be met, and the site will be adjacent to, linked in an accessible manner to, or close to a SANG or network which can deliver the required circular walk. Small SANG should be available to residents on their doorsteps.

Linear SANG – This approach allows for the width of a SANG to be reduced, where the walk incorporates an attractive linear feature or links to other open sites. For example, alongside waterways or disused railway lines. Linear SANG should include sites with wider areas, creating irregular shapes and opportunities for dogs to exercise freely off lead. In exceptional cases a there and back walk could qualify. It would require strong evidence and visitor surveys to show that it will provide an avoidance experience like that of a traditional SANG. It would also be preferable for linear SANG to link with wider routes and/or other SANGs to provide opportunities for a variety of walks.

SANG Network – Where several SANGs are in proximity or adjacent, they can be used and visited as one single entity. This approach allows for the use of links between SANG units to deliver a circular walk and meet all the Guidelines in combination. The default position is that the SANG links would not count as having capacity or catchments but would need to be secured in perpetuity. If they happen to be a substantial unit of green space themselves then they could be included within the SANG calculation. The size of an individual SANG catchment can be increased depending on the area afforded by an overall SANG network (excluding links), in line with the quanta figures in the TBH Delivery Framework.

Equivalence – This will be required on all SANG sites not meeting the guidelines in Appendix 1. There will have to be an over provision of something else to offset the lack of the full circular walk. This would be likely to incorporate an increased provision rate, for example providing 12 hectares of SANG per thousand head of population. A significant high quality SANG in terms of amenities and habitats could also demonstrate this requirement. We are happy to discuss this matter further on a case by case basis, either through our DAS Service for developers or our Local Plan Service for Local Planning Authorities.

Appendix 1: Site Quality Checklist – for a suite of SANGS

This guidance is designed as an Appendix to the full guidance on Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspaces (SANGS) to be used as mitigation (or avoidance) land to reduce recreational use of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

The wording in the list below is precise and has the following meaning:

- Requirements referred to as “must” are essential in **all** SANGS
- Those requirements referred to as “should have” should all be represented **within the suite** of SANGS, but do not all have to be represented in every site.
- All SANGS should have at least one of the “desirable” features.

Must have

- For all sites larger than 4ha there must be adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use, i.e. within easy walking distance (400m) of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking space should be determined by the anticipated use of the site and reflect the visitor catchment of both the SANGS and the SPA.
 - It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANGS.
 - Car parks must be easily and safely accessible by car and should be clearly sign posted.
 - The accessibility of the site must include access points appropriate for the particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for.
 - The SANGS must have a safe route of access on foot from the nearest car park and/or footpath/s
 - All SANGS with car parks must have a circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.
 - SANGS must be designed so that they are perceived to be safe by users; they must not have tree and scrub cover along parts of the walking routes
 - Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming to urban in feel.
 - SANGS must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually-sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
 - All SANGS larger than 12 ha must aim to provide a variety of habitats for users to experience.
 - Access within the SANGS must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.
 - SANGS must be free from unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works smells etc).
-
- ~~Access by bike (additional must have added by Woking Borough Council)~~

Should haves

- SANGS should be clearly sign-posted or advertised in some way.
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- SANGS should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential users. It would be desirable for leaflets to be distributed to new homes in the area and be made available at entrance points and car parks.

Appendix 3: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace: A best practice guide

Natural England would urge that these recommendations are followed unless there is valid justification for a deviation.

A SANG can be greatly improved for visitors and wildlife by implementing some of the suggestions in this guide. They are based on Natural England's Strategic Access Management and Monitoring teams' findings from visiting SANG and undertaking visitor number and questionnaire surveys.

This guide has been produced to provide more advice to Local Planning Authorities and developers up front. These are features found throughout the current SANG suite that we feel have tangible positive impacts on the draw to a SANG. We understand that it may not be possible to adopt them all, especially in a smaller SANG. There are a lot of quick fixes in this list which will generate a substantial uplift in SANG attractiveness. Natural England are likely to raise fewer concerns through the formal planning process on a SANG which provides the majority of the following.

It is essential that Natural England visits and agrees a SANG, before any housing development can be attributed towards it. This is in line with Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan. For SANG development advice please contact Natural England's Discretionary Advice Service:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/developers-get-environmental-advice-on-your-planning-proposals>

It is advisable to contact your local planning authority at the first instance of SANG development.

Naming of SANG:

1. Use a name which highlights any attractive features within the site. E.g. meadow, copse, lake etc.
2. Avoid the use of the word 'SANG' in the name of the site.
3. Keep the name relevant to the location but dissimilar to nearby SANG's.
4. The name is different to any associated development.

Location of SANG:

1. Where possible, provision of connectivity to wider greenspace/other SANG is recommended but should ensure a SANG does not result in new and additional access and visits to sensitive sites.
 2. Seek to protect and enhance any existing local wildlife site designations (e.g. SSSI/SINC/SNCI) within or adjacent to the SANG boundary.
-

Desirable

- It would be desirable for an owner to be able to take dogs from the car park to the SANGS safely off the lead.
- Where possible it is desirable to choose sites with a gently undulating topography for SANGS
- It is desirable for access points to have signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and the routes available to visitors.
- It is desirable that SANGS provide a naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. The provision of open water on part, but not the majority of sites is desirable.
- Where possible it is desirable to have a focal point such as a view point, monument etc within the SANGS.

Biodiversity:

1. Ensure habitat of SANG complements adjacent habitats. e.g by extending similar landscape or something complementary such as grassland for foraging woodland birds.
2. Ensure appropriate connectivity of landscape scale habitat features. e.g. hedgerows, tree belts etc.
3. Include features such as; dead wood, sand banks, wildflower meadows etc.
4. Where open water is included, separate dog ponds and wildlife ponds. (Case study 4)
5. Avoid frequent mowing as a tool to manage grasslands, it is an expensive technique which produces little biodiversity benefit.
6. Grazing is a good management tool. It is not suitable for all SANG, but if it possible on your SANG, a route must be provided which avoids the grazing area for the benefit of those nervous of cattle.
7. Good practice monitoring of SANG use should be built into in perpetuity management of the site, and work consistently with the SAMM Project.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to land management and/or development that aims to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before. BNG does not change existing protections to protected sites, irreplaceable habitats or protected species.

Through appropriate design and implementation BNG can complement the purpose of SANGS. These are designed to provide more natural and diverse green space for communities to benefit from and, consequently, delivering more effective mitigation to alleviate pressure on SPAs. [SANG is not an automatic delivery mechanism for BNG but the two can exist on the same site.](#) [BNG on SANG is only attributable](#) to such habitat creation or enhancement that proves measurable additionality over and above the minimum requirements of the SANG, demonstrated through use of the Biodiversity Metric stipulated by the consenting body.

For BNG to be delivered on SANG, the SANG should achieve nature conservation outcomes that demonstrably exceed existing obligations under the SANG guidance, as quantified through the metric. It is encouraged that, where applicable, additional or enhanced features at SANGs are informed by local nature or wildlife strategies and priorities, such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). It is recommended that the BNG calculations for the SANG are done separately from the rest of the project calculations, in order to ensure a clear audit trail and allow for simple demonstration of the additional biodiversity unit uplift beyond the minimum SANG requirements. Any additional features provided for BNG purposes should not conflict with the principle purpose of the SANG. Consideration should be given for other ecosystem services provided by the SANG and design should ensure BNG does not compete with these but delivers alongside them. For example, a wildflower rich grassland area created for biodiversity benefits would provide additional ecosystem services but could potentially also conflict with recreational services provided by the SANG. Careful consideration should be given to the design of any additional biodiversity features introduced into the SANG to ensure they did not conflict with the SANGs principle purpose.

For the purposes of the BNG calculation, the baseline value of the SANG is the site with the Habitat Regulation key required habitat features incorporated. Enhancements should be additional to count towards BNG, in that the enhancements would not have taken place in the absence of the BNG funding (or commitment of funding) and the biodiversity benefit (as measured through the metric) should not also be claimed to compensate for another project's biodiversity impact. Further information on BNG is set out in the following guidance and standards

1. The CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA Good practice principles for development should be followed: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/C776a-Biodiversity-net-gain.-Good-practice-principles-for-development.-A-practical-guide-web.pdf>
2. [The British Standard for Biodiversity Net Gain \(BS 8683\) is a process standard that describes the implementation of BNG by a project \(to be released in 2021\).](#)

Equality Act 2010 Compliance:

1. This does not fall under the remit of Natural England and we will not be giving bespoke advice about it during our pre application discussions. However, we urge developers and Local Planning Authorities alike to consider the requirements of it, when designing their SANG solutions.

Paths:

1. We are concerned about sections of the circular route that seasonally are wet, muddy or flooded, and could put visitors off from visiting. In these cases, we recommend boardwalk or paths are built up, for them to remain as compliant SANG. Relating to this, if applying grip to surfaces, avoid wire netting as it can trap dog claws.
 2. Path surfacing needs to remain semi natural. The highest specification surface we would accept is resin bound hoggin.
-

Appendix 2: Site Quality Checklist – for an individual SANGS

The wording in the list below is precise and has the following meaning:

- Requirements referred to as “must” or “should have” are essential
- The SANGS should have at least one of the “desirable” features.

Must/ Should have

- For all sites larger than 4ha there must be adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use, i.e. within easy walking distance (400m) of the developments linked to it. The amount of car parking space should be determined by the anticipated use of the site and reflect the visitor catchment of both the SANGS and the SPA.
- It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANGS.
- Car parks must be easily and safely accessible by car and should be clearly sign posted.
- The accessibility of the site must include access points appropriate for the particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for.
- The SANGS must have a safe route of access on foot from the nearest car park and/or footpath/s.
- All SANGS with car parks must have a circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.
- SANGS must be designed so that they are perceived to be safe by users; they must not have tree and scrub covering parts of the walking routes.
- Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming too urban in feel.
- SANGS must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures, except in the immediate vicinity of car parks. Visually-sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
- All SANGS larger than 12 ha must aim to provide a variety of habitats for users to experience.
- Access within the SANGS must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.
- SANGS must be free from unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works smells etc).
- SANGS should be clearly sign-posted or advertised in some way.
- SANGS should have leaflets and/or websites advertising their location to potential users. It would be desirable for leaflets to be distributed to new homes in the area and be made available at entrance points and car parks.

3. Avoid convoluted paths and pinch points in SANG design. By maintaining a minimum width between paths of 100 m in open ground and 50 m in dense woodland. If necessary, look to extend the area of the SANG, or look at a local SANG Network.
4. Avoid paths running through areas adjacent to major infrastructure with prolonged loud noise. For example, adjacent dual carriageways or motorways. Natural England look at a maximum decibel limit of 60, before requiring discounting of SANG area.

Way-marking and signage:

1. Provide a map at the entrances with an easy to follow circular walk.
2. Gates, fencing and planting following natural land features can help distinguish routes.
3. Highlight points of interest and site history.
4. Car parks well sign posted using highways specification. Where possible through use of the brown sign initiative.
5. Provide contact details for site manager at main entrance.

Bins and dog fouling:

1. Dog bins should be in convenient sections of site and near the entrances.

Car park standard:

1. Provide a minimum of 1 parking space per ha.

Safety and security:

1. Where required for health and safety purposes, the SANG should have suitable access for emergency vehicles.
2. Car parks should be designed to reduce risk of anti-social behaviour, break in or feelings of vulnerability for site users.
3. Perimeter fencing secure to prevent dogs getting out.

Amenities:

These are **not a requirement** but have proved an attractive feature in those SANG with the space available.

1. A play area is a feature that attracts those with children to visit the site, as these are not present on the SPA. If a play area is included, it should be made from sustainable natural sources and not be full of bright plastics.
2. A café or food/drink provisions often attracts more visitors to the site. (Case study 4)

~~Access by bike (additional must have added by Woking Borough Council)~~

Desirable

- It would be desirable for an owner to be able to take dogs from the car park to the SANGS safely off the lead.
- Where possible it is desirable to choose sites with a gently undulating topography for SANGS

To conclude

We sometimes lose track of the basic requirement for a SANG, which is to attract people away from the SPA. When designing all SANG, the visitor experience needs to be put first. Costings and even habitat creation should all fall from a strong Visitor Strategy, which should form part of the SANG Management Strategy. Sites and their information should be created in a positive manner to interest visitors and have them coming back time and time again. Though biodiversity and landscape planning are obviously important, we urge you to start by considering the local populous and what they want and how they want to interact with your site, when creating a new SANG.

-
- It is desirable for access points to have signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and the routes available to visitors.
 - It is desirable that SANGS provide a naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. The provision of open water on part, but not the majority of sites is desirable.
 - Where possible it is desirable to have a focal point such as a view point, monument etc within the SANGS.

Case Studies

1. Edenbrook Country Park – Hart District Council - Well surfaced paths, and provisions for wildlife.

Edenbrook is a 24-hectare country park, delivered by Berkeley in partnership with Natural England and Hart District Council.

The paths are sufficiently wide for a combination of site users (Figure 1). There is also a good network of surfaced paths which are not convoluted and avoids pinch points. This was historically agricultural fields, but through innovative design, they have delivered a site that delivers both for visitors but also for biodiversity. Hart District Council have recognised the SANG network approach here and are bolting on extra area to the SANG and linking to other SANG in the vicinity.



Figure 1: The surfaced paths at Edenbrook are located sufficiently far from one another, and from wildlife rich-areas. They are wide enough for the whole combination of site visitors to use.

2. Farnham Park – Waverley Borough Council - Provisions for dogs and wildlife.

Several of the ponds in Farnham Park are designated as wildlife ponds. These are rich in wildlife, hosting many amphibian and invertebrate species. Dead hedges were built around three of the ponds, using materials cut from Farnham Park. To provide water and an opportunity to swim, 'Friends Pond' has been kept fully accessible to dogs. It is located nearest the main entrance and is easily accessible to all visitors. The wildlife ponds are further away from the main entrance, where visitor density is expected to be lower.



Figure 2: 'Friends Pond' a dog pond on Farnham Park which allows dogs to swim and drink from, whilst other ponds are fenced to protect wildlife.

Appendix 3: Background

The Thames Basin Heaths SPA was designated in 2005 under the Habitats Regulations 1994 to protect the populations of three internationally-threatened bird species that use the heathlands: woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. One of the principle threats to these species is disturbance during their breeding period which collectively extends from February to August. Freely roaming dogs hugely exacerbate the disturbance caused by people visiting the sites.

The Thames Basin Heaths area is much urbanised with little green space available to people apart from the designated areas of heathland. The whole area is also under pressure for more housing.

The Habitats Regulations require an 'appropriate assessment' to be carried out for any plan or project (including housing developments) which may affect the designated interest, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The result is that each new planning application within the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone would have to be assessed in combination with all the other extant applications. A solution to this situation (which would cause a log jam in the planning system) is the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan.

The Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Framework, which is monitored by the TBH Joint Strategic Partnership Board, provides the framework for addressing new residential development in the Thames Basin Heaths Planning Zone.

The need to provide green space for the community was incorporated into planning policy through PPG 17, originally published in 1991 and revised in 2003. It requires local authorities to set green space standards locally but that these should include aspects of quantity, quality and accessibility. PPG17 illustrates the breadth of type and use of public open spaces that are encompassed by the guidelines. SANGS fit into a small proportion of these. Local authorities may look at provision of SANGS in relation to other public open space provision within their area and identify potential SANGS as part of their audit of green space.

3. Bucklers Forest – Bracknell Forest Council Comprehensive and engaging interpretation.

At the entrance to the site, Buckler's Forest includes a map that shows 3 options for circular routes (measuring 3.6 km, 2.4 km and 1.3 km). It also includes information on the wildlife that visitors can expect to see on site. As well as this, it highlights the site history. The inclusion of such comprehensive signage encourages users to care more about the site.

Buckler's Forest has showcased its site history by incorporating green electrical boxes, retained from the transport laboratory, into the site design. These have been transformed into benches, bug hotels, and even mini 'museum' exhibitions. The integration of the site's history is beloved by many site visitors and it creates a distinctly 'country park' feel.



Figure 3: A mini 'museum' exhibition including some archaeological samples found on site. Located within a green electrical box present when the site was a transport laboratory.



Figure 4: A bug hotel also within a repurposed green electrical box.

4. Heather Farm – Delivered by Horsell Common Preservation Society in partnership with Woking Borough Council - Provision of amenities.

Heather Farm has proved to be a very popular SANG, particularly for of its amenities, including a café and a large car park. Whilst it is not possible, or advisable, to include a café on every SANG, at Heather Farm, it has attracted a lot of visitors, many of whom would otherwise visit the SPA. After identifying a need for additional parking provisions, Horsell Common Preservation Society added 57 new spaces to the car park. There are currently 109 car parking spaces for visitors. Heather Farm provides 4 spaces per hectare, significantly more than the suggested minimum of 1 space per hectare.



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Appendix 4: SANGS Information Form

This form is designed to help you gather information about any potential SANGS. For more guidance on the creation of SANGS, please also refer to the relevant Borough Council's Thames Basin Heaths SPA Interim Avoidance Plan.

Natural England, Local Planning Authorities, and other organisations will then be able to consider the potential suitability of the proposed SANGS based on this initial information.

Background information

<p>Name and location of proposed SANGS</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Grid reference:</p> <p>(Please attach a map of the site with the boundaries clearly marked)</p>
<p>Size of the proposed SANGS (hectares), excluding water features</p>	
<p>Any current designations on land - e.g. LNR / SNCI</p>	
<p>Current owners name and address. (If there is more than one owner then please attach a map)</p>	
<p>Who manages the land?</p>	
<p>Legal arrangements for the land – e.g. how long is the lease?</p>	
<p>Is there a management plan for the site? (if so, please attach)</p>	

Figure 5: A view of some of the habitat creation at Heather Farm

Current visitor arrangements

Is the site currently accessible to the public?	
Does the site have open access?	
Has there been a visitor survey of the site? (If so, please attach)	
If there has been no visitor survey, please give an indication of the current visitor levels on site	High / Medium / Low
Does the site have existing car parking?	Yes / No How many car parks? How many car parking spaces? (Please mark car parks and numbers of car parking spaces on the site map)
Are there any existing routes or paths on the site?	Yes / No (Please mark these on the map)
Are there signs to direct people to the site? (Please indicate where and what type of sign)	

5. Wellesley Woodlands – Rushmoor Borough Council - Waymarking and signposting.

Wellesley Woodlands has incorporated non-intrusive way-markers to clearly signpost users around the 8 trails included in the SANG. These are easy to follow for site users whilst remaining unobtrusive. Where multiple trails intersect, signposting is clear to ensure that trails can be followed with ease. Both the map and associated markers clearly identify those trails that are suitable ground for wheelchairs and those with restricted mobility.



Figure 6: A signpost clearly defining two all-ability trails, the Birch Trail and the Holly Trail.



Figure 7: A way-marker to signpost users along the Wellesley Willow Trail.

Site quality checklist

This checklist is intended to help identify what is already present on the site and what needs to be developed for the SANGS to be suitable. This information is taken from Appendix 2 – please refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

Must/should have – these criteria are essential for all SANGS			
	Criteria	Current	Future
1	Parking on all sites larger than 4ha (unless the site is intended for use within 400m only)		
2	Circular walk of 2.3-2.5km		
3	Car parks easily and safely accessible by car and clearly sign posted		
4	Access points appropriate for particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for		
5	Safe access route on foot from nearest car park and/or footpath		
6	Circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park		
7	Perceived as safe – no tree and scrub cover along part of walking routes		
8	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced		
9	Perceived as semi-natural with little intrusion of artificial structures		
10	If larger than 12 ha then a range of habitats should be present		
11	Access unrestricted – plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely off the lead		
12	No unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment smells etc)		
13	Clearly sign posted or advertised in some way		

14	Leaflets or website advertising their location to potential users (distributed to homes and made available at entrance points and car parks)		
Desirable features			
	Criteria	Current	Future
15	Can dog owners take dogs from the car park to the SANGS safely off the lead		
16	Gently undulating topography		
17	Access points with signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and routes available to visitors		
18	Naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. Provision of open water is desirable		
19	Focal point such as a view point or monument within the SANGS		

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6. Biodiversity Net Gain

Examples of Biodiversity Net Gain delivered within a SANG:

- A. If an extra hedgerow was put into a SANG, not for screening purposes, this could count. If it is put in for screening reasons, this is a key SANG feature and therefore cannot count towards BNG unless the hedgerow was of higher distinctives than that needed for screening purposes or maintained in better ecological condition, in which case it could count.
- B. Planting wildflower bulbs on appropriately sited amenity grassland within a SANG and in turn converting it to species rich meadow could be counted towards BNG.
- C. If the SANG has structures such as a toilet block or café, then BNG could be delivered through the introduction of green/vegetated roofs and/or walls on such structures.

Potential Opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain



By vegetating the roof of this structure at Famham Park SANG, measurable additionality over and above the minimum requirements of the SANG has been demonstrated and it can therefore count towards the delivery of biodiversity net gain.

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Appendix 4: SANG Information Form

This form is designed to help you gather information about any potential SANG. For more guidance on the creation of SANG, please also refer to the relevant Borough Council's Thames Basin Heaths SPA Interim Avoidance Plan.

Natural England, Local Planning Authorities, and other organisations will then be able to consider the potential suitability of the proposed SANG based on this initial information.

Background information

Name and location of proposed SANG	Name: Address: Grid reference: (Please attach a map of the site with the boundaries clearly marked)
Size of the proposed SANG (hectares), excluding water features	hectares
Any current designations on land - e.g. LNR / SSSI	
Current owners name and address. (If there is more than one owner then please attach a map)	
Who manages the land?	
Legal arrangements for the land – e.g. how long is the lease?	
Is there a management plan for the site? (if so, please attach)	

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Current visitor arrangements

<p>Is the site currently accessible to the public?</p>	
<p>Does the site have open access?</p>	
<p>Has there been a visitor survey of the site? (If so, please attach)</p>	
<p>If there has been no visitor survey, please give an indication of the current visitor levels on site</p>	
<p>Does the site have existing car parking?</p>	<p>How many car parks?</p> <p>How many car parking spaces?</p> <p>(Please mark car parks and numbers of car parking spaces on the site map)</p>
<p>Are there any existing routes or paths on the site?</p>	<p>(Please mark these on the map)</p>
<p>Are there signs to direct people to the site? (Please indicate where and what type of sign)</p>	

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Site quality checklist

Must/should have – these criteria are essential for all SANG			
	Criteria	Current	Future
1	Parking on all sites larger than 4ha (unless the site is intended for use within 400m only)		
2	Circular walk of 2.3-2.5km		
3	Car parks easily and safely accessible by car and clearly sign posted		
4	Access points appropriate for particular visitor use the SANG is intended to cater for		
5	Safe access route on foot from nearest car park and/or footpath		
6	Circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park		
7	Perceived as safe – no tree and scrub cover along part of walking routes		
8	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced		

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9	Perceived as semi-natural with little intrusion of artificial structures		
10	If larger than 12 ha then a range of habitats should be present		
11	Access unrestricted – plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely off the lead		
12	No unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment smells etc)		
13	Clearly sign posted or advertised in some way		
14	Leaflets or website advertising their location to potential users		
15	Can dog owners take dogs from the car park to the SANG safely off the lead		
16	Gently undulating topography		
17	Access points with signage outlining the layout of the SANG and routes available to visitors		
18	Naturalistic space with areas of open countryside and dense and scattered trees and shrubs. Provision of open water is desirable		
19	Focal point such as a viewpoint or monument within the SANG		

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**Statement of
Community Involvement**

September 2021-January 2022

This and other Local Development Documents can be made available, on request, in large copy print, as an audio file, Braille or languages other than English. If you require the document in one of these formats, please contact Planning Policy on 01483 743871 or email planning.policy@woking.gov.uk

A transcript of this document can be provided for visually impaired people, either in large print, braille or on tape. Please contact the number below if you require further information.

01483 755855

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Introduction - What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has produced this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to set out how we can involve our community effectively in Planning decisions. There are two main strands to planning in the Borough, the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and the processing of planning applications.
- 1.2 The Council is required by Government to produce a Statement of Community Involvement setting out how it will involve the community when it prepares or changes LDDs and also how the community will be involved in the decision-making process for planning applications.
- 1.3 When producing LDDs the Council will meet a certain level of public involvement, as set out in the Regulations, and this document will provide guidance to enable that to be achieved.

How was the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) developed?

- 1.4 This is the fourth SCI produced by the Council. Public consultation ~~will be~~ was conducted from 27 September 2021 and 8 November 2021, and the comments received will inform the have informed this final version. It is necessary to update the SCI for it to be in line with new government guidance and regulations, but also to ensure it is up-to-date and remains a useful and effective tool for residents and the development industry.
- 1.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the main legislation from Central Government which provides the policy and legal basis to the planning system in England and Wales. The Council's original Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was prepared in the context of the 2004 Act and was adopted in February 2007. The second SCI (published in 2011) was updated following further changes to the planning process through legislation in the Planning Act 2008. The third SCI, published in 2015, was a further update to reflect recent changes to the planning system introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and associated revised Regulations: The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012. This fourth iteration of the SCI has been prepared to ensure it complies with updated guidance and regulations. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets the Government's planning policies for England, with planning practice guidance providing guidance on how the Government expects policies to be applied.
- 1.6 The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Act was brought in by the coalition government, with the main aim of devolving greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and giving local communities control over housing and planning decisions.
- 1.7 The Act gave power to the Secretary of State to revoke whole or part of regional strategies. On 28 February 2013, the Secretary of State gave orders to partially revoke The South East Plan. This came into effect on 25 March 2013. This means that the Council is no longer required to comply with the regional policies set out in the South East Plan, with the exception of policy NRM6: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which was saved and still applies to our borough.
- 1.8 The Localism Act also introduced a new right for communities to prepare a neighbourhood development plan if they choose to do so. Since then significant progress has been made across the Borough, with three Neighbourhood Plans adopted (Hook Heath in 2015, and Pyrford and West Byfleet both in 2017) and three other Neighbourhood Areas designated, with neighbourhood planning activity progressing within them. These are Byfleet village, Hoe Valley, and Brookwood and Bridley.

SECTION 1

- 1.9 Further information on Neighbourhood Plans can be found in Section 4 and on our website: <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/neighplg>

Planning affects all of us

- 1.10 The planning system in England is plan-led. This means that plans are prepared to guide future development and give firm guidance on what can be built where.
- 1.11 Planning shapes the environment around us, where we live, work, shop and play. Planning decisions determine where new homes, offices, shops and leisure facilities will be located and what happens to our countryside, open spaces and historic environment. That is why the Council is keen to ensure that the community is involved in key decisions on planning matters.

Our Community

- 1.12 Our community includes all of the individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate businesses within the Borough. We recognise that the different groups that make up our community have different needs and expectations. They also have different desires, capabilities and capacities to get involved.
- 1.13 The Council has looked at the different types of community groups in the Borough who should be included in planning processes and the possible techniques for engaging them. Based on the Council's principles of consulting the community, the Council will:
- actively seek informed views from appropriate groups using a range of techniques
 - involve people as far as possible and appropriate in Council decision making, through inviting them to participate in identifying issues, consulting to address the issues and publishing decisions
 - seek to join up consultation with other processes, focussing on peoples' experiences and concerns, and balance that with any particular governmental processes.
- 1.14 The SCI explains how and when public participation will occur. It is therefore the Council's service agreement with the community and stakeholders in relation to planning matters.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that:

- Plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees (paragraph 16.c);
- In decision making, early engagement with the local community is encouraged (paragraph 40).

- 1.15 The 2020-21 Covid19 pandemic led to periods of change to legislation and guidance on social contact, which limited people's movement and access to public buildings. Therefore, some forms of consultation needed to adapt to be more flexible. This SCI is amended to enable plan-making to continue, to reflect the Written Ministerial Statement published by the Government on 13 May 2020 and updated Planning Practice Guidance on Statements of Community Involvement. Amendments have been made to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations). This meant that for the period between the Ministerial Statement's publication and the end of 2020, Councils were not required to make planning documents available at their principal offices. The amendments to the Regulations also removed the requirement for the Council to provide hard copies of documents, but it still had to make documents available on its website.
- 1.16 The Council will endeavour to exceed the minimum requirements set in the Regulations, and will seek to ensure that engagement and consultation is as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible, as detailed in paragraph 2.14. The updates made to this SCI ensure that it could be used during the 2020/21 pandemic, and also make it fit for purpose should there be pandemic or similar restrictions in future. The Council will continue to promote effective community engagement in ways that are practicable and responsive to change beyond our control.

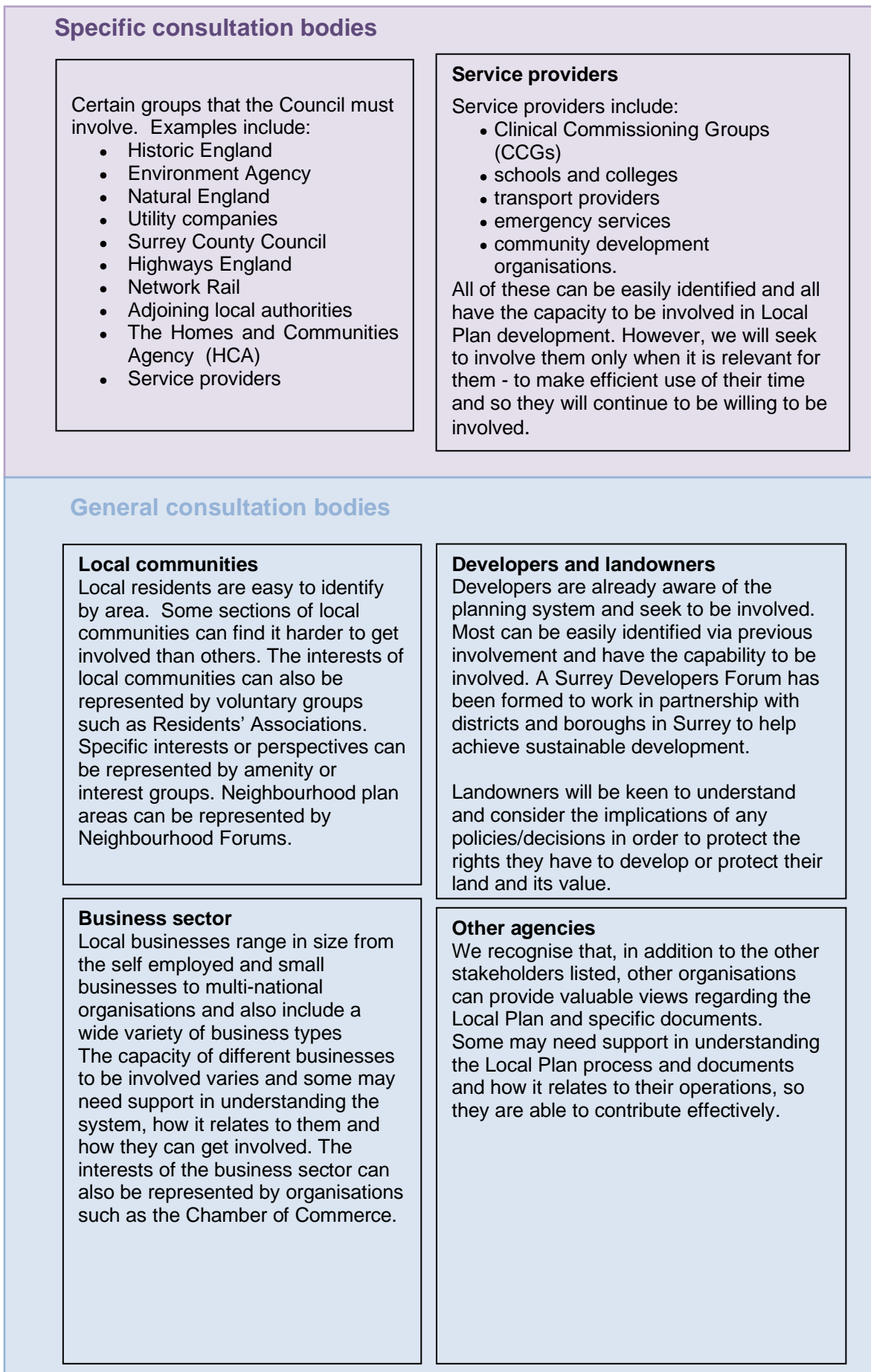
Who will be consulted on Planning issues?

- 1.17 Stakeholders and community groups who should be involved in planning processes include statutory organisations that the Council must involve, local interest groups, service providers and operators, local businesses and residents.
- 1.18 The Regulations¹ provide some guidance on the types of groups that need to be included in consultation processes on Local Plans (Development Plan Documents, or DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). They set out specific and general consultation bodies.
- Specific bodies are statutory consultation groups who are often knowledgeable in certain subjects (for example the Environment Agency on flooding matters).
 - General bodies include voluntary groups, interest groups, those with business interests and hard-to-reach groups.
- 1.19 Figure 1 on page 8 summaries the specific and general consultation bodies. Appendix 1 contains full details of these bodies but lists the types of groups to be involved, rather than names of people or organisations, which may change over time.
- 1.20 Stakeholders and the community are encouraged to access information online, however the Council accepts that not everyone has access to the necessary technology or the internet. Also, different types of engagement will require different means and methods to be used. Therefore, a range of options are set out in this SCI to enable engagement and participation that is as wide-reaching as possible, noting the considerations set out at paragraph 1.15.
- 1.21 The Council holds an electronic database of over 6,000 organisations and individuals who would like to be kept informed about Local Plan progress. The database is continually updated. Any resident, business or interested party can add their details by contacting the Planning Policy team via email (planning.policy@woking.gov.uk) or telephone **01483 743871**. There are also statutory organisations who the Council must consult on planning applications. These can be found in Appendix 1.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012

SECTION 1

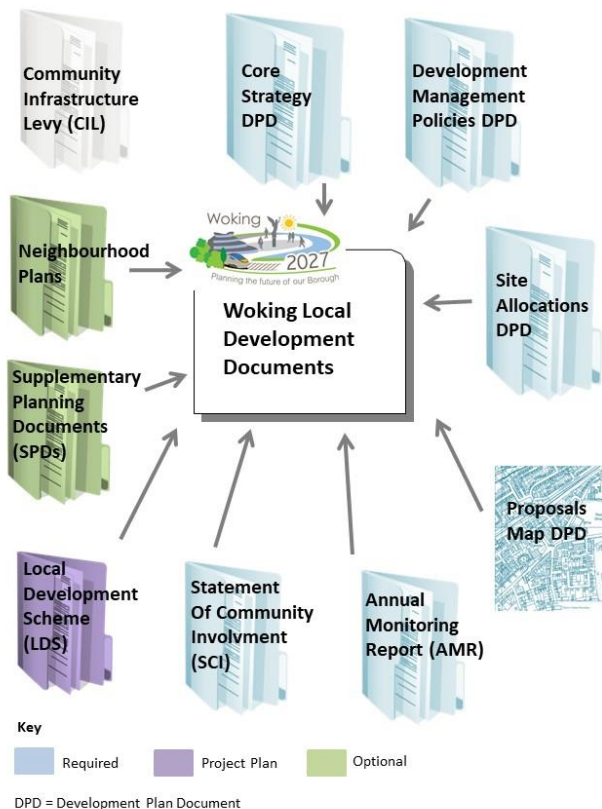
- 1.22 It is important to include those that are seldom heard in the planning process. Hard to reach groups in Woking Borough will be encouraged to participate in Local Development Document production to ensure a full representation of opinions is received. The techniques that will be used to try to engage with various groups are detailed in Appendix 2.
- 1.23 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduces a Duty to Cooperate, which requires specific bodies to cooperate with the Council in preparing its Local Development Documents. The Council has a legal duty to work with these bodies to address strategic issues of cross boundary importance.

Figure 1: Who are the Specific and General consultation bodies?

What are Local Development Documents?

- 2.1 Local Development Documents (LDDs) are Planning Policy documents that comprise Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). They provide the necessary framework for determining how the Borough will grow and develop. Development Plan Documents (DPDs) include policies that set the strategy for development, identify suitable sites for development and policies which will be used to determine planning applications. The Council has adopted its main strategic policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) in October 2012. In accordance with the NPPF, the Core Strategy was reviewed in October 2018. The document sets out a vision for local development and set out how that vision can be achieved by 2027. It includes primary policies for dealing with different issues such as housing and environmental protection.
- 2.2 The Council has two DPDs that enable the delivery of the Core Strategy. The first is the Development Management Policies DPD, adopted in October 2016, which contains detailed development management policies to help determine day to day planning applications. The Site Allocations DPD identifies various sites for development for a number of uses to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy. A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have also been or are in the process of being prepared. Figure 2 shows Woking's various LDDs which have been adopted or are being prepared.
- 2.3 More information on the progress of the Local Plan can be found at <http://www.woking2027.info/>

Figure 2 Woking's Local Development Documents



- **Core Strategy DPD**– this sets out the broad quantity and distribution of development for the Borough, supported by strategic policies and designations ([Adopted October 2012](#) and reviewed in October 2018)
- **Development Management Policies DPD** - this sets out detailed policies for the management of development in the Borough to help determine planning applications (adopted October 2016).
- **Site Allocations DPD** – this allocates specific sites for various types of development and infrastructure, to deliver the requirements of the Core Strategy.
- **Proposals Map** – this illustrates the geographical extent of policies and proposals. ([Adopted Oct 2012](#) and reviewed in 2016 and 2018, and updates will be ongoing).
- Monitoring Reports are [annual reports](#) that assess the progress on the delivery of the various Local Development Documents LDDs
- Statement of Community Involvement

- Parking Standards SPD (Adopted 2018)
- Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight SPD ([Adopted 2008](#), updated version 2019 and consultation draft 2021).
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area Avoidance SPD (2010-2015 and updated consultation draft 2021)
- Climate Change SPD ([Adopted 2013](#))
- Affordable Housing Delivery SPD (Adopted 2014)
- Design SPD (Adopted 2015)
- Hot Food Takeaway SPD (Adopted 2014)

- The Local Development Scheme ([LDS](#)) is a project plan for preparing Development Plan Documents. It sets out a timetable for when documents will be produced and when consultation on them will take place

- Community Infrastructure Levy ([CIL](#), adopted by the Council October 2014 to take effect from April 2015)
This is a standardised charge that applies to new developments in order to raise funds to deliver infrastructure to support sustainable growth in the Borough. For more info see: <http://www.woking2027.info/infrastructure>.

Community involvement in the preparation of Local Development Documents LDDs

2.5 This section looks at how Woking's community can become involved in the production of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Policy requirements

2.6 In creating these documents, the Council must take into account the requirements set out in legislation and in national policy. The community will be involved throughout the different stages of production for each document. At an early stage of preparation of a LDD, the Council will engage with individuals, community groups and stakeholders on the issues that they would like to see addressed. The Council will then develop ideas for addressing issues and concerns raised through the preparation of DPDs and SPDs. Where it is necessary to do so, the Council will involve the community when drafts of LDDs have been prepared.

2.7 Minimum levels of consultation on DPDs and SPDs are determined by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. Key references in the Regulations are:

- Regulation 2– defines the 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies.
- Regulation 12 and 13– public participation in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Regulation 18– public participation in the preparation of a Local Plan or Development Plan Document.
- Regulation 19– publication of a Local Plan or Development Plan Document.
- Regulation 20– representations relating to a Development Plan Document.

2.8 The Council will always endeavour to exceed the minimum requirements of these regulations and ensure that 'hard to reach' groups are adequately involved.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 2.9 There are different requirements for DPD and SPD production. DPDs contain core policies so require additional consultation. Figure 3 sets out the key stages of DPD preparation and outlines the process the Council will follow to involve the community.
- 2.10 The extent of consultation undertaken for DPDs should be proportionate to the scale of issues involved in the plan.
- 2.11 Councillors are involved at every stage in producing a DPD to ensure that the documents are addressing the needs of the local community without ignoring its statutory duties. There is an LDF Working Group (LDF WG)², this group comprises of councillors representing the political make-up of the Council, with a special interest in Local Development Documents. A document will first go to the group, where they will scrutinise it and make recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee, who in turn make a recommendation to Full Council. Documents are agreed by LDF WG and then approved by either the Executive Committee or full Council, before formal consultation on them begins.

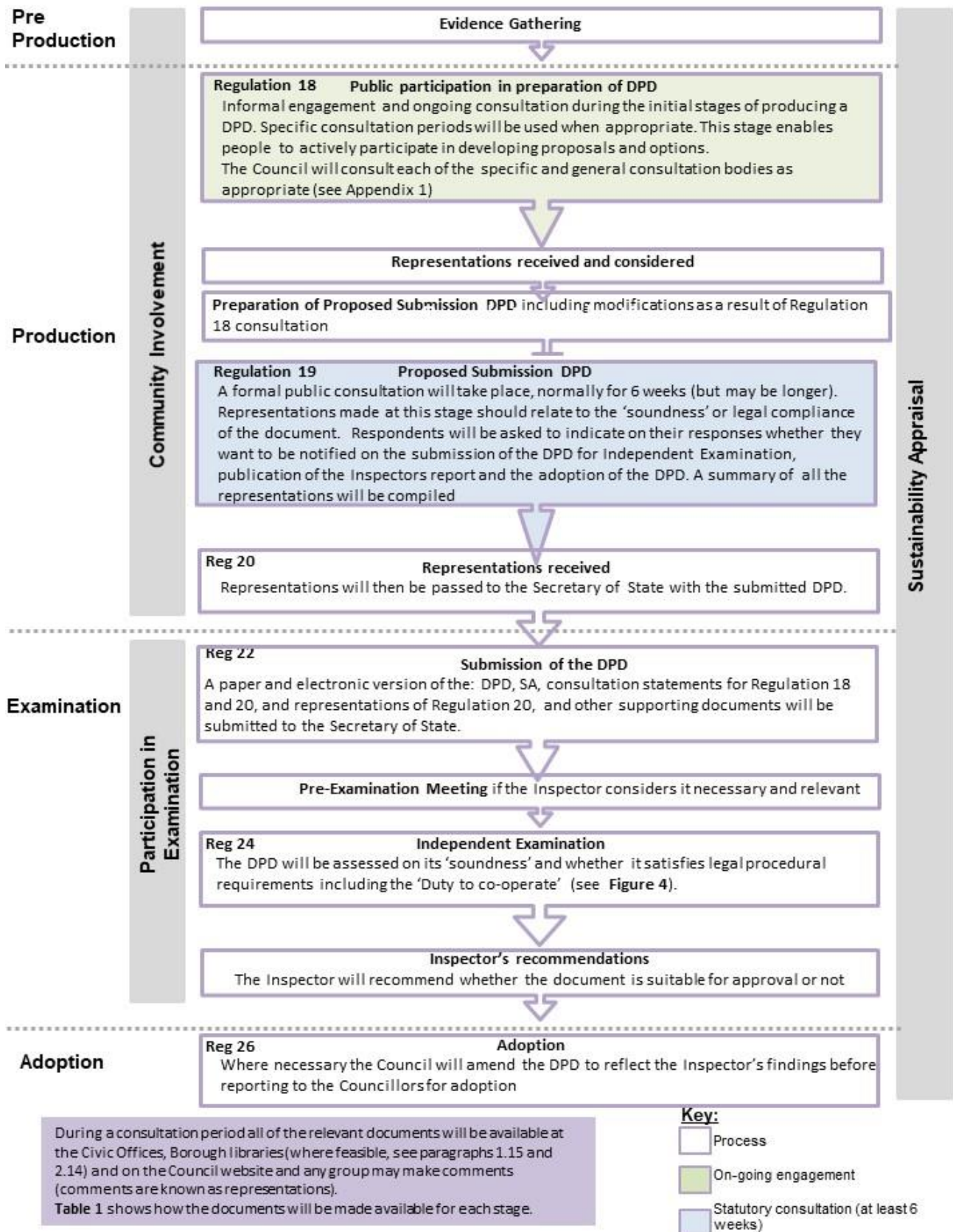
The Government advise the Proposed Submission version of a DPD should be the final version but accept that amendments may need to be made. The Council may propose a schedule of modifications as a result of representations received during the Regulation 19 consultation and new evidence coming forward, for the Secretary of State to consider as part of the Examination of the DPD.

- 2.13 All DPDs are subject to Independent Examination by and inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. Everyone who supported or objected to any part of the DPD during its consultations will be given the opportunity to be heard at the Examination. It is only after the recommendation of the Inspector has been taken into account that the DPD will be adopted.

² Local Development Documents were formerly known collectively as the Local Development Framework (LDF)

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Figure 3 Key stages of Development Plan Document preparation



The Regulations referred to above are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012.

Figure 4: The tests of soundness and Duty to Cooperate**Tests of soundness****Positively prepared**

A development plan document should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, and should be informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet requirements from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development

Justified

A development plan document needs to be founded on a **robust and credible evidence base** that ensures it is an appropriate strategy, taking account of reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence. Some points to consider may include:

- evidence of participation of the local community and others having a stake in the area
- research/fact finding – the choices made in the plan are justified by the evidence. What is the source of the evidence? How up to date and convincing is it?

Effective

The development plan document needs to be deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with and evidenced by the statement of common ground The DPD should also be:

- flexible
- able to be monitored.

Consistent with national policy

The development plan document should be consistent with national policy. It should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Duty to Cooperate.

The Localism Act introduced the 'duty to cooperate'. This requires local authorities such as borough councils and, county councils or other public bodies to '*engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis*' with each other on planning matters of strategic or cross boundary significance including the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Local Development Plan Documents. This is a legal test on which DPDs will be measured at Examinations.

The Government states that these bodies should work together on strategic matters including sustainable development, housing and transport, that have significant wider impacts. Those subject to the requirement will need to have regard to activities of other bodies prescribed in the regulations and consider whether to prepare joint Local Development Documents.

To demonstrate effective and ongoing joint working, one or more statements of common ground should be prepared, documenting how cross-boundary matters have been addressed and progress in cooperation. If an independent examiner considers that the duty has not been complied with in the preparation of a Development Plan Document DPD, they may reject the DPD.

Please refer to the primary legislation³ and regulations⁴ for more information.

³ The Localism Act 2011

⁴ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012

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Table 1: How each of the documents will be made available (as set out in Regulation 22)

Documents	Civic Offices/ Libraries (see para 2.14)	Website	Local press	Specific bodies	General bodies	Persons wishing to be notified*
DPD	✓	✓		✓		
Sustainability appraisal Report	✓	✓		✓		
Proposals Map	✓	✓		✓		
Consultation (Reg 18)	✓	✓		✓		
Consultation (Reg 19 and 20)	✓	✓		✓		
Representations	✓	✓		✓		
Supporting Documents	✓	✓		✓		
Statement of matters		✓		✓	✓	✓
Press notice		✓	✓			

*'Persons wishing to be notified' refers to those persons who expressed a desire at the proposed submission stage to be contacted when the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State.

2.14 Normally, all methods and venues for deposit of consultation documents shown in Table 1 will be used. However, during times such as the 2020-21 Covid 19 pandemic, Government restrictions and guidance meant that the Civic Offices and libraries closed to the public for three extended periods of time, and then opened with operational restrictions, meaning that their ability to hold consultation documents for public inspection was limited. Other events beyond the Council's control may also result in restrictions to people's movement and/or access to public buildings. During such times, all documents will be available on the website, as usual, and other consultation methods will continue to be employed to ensure that engagement is as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible. In addition to the website, to lessen dependence on the internet and electronic devices in case access is an issue for some, particular adjustments and allowances will be explored. This may include fuller distribution of documents in hard copy by post, and by CD or USB stick, where reasonable requests are made. Greater contact and communication may be made with local groups, such as Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Forums, to help raise awareness of consultation. Alternative means may also be used to enable the public to ask questions and discuss the consultation, including telephone calls and virtual meetings. It may be that an extended consultation period is set, compared to that normally used for consultation on LDDs.

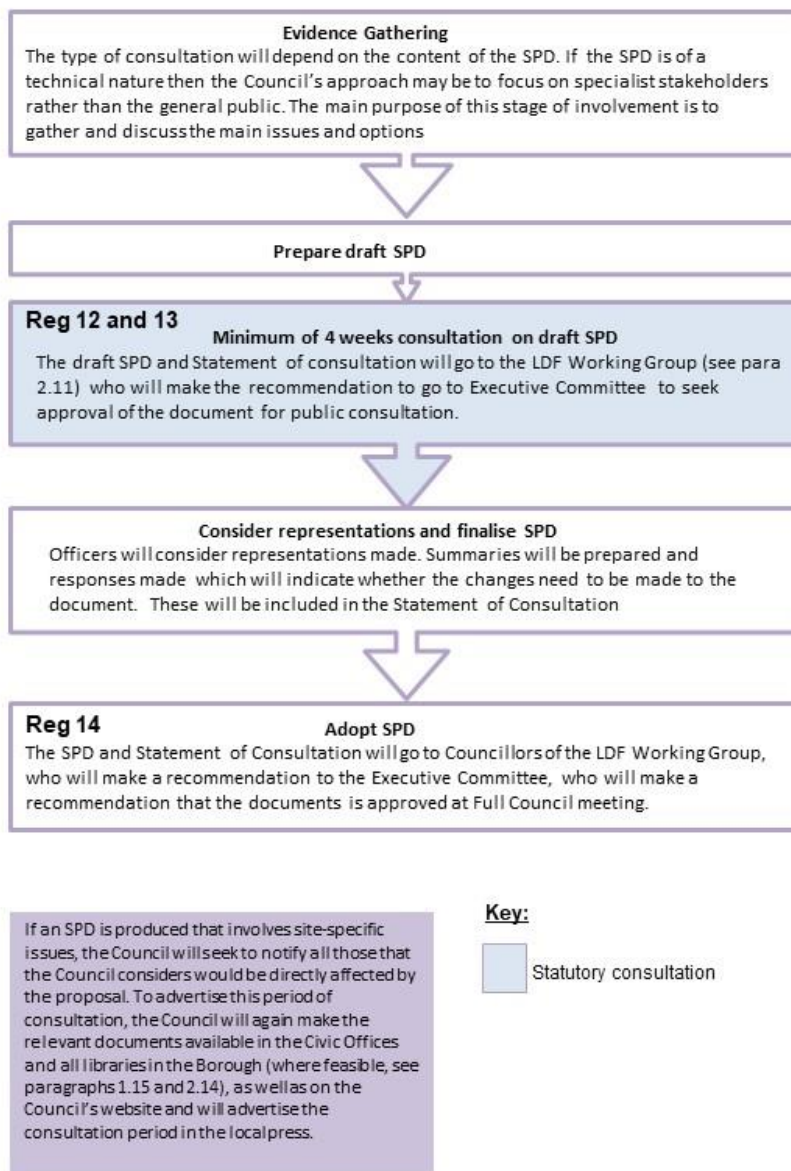
[2.15](#) [The Council is keen to reach out to all sections of the community and will use social media appropriately to engage with as wide a cross section of the community as possible. The specific social media platform that will be used will be determined by what is being consulted on and the target section of the community to be engaged.](#)

2.16 It should be noted that the specific consultation bodies will receive the supporting documents that the Council believes are relevant to them.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

2.17 SPDs are produced to support and provide additional information and guidance on policies and proposals contained in DPDs, including how policies apply to day to day planning decisions. The Council will undertake informal, targeted and formal consultation during the preparation of an SPD. The procedure for SPDs is slightly more straight forward than for DPDs because it does not require a formal examination. The process is set out below:

Figure 5: Key stages of Supplementary Planning Document preparation



The Regulations referred to above are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.18 The Council is required to assess the social, environmental and economic implications of policies and proposals of DPDs and SPDs where it is relevant to do so. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will help to test the soundness of LDDs by ensuring they reflect sustainable development objectives, as well as being consistent with each other in terms of their objectives and policies. The aim is to ensure that decisions help contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The sustainability appraisal will take place alongside the preparation of the DPDs (and SPDs if required) and there will be opportunities for consultation at key stages in the preparation of the appraisal.
- 2.19 A Sustainability Appraisal will not always be required to be undertaken for SPDs. The Council has an adopted Core Strategy, which has been subject to a full [Sustainability Appraisal](#). As SPDs must be in conformity with adopted DPDs, they will not require full sustainability appraisals as long as the higher-tier policy, which they hang from, has been subject to full sustainability appraisal.
- 2.20 In undertaking sustainability appraisals, the Council will:
- consult key stakeholders on the scope of the sustainability appraisal
 - consult key stakeholders and the public as part of public participation in preparation of the DPD and make initial sustainability appraisal work available
 - undertake public consultation on the sustainability appraisal report along with the Proposed Submission DPD (or SPD).
- 2.21 Key stakeholders are the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Highways Agency, Surrey County Council and any other relevant bodies with a sustainability remit on the Council's consultation database. These include the key social, economic and environmental groups e.g. Local Action 21, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Woking Chamber of Commerce.

Which consultation techniques and when will they be used?

- 2.22 The Council has adopted the approach of early consultation with groups prior to the Regulation stages of consultation. This will enable the Council to understand community and stakeholder issues to help to produce robust policies.
- 2.23 There are certain times when early consultation will be particularly beneficial. For example, when producing research work to inform LDDs it may be appropriate for the Council to seek the views of certain bodies to target particular issues or in relation to infrastructure requirements (i.e. water and sewerage provision), and early liaison and discussions with developers will help to identify their site-specific proposals.
- 2.24 Informal community engagement will ensure that awareness of Local Plan issues is maintained. The community will be regularly informed about progress on policy development. The Council website is regularly updated.

Techniques

- 2.25 A combination of informative and interactive consultation techniques will be applied to LDD production. This will depend on the type of document being produced, the target audience and the different stages of LDD production. Consultation techniques will have regard to any wider restrictions and government guidance that may limit social contact, people's movement and/or access to public buildings, as outlined in paragraphs 1.15 and 2.14. Different methods

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of consultation will be used at the Council's discretion having taken soundings from the various community groups. Appendix 2 lists the engagement techniques which can be used during DPD and SPD production.

- 2.26 The Council will aim to consult with as many people as possible, particularly hard-to-reach groups. Various methods will be used including specific formal or informal meetings with groups, which may be held in person or virtually; visiting places where those hard to reach groups tend to go and holding workshops at various times of the day and at various places to target as many people as possible.
- 2.27 The first stage of LDD production is largely interactive, qualitative and open-ended to ensure issues and solutions are considered. As the stages progress, engagement is more focused, and the Council will inform the community of proposed solutions and seek their views.

Responding to consultations

- 2.28 The Council is willing to receive responses via email, electronic forms (eforms), and written responses through the post.
- 2.29 All representations are expected to clearly state what is being commented on, and the desired changes. The Council will not send individual acknowledgement of representations at the time of their receipt, but will publish its response to the representations received in due course (see paragraphs 2.32 and 2.33 below).
- 2.30 All representations are normally recorded in a consultation database. Emails may either be printed and filed or electronic copies stored. The consultation database will be managed and data stored in a way that complies with data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act (2018, as amended) and data stored on it will be used fairly, lawfully and transparently; for specific purposes; and will be kept up to date. Individuals have the right to request their information is updated or erased, and can be informed about how their data is being used on request. Further detail can be found at www.gov.uk/data-protection.
- 2.31 As the preparation of LDDs is a public process, representations cannot be treated as confidential. Therefore, people are encouraged not to send confidential comments as the Council publishes all representations received, and responds to comments in a transparent manner. However, the Council is obliged to omit publishing certain personal details with regard to the Data Protection Act.
- 2.32 The Council will not publish any representation that is deemed inappropriate or offensive.

Feedback from the Council

Reporting on responses received

- 2.33 Following each period of consultation on any Local Development Document (LDD), the Council will prepare a 'Responses Report' which will set out the comments received, the Council's consideration of the comments, and whether any change to the document is required as a result of the comment.
- 2.34 After each round of consultation, the Council will present the results by summarising and collating similar responses, e.g. those supporting the document, those wanting changes to the document and suggested changes. Representations will be summarised fairly and reasonably and the Council will provide adequate reasons for recommendations. A Responses Report will be made available for public viewing at the Council Offices and on the

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website and may be made available in hard copy on request. It is envisaged that the responses will be reported to councillors at the LDF Working Group and will be background to the decisions of the Executive Committee and Full Council meetings.

Please note:

- The Council is unable to accept any anonymous or confidential responses. All responses will be made publicly available.
- The Council will not accept any responses which are considered to be offensive.
- Comments on LDDs received after the consultation period deadline cannot be taken into account.

Getting involved with planning applications

- 3.1 The Council's Development Management Section is responsible for processing all types of planning applications within the Borough, where required. Both publicity and consultation are a key part of the process. This section sets out how the community and stakeholders can be involved in various stages of the planning application process.

The pre-application stage

- 3.2 The Government highlights the potential of early engagement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system. As part of this, pre-application discussion enables better coordination and improves outcomes in the planning process, by enabling early consideration of fundamental issues, such as design, infrastructure and affordable housing. The Council encourages all parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. While pre-application discussions are normally confidential between the prospective applicant and the Council, public engagement with the local community at this stage is strongly encouraged. Engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees, where relevant, may also be beneficial prior to submitting a planning application.
- 3.3 The Council offers a formal pre-application service for a fee, in line with other Surrey Planning Authorities. The fee charged depends on the scale of the proposed development. The Council strongly recommends obtaining pre-application advice to help achieve a more efficient service and a speedier decision making process. It will help to establish whether the principle of development is acceptable prior to the submission of a formal planning application and will help to identify key issues at the early stages, giving applicants an opportunity to address them.
- 3.4 For more information on how to request pre-application advice or information on the fees charged, please visit: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/our-service> The type of pre-application advice and engagement in terms of meetings and public consultation will be responsive to Government legislation and guidance, such as that resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, or other future events that may limit social contact, people's movement and/or access to public buildings. Such situations may mean that face to face meetings or events can not take place. Written advice will be provided and other means of discussion and consultation may still take place.
- 3.5 The Council also strongly encourages **pre-application consultation with the community** on major applications that will have a significant impact on local areas. However, this is dependent on the applicant and the Council can not require developers to involve the local community. Planning applications cannot be refused if a developer refuses to involve the local community. However the Localism Act 2011 introduced a requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain types of developments⁵. The requirement will give local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to proposals.
- 3.6 Pre-application consultation carried out by applicants **should** provide all groups, including statutory and non-statutory interest groups with an opportunity to participate in the evolution of proposals.

⁵ Section 122 The Localism Act 2011

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- 3.7 Applicants are especially encouraged to liaise early with infrastructure providers for new developments, and this is most beneficial at the pre-application stage.
- 3.8 The level and methods used by applicants to consult during pre-application consultation will vary based on the nature, size and type of development. Pre-application consultation should be proportionate to the size of development, and its potential impacts. Suggested methods of consultation may include letters or leaflets distributed to neighbouring properties, posters, a drop in session or exhibition event to discuss proposals or a public meeting. Various electronic means may also be used, including websites showing information about a proposal, and email communication. [The Council will discuss at an early stage in the pre-application process how best to engage and involve stakeholders.](#)
- 3.9 The cost and time involved in pre-application consultations are the responsibility of the applicant. However the applicant is likely to benefit from early community involvement as it may reduce delays. For example, the applicant will have the opportunity to incorporate the suggestions of the community into proposals, or explain why comments were not taken into account.
- 3.10 Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide the Council with reasonable access to all information relating to community involvement undertaken to ensure that procedures followed are in accordance with the SCI. When applicants have undertaken community consultation the Council would prefer that a full statement of community involvement is submitted with the planning application.
- 3.11 Council officers and councillors will expect to be invited to attend pre-application consultation events; however it is essential that impartiality is maintained. Council officers will be supportive of pre-application consultation but not influential at pre-application consultation events. Where councillors are interested in pre-application processes they will not give an opinion at community involvement events as this may prejudice them from taking part at the planning committee.

The application stage

- 3.12 National legislation and guidance set out how the Council should publicise planning applications once they have been submitted. [The Council is required to undertake a formal period of public consultation, prior to deciding a planning application, as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\)\(England\) Order 2015 \(as amended\). This would involve placing a notice in the local press and/or displaying a site notice and/or serving notice on adjoining owners and occupiers of the site.](#) Statutory requirements ~~exist~~ vary for different types of application, ~~as set out in the Planning Regulations~~ and the type of notification will be dependent on the nature of the application. [How the Council will notify adjoining owners and occupiers is set out in Figure 6 below. There are separate arrangements for applications for permission in principle, applications for listed buildings and applications for prior approval.](#)

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Figure 6. Neighbour notification on different types of planning applications

<u>Type of application</u>	<u>Neighbour notified</u>	<u>Extent of neighbour notification</u>
<u>Householder application</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for planning permission for 'minor' and 'major' development including change of use</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for tall buildings outside the town centre*</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners with wider consultation at case officer's discretion</u>
<u>Applications for tall buildings within the town centre*</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Properties within 100m of the site. Wider consultation at officer's discretion</u>
<u>Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Development/Use</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Certificate of Lawfulness for an Existing Development/Use</u>	<u>Assessed on a case-by-case basis</u>	<u>At the case officer's discretion</u>
<u>Applications for details pursuant to conditions</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Applications for non-material amendments</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Applications for prior approval except below</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for prior approval under part 6 (agricultural buildings) and 11 (demolition) of the GPDO</u>	<u>No</u>	

Note: * A tall building is defined as one being 18m or more in height taken above ground level or 7 or more storeys above ground level. Where a building is dissected by the 100m radius, all the properties in the whole building will be notified.

'Minor' development are those defined as being applications were

- The number of dwellings is between 1-9
- The floor space is less than 1,000sq.m or the site area is less than 1ha

'Major' development are those defined as being applications were

- The number of dwellings is 10 or more
- The floor space is over 1,000sq.m
- The site area is greater than 1ha.
- The site area is greater than 0.5ha and the number of dwellings is not known

Wider notification may be undertaken at the discretion of the case officer

3.13 Figure 76 provides advice and information on how the public can make their views on planning applications known. The Council uses the following methods to notify the public about planning applications:

- details of all applications are sent to local papers who **may** decide to list them. There are some applications where it is mandatory they are published in the

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newspaper e.g. Major Applications, applications in Conservation Areas and EIA developments

- neighbours are notified by letter and are given 21 days to comment on the application
- site notices are supplied for those applications subject to a statutory advert
- weekly lists of applications received are available on the Council's website;
- planning applications can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the Council's website at <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/publicaccess> . People have the option to submit their comments via the website.

- 3.14 The Council is required to consult statutory bodies on particular planning applications, for example, infrastructure providers, environmental interest, leisure and historical interest groups. These statutory and non-statutory groups are listed in Appendix 4. The Council has to consult Surrey County Council on applications that may affect the implementation of its development plan policies, including minerals and waste. These types of application can be found in Appendix 6.
- 3.15 By increasing basic publicity methods non-statutory organisations, which represent specialist interest groups have greater opportunity to comment on applications.
- 3.16 Design and Access Statement (DAS) are required for major development applications and applications within designated areas (such as Conservation Areas) where they meet certain thresholds⁶. The Council can not validate a planning application without a Design and Access Statement where one is required.
- 3.17 The Design and Access Statement or similar statement of consultation should clearly show the groups and people the applicant has been, or will be, discussing the scheme with. A good statement will be able to show that the applicant has spoken to local communities and sought professional advice at the earliest possible stage of the scheme's development.
- 3.18 For further guidance please see the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's CABA (now the Design Council) guidance [*Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them*](#). The legal requirements for a Design and Access Statement can be found in the The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 3.19 Agendas for Planning Committee are available five working days before a meeting and can be viewed on the website. Members of the public may be able to speak at Planning Committee meetings in accordance with public speaking protocol.

⁶ The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013

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Figure 76. Public consultation on planning applications

How do I make my views known?
<p>Any comments you wish to make must be in writing otherwise they cannot be considered. Please note that the Council can only take into account issues which are relevant to planning and can only refuse applications where there are sound and clear cut planning reasons to do so. The extent of local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission unless it is based on valid planning reasons which can be substantiated. Further guidance about relevant issues is provided below.</p> <p>If you make your opinions known they cannot be kept confidential. They will be put on a public file and published on the internet where they can be seen by anyone, including the applicant. This is a legal requirement. We do however, redact signatures and personal details.</p> <p>The Council reserves the right to remove and discard any offensive submissions.</p> <p>Details of applications, including plans, are available for viewing and printing online, or can be viewed on a public terminal at the Civic Offices, where feasible. Advice and information on a particular application may also be obtained over the telephone.</p>
What if my comments are received late?
<p>Failure to meet the deadline could mean your comments are not considered. However, the Council will endeavor to take into account all comments received before an application is decided. Comments received late will be addressed within the Officer report where possible, or will be reported orally to Committee where appropriate.</p> <p>Should a late letter raise a new planning issue which requires further consideration a decision may be deferred to allow time for the issue to be fully investigated.</p>
What happens if the application is changed (amended) before it is decided by the Council?
<p>Often the Council negotiates changes (known as amendments) to schemes following an initial assessment of a proposal and/or following an assessment of comments or objections made. There is no statutory obligation to consult on amendments, but where changes are significant it is the Council's policy to re-notify the neighbours. A period of 14 days is usually allowed for comment to be made. Neighbours will not be re-notified of relatively minor changes unless they are likely to have an impact which is considered to be worse than the original submitted plans.</p>
What happens to my comments?
<p>They are passed to the Case Officer for consideration. Where appropriate, amendments may be sought to address issues raised. Unfortunately, due to the volume of comments made on applications the Council is not able to reply to these submissions or formally acknowledge them. Comments will be published on the internet within a reasonable timeframe, as will the outcome of decisions taken. A list of decisions can be obtained on the website.</p> <p>All matters raised in letters are taken into account and are summarised in an officer's report . The Planning Committee meets approximately every month. The applicant has a right to appeal to the Secretary of State against refusal of planning permission. In such cases correspondence received from objectors will be passed to the Inspector dealing with the matter. Objectors will be notified of the appeal and may be invited to comment again direct to the Inspector.</p>
Should I involve my ward Councillor?
<p>Your ward Councillor is your local elected representative on the Council. Not all Ward Councillors sit on the Council's Planning Committee but they may request the right to address the Committee or ask another Member of the Committee to speak on their behalf. A Ward Councillor is also able to ask for delegated applications to be referred to the Committee for determination as long a a valid planning reason is provided.</p>
Can I address the committee directly?
<p>The criteria for public speaking can be found in the Council's constitution, available at www.woking.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-council.</p>

The decision stage

3.20 The majority of applications are dealt within eight weeks (or 13 weeks for major applications). The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by the Council. The Officer's Report will provide a summary of comments received. The decision can be found on the website using the relevant reference number or address. The public should access this information online, however it is accepted that not everyone has access to the necessary technology or the internet. In this regard, the Council can be contacted on 01483 755855 where alternative options can be provided. Decision lists covering specific dates can also be accessed on the website.

The post decision stage

3.21 If a planning application is refused, the applicant is unhappy with a planning condition or if the Council does not determine it within the statutory time period, the applicant has the right to appeal against the decision or failure to make a decision. Only the applicant has the right to appeal.

3.22 [The Planning Inspectorate](#) deal with appeals and make the final decision. Appeals are placed on the weekly list on the Council's website. Everyone who was notified and gave their views on the original application will be advised that an appeal has been received and told how they can make their views on the appeal known directly to the Planning Inspectorate. Written objections are sent to the Planning Inspectorate and depending on the type of appeal further comments may be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. All views are heard during the appeal. The Planning Inspectorate will inform the Council and objectors of the outcome.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 The Localism Act gives citizens, communities and local government the power and responsibility to work together to create a fairer society by devolving greater powers to Councils and neighbourhoods. [The plain English guide to the Localism Act](#) has been prepared to try and help people understand it.
- 4.2 The Localism Act allows for communities to draw up a 'neighbourhood development plan' and/or 'neighbourhood development order', providing communities with the power to develop a shared vision, have a greater say in the decisions that affect them and play a bigger role in determining the shape of the places where they live, work and do business. Neighbourhood Plans can help to direct and deliver sustainable development.
- 4.3 Local planning authorities (like Woking Borough Council) are required to provide technical guidance and support to neighbourhoods to draw up their plans. Some funding is available for communities wishing to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans will have to conform with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and can not plan for less development than has been set out in the Core Strategy, nor undermine its strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to prevent development in a neighbourhood. They can plan for more but not less development.
- 4.4 Neighbourhood Plans represent a change that allows local people more of a say on where new houses, businesses and shops should go and what they should look like. They represent a chance to guide the location and appearance of development that comes forward within a neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Plans could be very simple, or go into considerable detail, and their content should be determined by the community, noting that they need to be in conformity with strategic planning policy.
- 4.5 Some of the policies within Neighbourhood Plans could be expressed in a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO). Once approved by the Council and designated, NDOs would remove the need to seek planning permission if the application is in conformity with the order.
- 4.6 Government guidance recognises that a successful Neighbourhood Plan should represent the views of the community, and should therefore be delivered by the community. The onus is placed upon communities to lead on Neighbourhood Plan delivery. The Council will provide advice and assistance to communities who want to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, including about the stages that need to be followed (see below and Figure 78).
- 4.7 Neighbourhood planning allows people to come together through a Neighbourhood Forum or Parish Council⁷. It is important to ensure that any Neighbourhood Forum delivering a plan is representative of the community it wishes to plan for. It is therefore essential to ensure that as many residents and groups as possible from a neighbourhood are aware that a plan is proposed, and are actively involved in the process. This will be particularly important as plans are required to go through a referendum before they can be adopted.
- 4.8 Before Neighbourhood Planning can start, local communities through their proposed forums will have to apply to the Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area and a Neighbourhood Forum. The Council has a duty to determine the applications after consulting local residents.

⁷ There are no Parish Councils in Woking Borough

SECTION 4

- 4.9 Provided a Neighbourhood Plan is in line with national planning policy, the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and other legal requirements it will pass examination by an independent examiner and, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority, then the local authority will bring it into force. The stages of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan are shown in Figure 8.

Community right to build

- 4.10 As part of neighbourhood planning, the Localism Act gives groups of local people the ability to bring forward small developments. These might include new homes, businesses and shops. The benefits of the development, for example, profits made from letting the homes, will stay within the community.

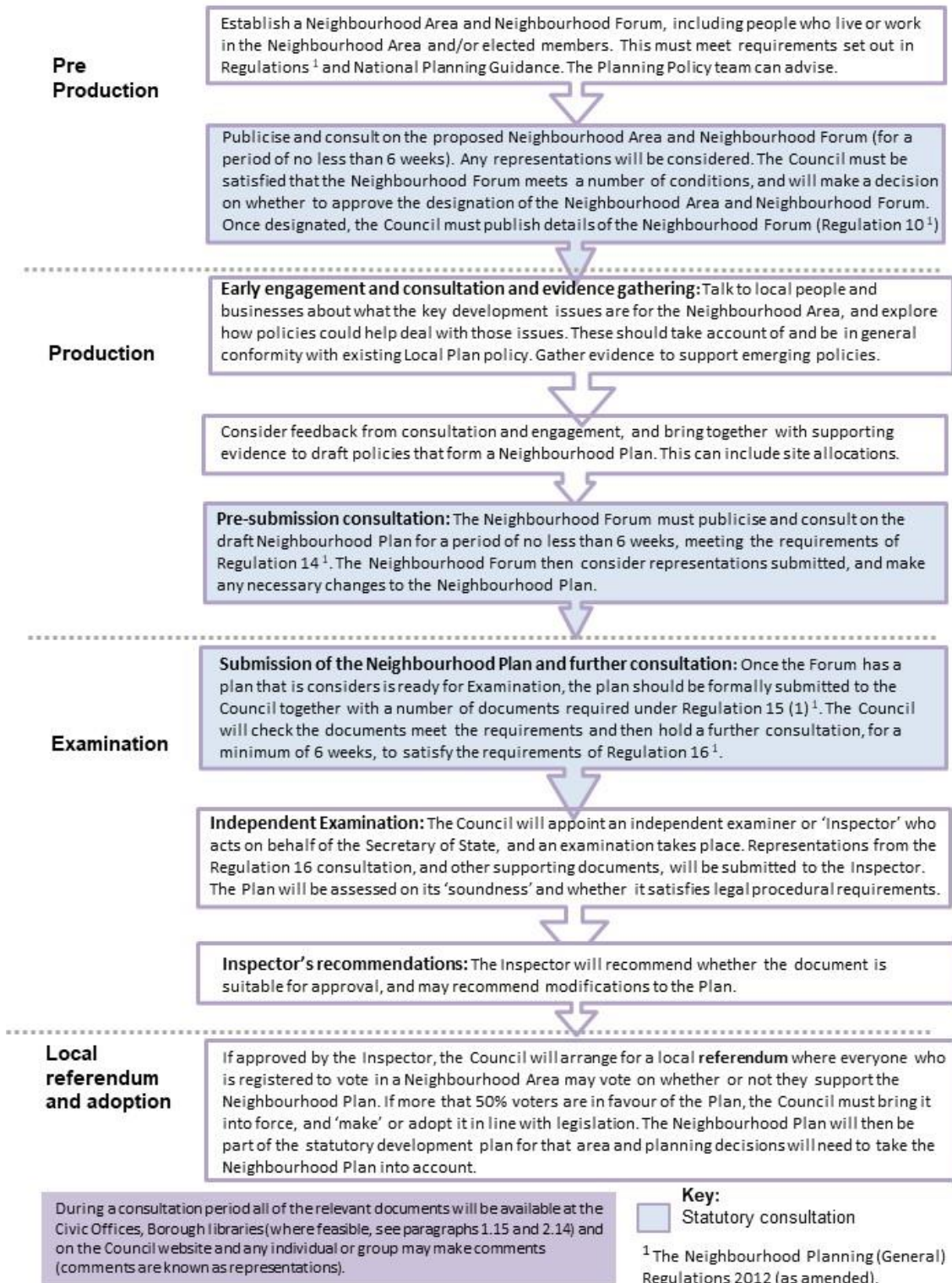
Requirement to consult communities before submitting certain planning applications

- 4.11 To further strengthen the role of local communities in planning, the Localism Act introduced a new requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain types of developments, as detailed in paragraph 3.5. This gives local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to specific proposals. In addition, it highlights the Council's encouragement of pre-application consultation with the community on major applications where development will have a significant impact on local areas.

Reform the way local plans are made

- 4.12 The Localism Act also limits the discretion of planning inspectors to insert their own wording into Local Plans. It ensures that rather than focusing on reporting plans' progress to central Government, authorities focus on reporting progress to local communities. The Government say that they hope that this will give local planning authorities greater freedom in drawing up Local Plans without undue interference from government. However, plans still have to be examined by an independent Inspector and found to be sound before they can be adopted.

Figure 78: Stages in establishing a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area, and preparing a Neighbourhood Plan



Further information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2> and
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/neighbourhood-planning/>

Monitoring and Resources

Monitoring of the SCI

- 5.1 Monitoring of the SCI is vital to ensuring that the Council has conformed to what it has set out. Annual reviews will confirm whether a high level of public involvement has been maintained in the production of LDDs, and ensure that no less has been carried out than the stated level of engagement in the SCI. In the event that more engagement is carried out than stated this will be acknowledged in the annually prepared Monitoring Report.

Resources

- 5.2 The Government recommends assessing resources for managing community involvement. The officers of the Council's Planning Policy team working on the SCI are the Planning Policy Manager and a Planning Policy Officer. Other members of the Council's Planning Service and Officer's across other Council departments may be able to assist with stages of public engagement, particularly in ensuring engagement is as wide as possible.
- 5.3 Consultants will be used where there is a lack of expertise or capacity in house for specific projects. The Council's Residents' Panel will assist with focus group work where required. Woking Residents' Panel has been re-established and comprises 1,000 residents who are representative of the borough (age 18 and over), from all backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. They will be contacted via email or post, and asked to provide their views on issues and projects that affect local people and on local services that the Council provides. More information about the Residents' panel can be found at www.woking.gov.uk/residentspanel.
- 5.4 The LDF Working Group consisting of councillors will review evidence and results of consultation at each stage and make recommendations to the Council's Executive.
- 5.5 In line with regulations, marketing of LDDs is necessary. The Council's Marketing and Communications team will be involved in the production and design of documents.

Risk assessment

- 5.6 In preparing the SCI, it is considered that the main areas of risk relate to the following.
- **Staff turnover.** The Planning Policy Team is now fully staffed.
 - **Legal Challenge.** The Council will minimise the risk of legal challenge by ensuring that the SCI is up-to-date, and has well-audited stakeholder and community engagement systems.

Appendices

Consultation groups involved in Local Development Documents production

The following groups and bodies will be consulted where relevant. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and relates to successor bodies where re-organisations and/or renaming occurs.

Specific consultation bodies as defined in the Regulations 2012⁸ :

- (i) the Coal Authority
- (ii) the Environment Agency
- (iii) the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)
- (iv) the Marine Management Organisation (if relevant)
- (v) Natural England
- (vi) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- (vii) The Highways Agency.
- (viii) a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority (Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Guildford Borough Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and parish councils adjoining Woking Borough).
- (ix) any person:
 - (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
 - (ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority
- (x) if it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area:
 - (i) a Primary Care Trust PCT⁹ ([NW Surrey Heartlands](#) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust)
 - (ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
 - (iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986
 - (iv) a sewerage undertaker (Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water)
 - (ee) a water undertaker (Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water)
- (xi) The Homes and Communities Agency.

Note:

Relevant telecommunications companies: Mobile Operators Association

Relevant electricity and gas companies: Southern Gas Networks, National Grid Co Plc

Relevant sewerage and water undertakers: Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water.

⁸ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

⁹ PCTs have been renamed Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

General consultation bodies as defined in the Regulations 2012¹⁰:

- (a) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of Woking Borough Council's area
- (b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in Woking Borough Council's area
- (c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Woking Borough Council's area
- (d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in Woking Borough Council's area
- (e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in Woking Borough Council's area.

Government departments

- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- ~~Ministry for~~ [Department for Levelling Up](#), Housing and Communities ~~and Local Government~~
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Education
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport
- Department of Health and Social Care (through relevant Regional Public Health Group)
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Ministry of Defence

The following consultation groups have been collated on a database of over 6,000 bodies and individuals to incorporate the above:

- Agents
- Business interest
- County councillors
- Developers
- Disabled groups
- Elderly people
- Ethnic groups
- Environment and nature conservation groups
- Health providers, including Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Housing associations
- Infrastructure providers
- Landowners
- Leisure groups
- Local councillors
- Local residents
- Local residents associations
- Minority groups
- Member of Parliament
- Religious groups
- Sports bodies
- Surrey planning officers
- Transport groups
- Young people

¹⁰ [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

Engagement techniques that can be used during DPD and SPD consultation

Technique	Description
General letters	A traditional but effective method as everyone can be targeted in this way. The Council's General Survey of 2003 indicated that 69% preferred to be consulted on Council issues via letter. However a 2009 consultation which asked about preferred methods on consultation on future planning matters saw this drop to 33%. To ensure high standards in efficiency, the Council needs to keep its Local Plan consultation database of community members and stakeholders up-to-date. Letters will be used to accompany new material for consultation and ask for comments.
Email	Approximately 78% of those on the LDD consultation database have asked to be contacted via email rather than letter. Emails can be used as a cheap and effective way to communicate as long as the database is kept up-to-date. Emails can also contain hyperlinks to documents on the website. Where emails are provided to us, by preference emails will be used.
Website	<p>The use of the website to publish documents is one of the methods to be used as per the Regulations.</p> <p>Woking Borough Council's website http://www.woking.gov.uk/ regularly receives between 50,000 and 70,000 visitors per month so it is an effective tool for information provision. Interaction with the public through electronic methods is encouraged in line with the Council's ambitions to provide services electronically and all documentation relating to LDDs will be made available on the website.</p> <p>In 2020, 96% of households across the country had access to the internet (ONS), with the majority having a broadband connection, making this a key method for engagement. Internet access is available at all libraries in the Borough and there is access to the Council website at the Civic Offices.</p> <p>The Council website holds information on LDD preparation process and during key consultation periods had a link from the front page of the website. Browsers are encouraged to sign up to the Local Plan database or to respond to consultations using online forms.</p> <p>The Planning Policy team has set up an LDD website with the address www.woking2027.info. Each of the key documents has its own landing page. The team will ensure that it is possible to respond to major consultations using an electronic form.</p> <p>Both the main Council website http://www.woking.gov.uk/ and the Planning Policy one are updated regularly.</p> <p>Paper versions of documents will be produced for those without IT facilities.</p>
Leaflets and postcards	To ensure the whole community is kept informed during plan preparation the distribution of leaflets or postcards can be an effective way to raise awareness. Leaflets can be delivered to households alone or with other Council mail outs to save postage costs. They can also be left in key places around the Borough such as libraries, Pool in the Park, Woking Leisure Centre and in shopping centres and supermarkets, where appropriate.
Local Plan newsletter	Where relevant, a Local Plan Newsletter will be sent out to update on progress on Local Development Documents. Decisions on this will be made on a case by case basis.
Provision of information for public viewing	Both Woking's libraries and the Civic Offices are beneficial places to provide copies of Local Development Documents (LDDs) for viewing. In addition, copies of key documents are sent to Woking Leisure Centre for public viewing during consultation periods. These locations will help to increase public awareness of current Local Plan issues. However, note potential restrictions detailed in paragraph 1.15.

Displays	These can be in Woking Library, the Civic Offices and at other locations such as Woking Leisure Centre, Pool in the Park and in the town centre. They are beneficial for raising awareness of current LDD issues. Staffed displays can be set up at many locations including shopping centres, supermarkets, residents' associations meetings etc. which allow staff to interact with the community and encourage them to comment on and discuss issues that may affect them.
Posters	There are approximately 14 large poster boards (the Borough Boards) located around Woking Borough. These are owned by the Council and can be used to display posters advertising consultation. Demand for these is high so can only be used for major consultation events. Where appropriate, posters will also be displayed on community notice boards, in shopping centres and supermarkets.
Press releases and advertisements	Formal advertisements such as statutory notices in local newspapers will be used when necessary during the DPD and SPD production process to inform the community of various key consultation dates and the publication of documents. Press releases and news articles will also help to publicise the Local Plan. Although advertising in local papers is costly, it is an effective way to target the Borough's population and the 2009 survey showed 59% of respondents preferred this method of being informed about future planning matters.
The Woking Magazine	A total of 48,000 copies of the Woking Magazine are printed and delivered free to households and many public information points across the Borough via Royal Mail three times a year. The Council also produces an online version of the magazine. The magazine regularly contains a Local Plan update which reports progress with key documents. The magazine can be used to distribute questionnaires. In the 2009 survey, 59% of respondents said they would like to be informed about future planning matters via the Woking Magazine.
General questionnaires	Questionnaires are a traditional method involving the collection of information in the form of written responses to a set of standard questions but can now be done online in addition to paper copies. General questionnaires can be sent to all households, while targeted questionnaires will be used when consulting on documents.
Targeted questionnaires	
Woking's Residents' Panel	The Council's Residents' Panel is representative of Woking's residents (age 18 and over) and provides a good sounding-board from which to gather information, e.g. via surveys.
Interviews	In targeting different groups it is beneficial to go to them. A questionnaire can be used as a guide for an interview.
Meetings	These can be hosted by the Council or staff can attend meetings hosted by others as guests/speakers. These can take place in person or virtually. Meetings can take place with selected stakeholders who may have specific interest/knowledge in a topic. Meetings allow for targeted engagement as a Council representative can go out to stakeholders. The Planning Policy team regularly attend residents' association meetings and developer forums are held.
Focus groups	These are small groups who are brought together to discuss a specific issue, and can either be held in person or virtually.
Workshops	This is a meeting at which small groups, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explores issues and develops ideas. For example, a topic workshop focuses on specific issues.
Participatory design techniques	These methods are visual and often use models and pictures to help stimulate peoples' imagination helping them put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved. People of all abilities and backgrounds often find it easy to engage. For example, models showing future development can be used to engage people, as a means to stimulate discussion.

APPENDIX 2

Public meetings	These are traditional methods for informing the public. They can allow any number of interested people to attend and learn about a topic. Meetings can be an interactive method of engagement when questions are asked, and can be held face to face or virtually.
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An evaluation of consultation techniques

Technique (R = Required; O = Optional)	Consultation benefits					Resource implication	
	Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Technique has been used in the past by the Planning Policy Team	Staff time	Financial cost
General letters (R)	x		x		x	Low	Low/Med
Email (R)	x				x	Low	Low
Website (R)	x	x			x	Low	Low
Leaflets and postcards (O)	x		x		x	Low-med	Medium
LDF newsletter (O)	x		x		x	Low-med	Medium
Information for public viewing (R)	x		x	x	x	Low	Low
Displays (O)	x		x		x	Low	Low-med
Posters (O)	x		x		x	Low	Low/Med
Press releases and advertisements (R)	x		x		x	Low	High
The Woking Magazine	x		x	x	x	Low	Low
General questionnaires (O)	x	x	x		x	Medium	Medium
Targeted questionnaires (O)	x	x	x			Medium	Medium
Woking's Residents' Panel (O)	x	x	x		x	Medium	Low-Med
Interviews (O)	x	x	x	x	x	Medium	Low
Meetings (O)	x	x		x	x	Medium	Low
Focus groups (O)	x	x	x	x	x	High	High
Workshops (O)	x	x		x	x	High	High
Participatory design techniques (O)	x	x	x			High	High
Public meetings (O)	x	x	x			High	Med-High

Statutory and non statutory bodies consulted on certain planning applications¹¹

Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations or re-naming occurs.

- Basingstoke Canal Authority
- Basingstoke Canal Society
- British Waterways Board
- Canal and River Trust
- Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
- Council for British Archaeology (Listed Buildings)
- Coal Authority
- Crown Estates Commissioners
- Design Council (formerly Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)
- Designated Neighbourhood Forums
- EDF Energy
- English Golf Union
- Historic England
- Environment Agency
- ESSO Pipeline Government Oil Pipeline
- Fairoaks Airport
- Forestry Commission
- Health and Safety Executive
- Highways Authority (including Highways England)
- Listed Buildings – Joint Committee
- National Amenity Societies
 - Ancient Monuments Society
 - Council for British Archaeology
 - The Garden History Society
 - The Georgian Group
 - Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
 - The Twentieth Century Society
 - The Victorian Society
- Local Rail Network Operator
- Ministry of Defence
- National Grid ~~Co-PL~~
- [Fields in Trust \(formerly National Playing Fields Association\)](#)
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Police Architectural Liaison Officer
- Railtrack Properties (Network Rail)
- Ramblers' Association
- SCC Canal
- SCC Heritage Conservation
- SCC Highways
- SCC Education Authority
- SCC ~~SCG~~-Public Health
- SCC Rights of Way Officer
- [SCC Spatial Planning Team](#)
- Secretary of State for Transport
- South East England Tourist Board
- Sport England
- Surrey Playing Fields Association
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- Thames Water Utilities
- Theatres Trust
- Transco – Gas pipeline
- Woking Sports Council
- WBC Arboriculturalist
- WBC Community Safety Officer
- WBC Contaminated Land Officer
- WBC Environmental Health Officer
- WBC Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer
- WBC Housing
- WBC Legal Services
- WBC Leisure Services
- WBC Planning Policy
- WBC Property Services
- WBC Waste Services Manager

¹¹ A list of statutory consultees on planning and heritage applications can be found on the National Planning Practice Guidance [website](#)

Weekly lists of planning applications

The Council prepares a [weekly list](#) of new applications. Interested parties are encouraged to look on the Council website where this information is available.

Consulting on strategic planning applications

Applications subject to consultation with Surrey County Council

- a) Development which would, by reason of its scale nature or location be of major significance, which may require additional infrastructure, community services and facilities;
- b) Where land is safeguarded for minerals, waste or for development by the County Council.

The Council will consult with other relevant bodies including: Other local authorities, and the Local Enterprise Partnership (Enterprise M3) when it considers appropriate.

National Planning Casework Unit

The National Planning Casework Unit was set up in March 2011 to process, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, planning casework previously handled by the Government Office Network. A letter was sent in February 2012 which provides an up to date list of the remit and responsibilities of the NPCU:

The following casework will be dealt with by NPCU.

- Referrals under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009
- Requests to call in planning applications for Secretary of State's decision (including call-in requests for Review of Old Minerals Permissions)
- Environmental Statements (screening, scoping and trans-boundary effects)
- Listed Building Consent – Local Planning Authority Applications
- Listed Building Consent – Private Applications (Circular 08/2009)
- Conservation Area Consents
- Article 4 Directions
- Statutory Allotments Disposals
- Revocation Orders
- Modification Orders
- Discontinuance Orders
- Completion Notices
- Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938
- Public Requests to Order Disposal of Land (PRODS)
- Prohibition and Suspension Orders (minerals permissions)
- Local Development Orders
- Referrals under Section 62(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Civil Aviation Authority objections (DfT/ODPM Circular 1/2003)
- Referrals under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966
- Consent under Section 14 (1) and 14(2) of Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990
- Consent under Article 17(2) of the Schedule to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967

The Unit also deals with:

- Compulsory Purchase Orders - three main types:

- Planning – under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 226, as amended by section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)
- Housing – for local authorities applying under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985
- Clearance – under Section 289 of the Housing Act 1985
- • Exchange Land Certificates – under Section 19 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981
- • Less than Best Price Disposal – under Sections 123 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1972
- • Ground 10a Consent – under Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985

The unit will also be dealing with requests to call in planning applications for Secretary of State's decision (including call-in requests for Review of Old Minerals Permissions).

Woking Borough Council will consult the National Planning Casework Unit as appropriate.

For more information on the NPCU then please visit:
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/infoforlpas/npcu>

Evaluation of possible consultation techniques for planning applications

	Technique	Consultation benefits					Resource implication	
		Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Degree of public ownership of proposals	Council officer staff time	Financial cost to Council
Pre-application	Letters	x					None	None
	Discussions with neighbours	x	x	x	x	Low	None	None
	Surgery or drop-in event	x	x			Low	None	None
	Exhibition	x		x			None	None
	Public meeting	x	x	x		Med	None	None
	Enquire by design		x	x	x	High	None	None
	'Planning for Real'		x	x	x	High	None	None
Application	Increase online advertisements	x		x			Low	Low
	Increase online publicity	x					Low	Low
	Neighbour notification	x					Low-med	Medium
Post-application	Personal notification of objector/ supporter	x					Low	Medium
	Notification on the website	x					Low	Low

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

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): a report produced annually that monitors progress against the Local Development Scheme (project plan for Local Development Documents) and policy targets¹².

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): standard charge decided by local authorities and levied on new development. For example, the CIL may be levied as a certain amount per square metre of development. The money would be used to pay for transport, schools and health centres, flood defences, play areas, parks and other green spaces. It would be a standard charge on all development rather than being calculated individually for each planning permission.

Community: usually refers to those living within a specific geographic area but can be any group with shared needs or interests across a wider geographical area.

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.

Community Planning: the strategies, techniques and capacity building required to encourage and enable communities to take a full and active role in both the statutory and non statutory planning processes.

Consultation Statement/Statement of Consultation: a report or statement issued by the [Council](#) explaining how they have complied with the statement of community involvement during consultation on local development documents.

Core Strategy DPD: sets out the long-term vision for area and the main strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.

Development Delivery DPD: This will specify exactly where new development will take place in accordance with the policies set out in the Core Strategy and it will also contain development management policies.

Development management policies: the Council will produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) containing development management policies. They cover detailed matters relevant to many planning applications such as design, transport and the environment..

Development Plan Document (DPD): Local Plan documents containing the core planning policies and proposals. These are subject to independent examination. Woking Borough Council has prepared and adopted the Core Strategy DPD and Proposals Map DPD; and is intending to prepare the a Development Delivery DPD which will contain Development Management Policies and Site Allocations.

Duty to Cooperate: This is a requirement introduced by the Localism Act. It requires local authorities and other public bodies to work together on planning issues.

Examination: formal examination of Local Plan documents by an independent inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Enquiry by design: intensive action planning workshop process involving urban designers and local stakeholders.

¹² Known as a Monitoring Report in the Localism Act

Focus group: small group of people who work through an issue in workshop sessions. Membership may be carefully selected or entirely random.

Inspector: representative from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which is an impartial government agency. Leads the examination of DPDs.

Local Development Documents (LDD): Comprises of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement i.e. both statutory and 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. The term LDF is no longer referred to in legislation.

Local Development Framework Working Group (LDF WG)¹³: a group of councillors representing the political make up of the Council, with a special interest in Local Development Documents. This group make recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee who in turn make a recommendations to Full Council meetings. Documents are approved by LDF WG and either the Executive Committee or Full Council before consultation on them begins.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): project plan for the production of Local Development Documents.

Material consideration: a material consideration is any planning matter which is relevant to a particular case.

Minority groups: An ethnic, racial, religious, or other group having a distinctive presence within a society or a group having little power or representation relative to other groups within a society.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): This is a single document which contains national planning policies. Local authorities must take into account the contents of the NPPF when preparing their development plans and when decisions are made on individual planning applications and appeals. The NPPF replaced numerous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance when it was first published on 27 March 2012.

Neighbourhood Planning: gives communities power to develop a shared vision for their area and shape development and growth, enabling them to influence where they want new homes, shops and offices, and develop policies that can guide planning decisions. Neighbourhood plan must align with strategic needs and priorities for the Borough, as contained in Local Development Documents.

'Planning for Real': method of community involvement which focuses on a three-dimensional cardboard model to enable easy visualisation.

Planning Inspectorate (PINS) The Planning Inspectorate holds independent examinations to determine whether or not DPDs are 'sound'. The Planning Inspectorate also handles planning and enforcement appeals.

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

¹³ Local Development Documents were formerly known collectively as the Local Development Framework (LDF)

planning policy and the operation of the planning system. The majority of these have been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF

Proposals Map: ordnance survey base map showing the location of proposals in all current development plan documents. Can be a development plan document itself or part of another. Following recent planning reforms, the proposals map is now known as a **Policies Map** in legislation

Representations: general comments or responses to a consultation which may support or object to proposals.

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

Sound/soundness: describes where a DPD is considered to 'show good judgement' and also fulfils the expectations of legislation, as well as conforming to national planning policy.

Spatial planning: an approach to planning that uses land in the most effective way to promote 'sustainable development'.

Stakeholder: Person or organisation with an interest because they will be affected or may have some influence.

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.

Statement of Matters: the regulations set out that the Council must produce a Statement of Matters which sets out the title of the document, subject matter of and area covered, period for representations, address where representations should be sent and list of places at which the document is available for inspection and the times at which it can be inspected.

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

Surrey Strategic Partnership: the countywide strategic partnership. It includes the following members: Surrey County Council, Surrey's eleven districts and boroughs, Surrey Police, [NW Surrey Heartlands](#) Clinical Commissioning Group, The Skills Funding Agency, the voluntary, community and faith sector and the business sector. These organisations work together to try to find solutions to local problems. They try to support each other and improve the way they work together, to make life better for people in Surrey.

Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan: the Sustainable Community Strategy for Surrey is known as Surrey's Partnership Plan: Standing up for Surrey. This plan sets out the Partnership's goals and plans for how they will work together to make Surrey a better place to live, work and do business.

Sustainability Appraisal: a process involving the identification, consideration and reporting of the likely impacts of planning proposals on social, environmental and economic interests. The findings of the sustainability appraisal are used to inform the production of Local Development Documents.

Sustainable Development: the core principle underpinning the planning system. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): is a system of incorporating environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes. It is sometimes referred to as Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment. The specific term Strategic Environmental Assessment relates to European Union policy.

Woking Borough Local Plan 1999: existing planning policy document for Woking Borough. The Core Strategy 2011 has replaced some of these policies, although some remained saved until such time as they are replaced by policies in the Development Delivery DPD.

Woking Partnership - represents the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of the area. Members include the Clinical Commissioning Group, Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, Woking Chamber of Commerce, Woking Association of Voluntary Service, Community Learning Partnership, and the People of Faith Forum.

Workshop: Meeting at which a small group, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explores issues, develops ideas and makes decisions. Less formal than a public meeting.

Localism terms

Terms such as Localism, Decentralisation, and Big Society have been used by the Coalition Government to explain their vision for the future. Outlined below is what these terms mean.

Localism: is the Government's ethos...

Doing everything at the lowest possible level and only involving central government if absolutely necessary.

Decentralisation is what the Government has to do...

Giving power to individuals, professionals, communities and local institutions.

Big Society: is what the Government is trying to achieve...

A society where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility and use it to create better services and outcomes.

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

DR GIFTY EDILA'S REPORT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - UPDATE TO COUNCIL ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

The Council has undertaken an extensive programme of change to ensure continuing improvement in all areas of public life but particularly in those areas addressed within Dr Gifty Edila's Report and the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge. This report outlines the steps taken by the Council to date.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That the report be received.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers:	<u>WBC21-028 Update on Council Decisions Following The Independent Investigation into the Woking Football Club and Associated Developments</u> <u>EXE20-047 Local Government Association Peer Challenge</u>
Reporting Person:	Joanne McIntosh, Director of Legal and Democratic Services/ Monitoring Officer Email: joanne.mcintosh@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3038
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Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ayesha Azad Email: cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk
Shadow Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
Date Published:	2 February 2022

Dr Gifty Edila's Report and Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - Update To Council on Recommendations

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 7 January 2021, Full Council considered Dr Gifty Edila's recommendations following her independent investigation into the Woking Football Club and associated developments. Full Council resolved that Dr Gifty Edila's recommendations should be accepted, and that Officers should report back to Council, on 29 July 2021, on progress made against the recommendations. Full Council received the progress report and resolved that a further report should be received by Council in February 2022.
- 1.2 Further to the above, the Executive received a report on 16 July 2020 outlining the recommendation of the Local Government Associations Corporate Peer Challenge. Given the synergy between the reviews, this report outlines the steps taken by the Council to date to comply with the recommendations flowing from both matters together with measures put in place to ensure continuing compliance with the recommendations.
- 1.3 The Council has committed to a continuing programme of change and self-improvement. It has taken steps to ensure compliance with the recommendations and in some circumstances taken steps which go beyond what was recommended. These recommendations have been regularly monitored by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team meeting and in respect of Dr Gifty's recommendations progress has been reported to Full Council.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the continuing programme of change which encompasses compliance with the recommendations. As part of the pre-scrutiny process, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update report at its meeting of 24 January 2022.

2.0 Dr Edila's Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council and its Committees have received various reports outlining the steps undertaken to comply with the recommendations contained within Dr Edila's report. The Council put measures in place to ensure compliance with these recommendations and has engaged in a programme of change and improvement. Most of the recommended actions have already been completed and processes embedded into the Council's governance procedures to ensure continuing compliance. This report does not revisit those matters already reported but will focus on those areas where there has been a notable development since the last report. Dr Gifty Edila's recommendations are listed in the July 2021 Council report together with the corresponding steps taken by the Council. This report has been provided to Members as background information.
- 2.2 Recommendation 2
- 2.3 Recommendation 2 (ii) was that:-

" (ii) If the WFC project proceeds to implementation, in the event of planning permission being obtained, an updated report should go to the Executive and Full Council and it should include confirmation of the legal powers on which the agreements were made."
- 2.4 Recommendation 2(ii) is contingent on planning permission being obtained for the Woking Football Club development. The Secretary of State has now dismissed the Planning Appeal and as such refused to grant planning permission in respect of this matter. A copy of the decision has been circulated to all Councillors for their information. As such, this recommendation, and the Development Agreements, shall fall away.

**Dr Gifty Edila's Report and Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge -
Update To Council on Recommendations**

2.5 Recommendation 4

Recommendation 4 (ii) was that:-

"(ii) Legal Services should seek Lexcel accreditation from the Law Society of England and Wales."

2.6 At its meeting on 29 July, Full Council agreed to the creation and funding of a new post within Legal Services together with a budget to cover a consultant and accreditation fees to enable the Legal Services team to achieve Lexcel accreditation.

2.7 The Council has now successfully recruited a new officer to the role of Lexcel Administrator. The successful candidate started at Woking on 22 December. Prior to the appointment the Council has sought assistance from Spelthorne Borough Council (which has been awarded accreditation) to ensure that it is in the best position to start the working towards accreditation. The Council has received quotes from Lexcel consultants and is taking steps to appoint its preferred consultant. The Legal Services team has embraced the prospect and remains confident that it shall achieve accreditation.

2.8 It was agreed in the body of the report to Full Council, that the Legal Services Team shall report back to Full Council to confirm that it has been awarded accreditation. It is anticipated that accreditation shall be achieved by the Autumn.

2.9 Recommendation 6

2.10 Recommendation 6 was that:-

"Part II confidential information in reports dealing with development projects should be limited to information that should not be in the public domain at that point in time and should not apply to the entire report."

2.11 The Council aims to consider all matters concerning development projects or otherwise in the public domain but sometimes this is not possible, particularly given the nature of commercial developments. The use of Part II shall be kept to a minimum and continues to be carefully considered by the Monitoring Officer in line with the statutory framework.

2.12 At its meeting on 7 October 2021, the Executive considered the first annual report in respect of Part II items.

2.13 Recommendation 13

2.14 Recommendation 13 (ii) was that:-

"(ii) WBC should allocate a part-time Scrutiny Officer post to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to assist with their work."

2.15 A part-time Scrutiny Officer is now in place to assist the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with its work. The Council's Director of Planning, Giorgio Framalico, has also taken on the role as the Corporate Leadership Team sponsor to the Committee. This demonstrates the Council's continuing commitment to support the valuable work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As such, compliance has been achieved in respect of the recommendation.

Dr Gifty Edila's Report and Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - Update To Council on Recommendations

3.0 Local Government Association Peer Challenge

- 3.1 The Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2019. The report of the LGA was considered by the Executive on 16 July 2020.
- 3.2 Overall, the report was positive about the Council, its ambition, its political leadership and its management capacity. The value of such reviews is that over time there are always things that can be improved. In that regard the LGA has made a series of recommendations. The Executive determined the Council's response to these recommendation in July 2020. These recommendations provide a "roadmap" to the Council for improvements it can make in order to progress further on its journey to complete its good governance framework and enhance its transformation. Substantial work has been undertaken to address the recommendations highlighted in the Peer Challenge report, and the further actions planned will ensure continuing improvements. The Council's response and action plan can be found at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 The Council's response to the recommendations shall continue to be monitored by the Corporate Leadership Team and the actions highlighted shall be implemented.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council has undertaken an extensive programme of change to ensure continuing improvement in all areas of public life but particularly in those areas addressed within this report. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's observations and feedback on these matters is welcomed to assist and inform the programme of change.

5.0 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The actions undertaken by the Council support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives and directly influence the development of the Corporate Strategy.

6.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 6.1 None specifically arising from this report.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 6.2 None specifically arising from this report.

Legal

- 6.3 None specifically arising from this report.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 None specifically arising from this report.

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

Executive Resolution	Summary of actions arising from resolution	Status
(i) Officers prepare a summary strategy document based on existing approved strategies and present it to Council for approval as part of the Business Plan process for 2021/22	At its meeting of 25 March 2021, the Executive approved the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021/22. The Corporate Plan provides an overview of the Council's strategic focus for the coming year. It encapsulates the commitments made previously by the Council, bringing them together into a single plan of action.	Completed
(ii) following the approval by Council of the summary document of existing approved strategies, proposed at (i) above, to undertake a programme of communications with residents and stakeholders outlining the wider policy approach of the Council	Resolutions (i) (ii) and (iii) all relate directly to the Council's commitment to constant communication with its residents. Whilst each resolution has been addressed, they are best read in conjunction with each other. The Council's vision is to be in constant communication with residents and to have an embedded culture of consultation in how it operates and makes decisions that are in the best interests of the communities of the Woking Borough. The Executive received a report on 20 January on Community Engagement and Communication.	Completed and ongoing. Engagement and Consultation will continue to be a key priority in the emerging Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan will have key performance indicators and monitoring arrangements in place.
(iii) Officers undertake a series of public engagement events to explain the framework for town centre development proposals	In summary, the Council has taken significant steps to implement an ambitious programme of engagement. Investment has been made into an on-line civic engagement digital platform, the Woking Community Forum, and a representative Residents' Panel has been established. The first meeting of the Residents' Panel was on the 7 th July. There are in excess of 750 residents	
(iv) the Citizens Panel be re-established and a programme of issues upon which to consult		

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

<p>it be established with an initial focus on the health and well-being in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership</p>	<p>who have registered to be on the Panel.</p> <p>A series of community roadshows took place between November and December 2021 alongside an engagement questionnaire, to obtain community feedback, to inform and influence the corporate priorities for the Council.</p> <p>The Council has determined that residents' views should influence the Council's five-year Corporate Strategy for 2022-2027. To fulfil this commitment, an online questionnaire was hosted on the Council's engagement hub, Woking Community Forum. In addition, 3,000 paper copies were sent to randomly selected households across the borough and eight engagement roadshows were hosted at key community-based locations.</p> <p>The Council has committed to prepare a newly defined Town Centre Masterplan to help guide future sustainable development within the Town Centre. The Executive Committee at their meeting of the 15 July 2021 agreed the overview of the master plan and budget. The Masterplan will seek to establish an overarching vision for Woking Town Centre that will enable sustainable development including new homes, a thriving business and retail destination as well as strengthening Woking as a cultural, recreational and community destination. During late summer a series of virtual workshops were held with Woking Residents' Panel, who gave their views on the current development of Woking Town Centre and their aspirations for the</p>	
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Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

	<p>future. In addition, face-to-face meetings have been conducted with key employers within the borough to understand their future needs and wants for a prosperous future. It is anticipated that the draft Masterplan will be presented to Council late spring 2022, before a formal in-depth and wide-ranging public consultation will begin later in the year.</p>	
<p>(v) a survey of Members be undertaken to establish what further information they would find helpful to include in the Green Book and what further awareness raising and/or training is required in respect of the Council's financial arrangements</p>	<p>A review of the Green Book will commence in March 2022 following the development and agreement of the new Corporate Strategy which will be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 3rd February 2022.</p> <p>The Green Book will be reviewed in order for it to align with the Corporate Plan as it should provide the key performance information for which to measure progress on delivering the key priorities of the Council.</p> <p>The review is being initiated through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Ongoing – scheduled to commence following the publication of the new Corporate Plan.</p>
<p>(vi) the proposal to Council in respect of a Standards Protocol to allow Members access to commercially sensitive information in respect of Thameswey Group companies, and any other Woking Borough Council subsidiaries, be supported</p>	<p>The Council adopted the amended ThamesWey Group Protocols (Page 281 of the consultation) which outline communications by ThamesWey with Councillors.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

<p>(vii) the consideration by the Director of Finance of the appropriateness of borrowing periods be highlighted when the Council is requested to approve its annual budgets and its annual accounts;</p>	<p>Treasury management has been incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Planning reporting through 2021 and the budget report to the Executive on 3rd February 2022 and Council on 10th February 2022.</p> <p>A Financial Review and Insight independent review was commissioned and was completed by 31st December 2021. This review incorporates a comprehensive statement covering borrowing and a review of all assets and liabilities of Woking Borough Council and all companies in which it has an interest. A report is on the O&S Agenda for 24 January 2022.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>(viii) the Council's efficiency strategy be revitalised in two main parts, one to explore procurement savings and the other to explore operational efficiencies through automation and use of digital services;</p>	<p>The Council has developed and implemented integrated service and financial planning in 2021/22 as considered and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 15th July 2021.</p> <p>A progress report on the integrated service and financial planning was provided to the meeting of the Executive on 7th October 2021 and 18th November which provided details of the Fit for the Future Programme which represents the Council's change plans and activity.</p> <p>A Head of Transformation and Digital post has been established and the post holder took up the role on 18th October 2021. A Digital Strategy was presented to the Executive at its meeting on 18th November and following this a first year action plan is being developed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

<p>(ix) an Internal Audit Review be undertaken in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny function and the resources required to ensure its effectiveness;</p>	<p>Internal Audit was commissioned as part of the Woking Borough Council (Council) Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22 ('Plan'), to conduct an advisory review of effectiveness of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee effectiveness. A draft report from the auditors was presented to Corporate Leadership Team in September and again on the 4 October including management comments. The audit was finalised in early October and shared with those who contributed to audit.</p> <p>In addition the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting in September received a detailed paper on the provisions of the statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2019 making recommendations for improvement. The implementation of the agreed actions arising and any additional actions arising from the audit will be monitored by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>(x) Officers review the extent to which customer feedback opportunities and Local Government Association case studies could be used in the management of the Council's services with a view to improving outcomes and securing efficiency improvements linked to the efficiency strategy;</p>	<p>The Council commissioned the Local Government Association to undertake a Peer Review of the Planning Service. This has been undertaken and the Council is awaiting the final report.</p> <p>A Community Engagement campaign has been developed and undertaken in 2021. The Council has successfully recruited a new engagement officer who has developed a managed programme of community engagement and activity. The Council has undertaken extensive work in this area.</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

	<p>More details in respect of The Council's Community engagement commitments can be found in the Community Engagement and Communication report to the Executive on 20 January. Whilst this programme of community engagement has been completed, it is an ongoing commitment of the Council.</p> <p>A meeting was held with an ex S151 officer, through the Local Government Association, to gain independent views on the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy approach and open up learning from other authorities.</p>	
<p>(xi) the use of Zoom, Teams and Digital services will all be expanded and continued, post Coronavirus, and form part of the efficiency strategy, use of automation; and</p>	<p>The Council is adopting the Microsoft 365 platform towards the end of 2021 which support the Councils remote working policy and development of an increasingly more agile workplace. A change programme is being established alongside the technical implementation in order to support service adoption of the platform and promote collaborative working opportunities it presents.</p> <p>The Council continues to host meetings virtually where legislation allows for it to do so.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>(xii) in the autumn the Council should consider its longer-term management arrangements as part of its 2021/22 business planning process.</p>	<p>The Fit for the Future programme has been established by the Chief Executive as the programme of change for the Council that will establish the culture, regime and focus for the how the Council will operate as a trusted voice, advocate and agent of change for the Borough.</p> <p>This programme is established on the themes of: > A culture of engagement - to understand and respond to the priorities of the Borough's Communities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Review Response and Action Plan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> A regime of conducting Council business with openness and transparency enabling strong democratic accountability> A focus on a one council way of working to deliver strong organisational performance and resilience <p>Delivering this Fit for the Future programme will include a review of the operating model of the Council to ensure it is best organised to drive forward and support the delivery of the programme. Proposals will be developed over the next 6-9 months to bring forward proposals that will establish a model of working for the Council that best addresses the challenges and maximises the returns from the best characteristics of the Council. The key principles that are informing the approach include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">> Digital First service delivery designed around the residents' journey of dealings with the Council;> working in partnership with public and commercial sector organisations to reduce the cost of operations; provide sustainable and resilient services; adopting best practice and innovation and positioning the Council as a key influencer and advocate in the region; and> adopting our version of operating as a commercial organisation in support of the Council's role as an active steward of the Borough's communities and generating wealth and benefit within the local economy.	
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COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION REVIEW PANEL 2021

Executive Summary

Each year, the Council considers a report from the Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel which sets out the previous year's election and electoral registration activities. The Annual Report sets out the work carried out by Electoral Services to maintain the integrity of the Electoral Register and the security of the electoral process in Woking.

The draft Annual Report was considered by the Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel at its meeting on 26 January 2022 and is commended to the Council. Attached for information as an appendix to the Annual Report is a copy of a paper prepared following a review undertaken by the Council's Returning Officer in light of the experiences of the 2021 elections. The paper was circulated to the Members of the Review Panel in August 2021.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That the Annual Report of the Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel be received.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
Reporting Person:	Claire Storey, Independent Co-Opted Member Email: Claire.storey@woking.gov.uk
Contact Person:	Emera Chown, Electoral Services Manager Email: emera.chown@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3215
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Date Published:	2 February 2022

REPORT ENDS



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Woking Borough Council, Surrey County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections – 6 May 2021

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Electoral Registration 2020-2021

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The revised Register was published on 1 December 2020. The total number of residential addresses at publication of the revised register was 43,241.

2.0 Registration Activity

- 2.1 To ensure that electors had as much time as possible to change or update their registration details, a Household Notification Letter (HNL) was sent out to all properties in the Borough at the beginning of February 2021. The HNL was accompanied by an elector leaflet which provided full details of the Borough, County and Police and Crime Commissioner elections being held on 6 May 2021. The leaflet also set out the measures that would be in place to ensure the safety of all electors and staff at polling stations during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.2 As a result of sending the HNL, there were 1,184 new applications during the four-week period following the mail out.
- 2.3 Several press releases were also issued by the Council encouraging registration within the Borough in the months leading up to the elections.
- 2.4 The deadline to register for the Borough, County and Police and Crime Commissioner elections was Monday, 19 April 2021. Electors who had submitted their applications had until Monday, 26 April 2021 to be verified to be included on the election register. If any new applicants could not be verified automatically, they were contacted to provide supporting evidence during this period. There were no problems with the Government Digital Service (GDS) and the online registration system for these elections.

3.0 Maintenance of the Register

Absent Vote Refresh

- 3.1 In January 2021, all absent voters with a personal identifier which was more than five years old were contacted to update their signature. Electors had six weeks to respond to the request and if no response was received after six weeks, the absent vote for the elector was removed.
- 3.2 1,063 electors were contacted with a new absent vote application form to obtain updated details. After three weeks, a reminder was sent to those electors who had not responded. 114 electors did not respond to either the initial request, or the reminder and the postal vote for these electors was removed accordingly. These electors were given the opportunity to re-apply for their postal vote when they were notified that the existing postal vote arrangement had been cancelled.

Data Checking

- 3.3 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) uses Council sources to identify new electors to add to the Register. Regular updates from Council Tax are received, which lists the details of properties where the person liable for the Council Tax has changed. This information is cross referenced with the Electoral Register, and an Invitation to Register (ITR) is sent out, to encourage the new occupants to register and confirm which electors can be removed from the Register. Changes to tenancy arrangements for WBC owned properties is also used to maintain the Register.

- 3.4 The Electoral Register is updated regularly with property updates from the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG), and once it is verified that the new properties are occupied, ITR's are sent to obtain the new occupier details.

Electoral Reviews

- 3.5 The ERO reviews entries for electors where there is reason to believe that they are no longer resident at a property on a regular basis. Reasons for reviewing electors include notification of new residents at a property and post being returned from an elector as being undelivered.
- 3.6 Reviews are carried out when the ERO has received notification that an elector is no longer living at a property, but does not have secondary, collaborating information, such as Council Tax data, which is required to remove the elector from the Register.

4.0 Polling Places

- 4.1 Following the election, a review of the Council's election and electoral registration processes was undertaken by the Council's Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer. Included in this review was the evaluation of the current designated polling place for the St John's East polling district (K3) due to accessibility issues to disabled voters at The Al Asr Education & Community Centre being identified. An assessment of alternative polling places was carried out with The Surrey History Centre being identified as having suitable facilities to ensure accessibility to all electors in that area.

5.0 Local Democracy Week

- 5.1 This year's Local Democracy Week ran between 11 to 17 October 2021 unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic officers were unable to visit and run workshops within schools in the Borough for a second year.

6.0 Annual Canvass

- 6.1 The canvass commenced on 28 June 2021 with the electoral register being disclosed to the Minister for the Cabinet Office as part of a data matching exercise known as national data matching and was carried out by using the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data. Once the results were received a further data matching exercise was undertaken at a local level using Council Tax and Housing and Benefits data known as local data matching.
- 6.2 The national data matching results were received on 29 June 2021 which gave a clear indication of the matched and unmatched properties in the Borough. The total number of matched properties and allocated to Route 1 after DWP matching was 30,103. The total number of unmatched properties and allocated to Route 2 was 13,012. The accuracy of the DWP dataset was 87.83%.
- 6.3 The local data matching was undertaken on 30 June 2021. The results confirmed that the total number of Route 1 properties was 34,675 and the total number of Route 2 properties was 8,673. The accuracy of the Council Tax dataset was 96.01%.
- 6.4 The total number of Route 3 properties was 38. These properties were exempt from data matching as they were primarily care homes, where a 'responsible person' could provide information on the residents.
- 6.5 All properties were contacted week commencing 30 August 2021 with Route 1 properties receiving a Canvass Communication A (CCA) form setting out who was registered at the

property. A response was only required if the information was incorrect. These properties were only in receipt of the one canvass form and were not followed up.

- 6.6 Route 2 properties received a Canvass Communication B (CCB) form followed by two further contact attempts for non-responding properties. At the first reminder stage some electors received an E-communication and where no email address was held a subsequent Canvass Form was sent week commencing 20 September 2021. At the final stage all non-responding properties received a personal visit carried out by the Council's canvassers.
- 6.7 All Route 3 properties were individually contacted by the Electoral Services Team.
- 6.8 10 canvassers carried out the second reminder, personal visit stage of the canvass from 19 October 2021, visiting all other properties that had not responded to the previous correspondence (either by email or by post). In total, 4,039 properties were included in this stage with each property receiving a minimum of two contact attempts.
- 6.9 A breakdown of the returns by the individual routes is set out below.

Route 1 Properties	Responses Received
Number of responses received	3318
Number of responses reporting a major change	1624
Number of responses reporting no change or minor change	1141
Number of responses reporting no change	553
Number of Additions within households	2163
Number of Deletions within households	2939

Route 2 Properties	Responses Received
Number of responses received	6209
Number of responses reporting a major change	2713
Number of responses reporting no change or minor change	780
Number of responses reporting no change	2716
Number of Additions within households	2714
Number of Deletions within households	2789

Route 3 Properties	Responses Received
Number of responses received	38
Number of responses reporting a major change	34
Number of responses reporting no change or minor change	4
Number of Additions within households	161
Number of Deletions within households	203

- 6.10 A total number of 11,529 Invitation to Register (ITR's) forms were issued to newly identified electors which were identified as part of the Canvass. A total number of 2442 ITR responses were received.
- 6.11 Electors from 7,030 properties used the automated response services.
- 6.12 Prior to the publication of the register additional checks were carried out in October and November to ensure its accuracy.

Duplicate Entry Checks

- 6.13 Possible duplicate entries were analysed, checking against Council Tax records, to highlight where entries have been duplicated. Where Council Tax records show that electors have moved from one property to another, they were removed from the previous address and an Invitation to Register (ITR) was sent out.

Empty Property Check

- 6.14 The details of new developments in Woking, in particular the Sheerwater Regeneration development were analysed, and cross referenced against Council tax records to ascertain which properties were empty or had been demolished.
- 6.15 The revised register was published on 1 December 2021. The overall response rate to the annual canvass was at 94.62%.
- 6.16 At the start of the canvass a total number of 43,586 residential addresses were on the electoral register. The total number of residential addresses at publication of the revised register was 43,386.
- 6.17 The following information is given as a comparison of the register as at 1 September 2021, (the last publication of the rolling registration updates before the canvass) and the register as published on 1 December 2021.

Register	1 September 2021	1 December 2021
No. of Electors	75,551	74,817
Attainers (16- and 17-year-olds)	634	251
18-year-olds	500	571
Over 76s	7138	7012
Postal Voters	13,987	14087

- 6.18 The number of electors fell during the canvass. However, this is a normal registration pattern, as the CAA, CCB and Canvass Forms sent to properties as part of the annual canvass does not register electors. Registration forms are sent to newly identified electors who register separately.
- 6.19 Electors who turn 18 in the course of the year (1 December – 30 November) are included in the attainer figures. Also included in the attainer figures are 16-year-olds, who will turn 17 in the same period. Whilst the number of attainers drops during the canvass, this indicates that a large number of these electors turned 18, and therefore are no longer classed as attainers. As the newly identified attainer electors complete their registrations, the attainer numbers will increase.

Borough, County and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections

6 May 2021

1.0 Notice of Elections

- 1.1 The Notice of Elections was published on Monday, 22 March, on the instruction of the Returning Officer.

2.0 Modern Polling

- 2.1 All 54 polling stations used Modern Polling for these elections. Modern Polling is a system provided by Modern Democracy, a leading company in the delivery of elections software and services to Local Government in the UK. Modern Polling is an easy-to-use facility which provides a faster more friendly check in for the voter. Through the system, each polling station was issued with one iPad and as a contingency sixteen spare iPads were readily available in the event the iPad's weren't able to charge properly, became damaged or broken.
- 2.2 The Polling Station Staff are able to scan the Voters' Poll Card using the iPads which securely hold a copy of the Register. The system instantly provides the poll clerk with the voter's information on-screen and marks them on the register and facilitates the production of the corresponding number list and the ballot paper account.
- 2.3 Initially at the opening of polls a few polling stations experienced issues with regards to the iPad's stating an elector had already voted in these elections. Having consulted with Modern Democracy's support helpline this was due to the camera on the iPad being very sensitive and scanning the QR code on the Poll Card before the elector had presented it to the Poll Clerk as well as the Poll Clerk skipping the issuing of the ballot papers process and confirming those steps had already been completed.
- 2.4 Feedback overall received from staff has been extremely positive, the iPads were user friendly and in particular voters were able to be processed quicker therefore minimising the risk of queues forming.
- 2.5 An issue occurred at the receiving line after the close of poll, Presiding Officers were unable to submit the ballot paper accounts online. This issue caused a delay of several hours in the processing of polling station documentation. After raising this issue with Modern Democracy, it was explained that the capacity provided by the software company was not large enough to accommodate all Modern Polling users across the Country completing the close of poll at the same time.

3.0 Election Staff

- 3.1 Six Deputy Returning Officers (DROs) were appointed with full powers whose main roles were to adjudicate on returned postal vote statements, inspect polling stations and oversee individual count teams. Additionally, the Democratic Services Manager and Corporate GIS Officer were appointed as DROs for the postal vote issuing and opening process.
- 3.2 The previous Returning Officer (RO) and Electoral Services Manager (ESM) left the Council on 31 March. Although the newly appointed RO and ESM had minimal experience in the running of the electoral process there was resilience within the existing Elections Team

having undertaken several previous elections. In addition to this a further highly experienced DRO from Runnymede Borough Council was appointed with full powers to oversee an individual count team to provide support to two newly appointed DROs.

- 3.3 The election was managed by the ESM, with support from two Electoral Services Officers, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Democratic Services.
- 3.4 The issue and opening of postal votes were managed by the Democratic Services Manager and Corporate GIS Officer supported by the Democratic Services team.
- 3.5 Staff were notified that, when accepting an offer of employment to work in a polling station they were consenting to work during the hours of poll without a rest break and in excess of the maximum working hours provided by the Working Time Directive.

4.0 Staff Training

- 4.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all staff training was carried out and undertaken on-line.
- 4.2 Additional training was undertaken by Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks for this election due to the trialling of iPads (Modern Polling). This training was conducted online in a webinar style over various dates. In addition to this Presiding Officers were invited into the Civic Offices by appointment only, adhering to all government guidelines to use the iPads in test mode ahead of Polling Day.
- 4.3 A Returning Officers Briefing was held via Zoom on 4 May to emphasise the key points and priorities ahead of Polling Day, in particular to highlight the safety measures put in place to keep all staff and voters safe in light of the public health situation.
- 4.4 Count supervisors and assistant count supervisors attended an online briefing to go through the arrangements for the verification and count with the onus being of the arrangements for the Stage 2 count process for the Police and Crime Commissioner count. Additionally, Count supervisors and assistant count supervisors were briefed prior to the start of the verification and count process.

5.0 Nominations

- 5.1 Nominations for the County election were dealt with by the Local Returning Officer, the Borough election were dealt with by the Returning Officer and the Police and Crime Commissioner election were dealt with by the Police Area Returning Officer.

6.0 Poll Cards

- 6.1 Poll cards were printed and issued when the Notice of Election was published on 22 March 2021.
- 6.2 Three further poll card mailings were sent throughout the election period, to ensure all eligible electors received official notification.

7.0 Postal Votes

- 7.1 Due to the closure of HG Wells Conference & Events Centre in September 2020 and the impact of the pandemic, an alternative venue of Export House was secured to hold the postal votes issuing and opening sessions for this election.

7.2 In light of the public health situation, it was necessary to adapt the procedures for the postal vote issuing and opening sessions to ensure the safety of all staff involved and the delivery of this process. The issuing and opening of postal votes were split between two teams, located on separate floors of Export House, Floors 3 and 4. Team A was managed by the Democratic Services Manager and Team B was managed for the Corporate GIS Officer. Each Team remained in their bubbles for the duration of this process to ensure resilience was in place in the event of one team contracting Covid.

7.3 The following measures were put in place to ensure the safety of staff at all times;

- The number of staff and issuing/opening sessions held were increased as it was unclear what the impact of the pandemic may have on postal vote process.
- The same postal vote staff were employed for the duration of the issuing sessions as was for the opening sessions however this was split into two separate periods of time.
- Staggered start times were in place to ensure staff from the two teams entered and exited the building at different times.
- Temperature checks were provided at the entrances to the building.
- Personal Protective Equipment was provided for all staff consisting of face shields, Type 1 surgical masks, hand sanitiser and sanitising wipes.
- Cleaning of both floors was carried out after each session.
- Staff worked individually unless they were part of a family bubble and were seated at desks two meters apart. Staff were not required to wear face masks when seated but were required to at all other times.
- Perspex screens were installed for observers visiting to view the postal vote process.
- On the day of the election, the opening of postal votes was undertaken at the Leisure Centre. In view of the smaller amount of space available, Perspex screens were used throughout the room.

Issue of Postal Vote Packs

7.4 The first issue of postal votes was on Thursday, 15 April 2021. Further postal votes were issued on 16 April, 17 April, 19 April and 21 April 2021. These were for electors who registered to vote on 19 April 2021 (registration deadline) and those who applied for a postal vote on 20 April 2021 (postal vote deadline). In total, 14,443 postal votes were issued.

7.5 A discrepancy between the ballot paper number on the Postal Voter Statements and the ballot paper number on the back of the Ballot Papers was identified before any postal vote packs were issued. The discrepancy related to the zeros in front of the ballot paper number (100000001 against 10000000001). The ballot papers were reprinted with two additional zeros; to avoid any unnecessary delays, the original ballot papers were in the meantime issued to two wards, with an accompanying explanation of the discrepancy. No issues arose from the discrepancy and no enquiries were received from electors. The Electoral Commission were advised of the Council's approach and stated that no additional action was required.

- 7.6 201 replacement ballot paper packs were issued up until the deadline of 5pm on Election Day. Packs are reissued in cases where the elector advised that they had spoiled their ballot papers, lost their postal ballot papers, or had not received them. In such circumstances, the original postal vote ballot paper was cancelled, and new postal vote pack issued.

Opening of Postal Votes

- 7.7 Opening sessions started on Monday 26 April 2021. As in previous years, the DROs adjudicated the postal vote scanning. Agents were advised in advance of the dates of the opening sessions.
- 7.8 In total eight opening sessions were held. The final opening session was held on Thursday, 6 May which dealt with those postal votes arriving in the post on the day of the election, those handed in at either the Civic Offices or polling stations and those returned by the Post Office through the final sweep.
- 7.9 The post box at the Civic Offices was checked at 10.00 pm and a final 'sweep' was undertaken by the Royal Mail at their delivery office, which resulted in further postal votes being received.

Returns Analysis

- 7.10 75% of postal vote packs were returned, representing a total of just under 11,000 envelopes returned.

Process Followed

- 7.11 Postal votes are opened and the contents checked prior to the scanning of the postal vote statement. At this stage, a postal vote can be provisionally rejected for the following reasons:
- Ballot Papers Numbers do not match – ballot papers cannot be accepted where the number on the ballot paper envelope does not match the number on the postal vote statement.
 - Ballot Paper Envelope and Ballot Papers are missing.
 - Postal Vote Statement is absent.

Verification of Postal Vote Statements

- 7.12 After the initial checks, postal vote statements are verified, to ensure the signature and date of birth provided on the statement matches those on the original postal vote application.
- 7.13 The reasons for rejecting a postal vote at this stage are:
- Date of Birth Rejected – either the date of birth has not been entered on the postal vote statement, or it does not match the date of birth provided on the postal vote application.
 - Signature Rejected – either the signature has not been entered on the postal vote statement, or it does not match the signature provided on the postal vote application.
 - Signature and Date of Birth Rejected - either the voter did not complete the postal vote statement or both the signature and date of birth provided on the postal vote

statement did not match the signature and date of birth provided on the postal vote application.

Rejected Postal Votes

7.14 The table below sets out the number of postal votes rejected through the scanning process. Postal votes are recorded as provisionally rejected in those instances where there is a possibility of reconciling the issue (such as a missing Statement). Any provisionally rejected postal votes which cannot be reconciled are deemed rejected at the close of poll.

Category	Borough	County	PCC
Rejected	261	261	261
Provisionally Rejected	285	283	284
Reconciled	16	14	14
Total Rejected	530	530	531
Missing Ballot Papers	58	63	146

7.15 Set out below are the number of postal votes rejected as part of the signature and date of birth verification process.

Reason for Rejection	Total
Date of Birth Rejected	74
Date of Birth Missing	0
Signature Rejected	168
Signature Missing	0
DOB and Sig Rejected	11
DOB and Sig Missing	0
Lost and Spoilt	8

Post - Scanning Checks

7.16 Following the scanning of the postal vote statements, the contents of the ballot paper envelope are checked. A postal vote can be rejected at this stage for the following reasons:

- Ballot Papers Numbers do not match – ballot papers cannot be accepted where the number on the ballot paper does not match the number on the ballot paper envelope.
- Ballot Papers were absent

7.17 Any errors relating to personal identifiers were recorded at the scanners. Where electors needed to update their identifier, they were contacted following the election. Any clerical errors were also corrected.

8.0 Polling Stations

8.1 54 polling stations were used for the elections in 30 venues, 9 of which were dual stations.

8.2 A visit to all polling stations was carried out prior to the elections to review the set up and management of the polling station in light of the pandemic. The following measures were put in place to ensure the safety of staff and voters at all times;

- Additional staffing of a third Poll Clerk was provided at all polling stations to help manage and maintain social distancing by limiting the number of voters allowed into the polling station at any one given time dependent upon the size of the venue.
- All staff were requested to carry out a lateral flow test three days prior to the election.
- All staff were required to wear Type 1 surgical masks and/or face shields.
- One-way systems where possible were put in place to ensure social distancing could be maintained with the addition of floor markings.
- Additional signage was displayed reminding voters of the need to follow public health guidelines such as social distancing, the wearing of face coverings and only entering if symptom-free.
- A crate of Personal Protective Equipment was provided to every polling station consisting of face shields, Type 1 surgical masks, hand sanitiser, sanitising wipes and gloves.
- Hand sanitiser was placed at key points throughout the polling stations, entrances, exits, polling booths and next to the ballot boxes. Spare face masks were also provided for those electors who forgot.
- Regular cleaning throughout the day of touchpoints such as doors, polling booths and all writing implements.
- Tellers were advised that they must always remain outside the polling station and observe social distancing with each other and when interacting with voters.

8.3 All polling equipment were delivered prior to polling day and Presiding Officers were asked to record any issues that occurred or were reported on polling day in a logbook. This included possible errors on the register, visits from Police Officers and cases where electors were marked as an absent voter and claimed not to have asked for a postal vote. This information has been analysed and, where appropriate, electors have been contacted.

9.0 Verification and Count

9.1 All polling station documentation and ballot boxes were returned to Woking Leisure Centre on Thursday, 6 May following the close of polls. Following the completion of the final postal vote opening session the postal ballot papers were stored alongside in the Main Hall overnight with two security guards' presence.

9.2 The verification of the County, Borough and PCC election was held on Friday, 7 May at Woking Leisure Centre from 9.30am followed by the County and Borough count. The PCC count was held on Saturday 8 May. There were eight count teams consisting of a count supervisor, an assistant count supervisor and twelve count assistants. Four count teams were located in the Main Hall, one in the Wurlitzer, Old Gym, Studio 1 and Studio 2.

9.3 Originally there was to be five count teams to ensure that the number of people attending can be safely accommodated and social distancing measures adhered to. However, the

decision was taken to increase the number of count teams to eight to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the count process.

9.4 The following measures were put in place to ensure the safety of staff, candidates, agents and guest at all times;

- Perspex clear screens were erected to create a physical barrier between staff, candidate, agents and guests.
- The use of face coverings was required for all those attending the verification and count unless subject to exemption in accordance with the government regulations.
- All staff, candidates, agents and guests were requested to carry out a lateral flow test three days prior to the count.
- Individual hand sanitiser, face shield and a packet of 10 Type 1 surgical masks was provided to each member of staff.
- Hand sanitiser was placed at key points throughout the count venue, entrances, exits and on every count table. Spare face masks were also provided for those guests who forgot.
- For safety reasons the number of counting agents and guests permitted to attend the count was limited to three per candidate.
- Desks with Perspex screens in the Main Hall were allocated for the sole use by guests as well as the use of Studio 3.
- Staggered lunch and break times were put in place using separate rooms to ensure count teams remained in their bubbles for the duration of the count.

9.5 The verification process for the County, Borough and PCC elections took longer than expected. This was primarily due to the three ballot papers having to be sorted into the relevant elections prior to commencement of the verification. The count of the ballot papers for the County Election commenced at 3.30pm followed by the count of the ballot papers for Borough.

9.6 Following the confirmation of the County and Borough results, all count teams were released at 10.00pm. SERCO removed all documentation and equipment from Woking Leisure Centre to the secure store.

9.7 The count of the ballot papers for the PCC election commenced at 9.30am on Saturday, 8 May. In accordance with the guidance from the PARO for the Police and Crime Commissioner, the ballot papers first had to be verified by a bundle check. This was to ensure the LRO was satisfied that the verification figure obtained on the previous day was accurate.

9.8 The verification figure was submitted to the PARO by 11.00am as stated in the count protocol. On receipt of confirmation that the verification for the Surrey Police Area had been announced at 11.51am, the first stage count commenced. The first stage count results were required to be submitted to the PARO by 1.30pm.

9.9 The declaration of the results of the first stage were announced at 3.57pm. As no single candidate received over 50% of the votes cast, we moved to the second preference count. Following the confirmation of the final result from the PARO, the LRO announced the results

and all count teams were released. SERCO removed all documentation and equipment from Woking Leisure Centre to the secure store.

- 9.10 During the count, security staff were in place at the entrances to the Main Hall, Wurlitzer, Old Gym, Studio 1 and Studio 2. CCTV cameras were installed in the Main Hall which covered the document sorting area, the counting areas and the entrances to the room.
- 9.11 Colour coded badges were issued to attendees, to differentiate between levels of security access for all those in attendance.
- 9.12 Borough Councillors were not invited to attend as guests as per previous elections due to the restriction of numbers allowed at the venue. However, Group Leaders from all parties were invited to attend the Count as representation.

Storage of Documents

- 9.13 All documents returned from polling stations and counted ballot papers were sorted into crates in the Main Hall and these were sealed and removed to a secure store on Friday, 7 May and Saturday, 8 May.

Turnout

- 9.14 The turnout for the elections was 40%.

10.0 Electoral Integrity

- 10.1 A query was raised with regards to duplications on the register which was investigated by the Electoral Services Officer. The elector in question has been contacted to confirm their present address and therefore will be removed from the register at the other address.
- 10.2 A resident reported that their household's four postal voter envelopes were received in poor condition. There were no further reports of postal voter envelopes received by residents, candidates or agents being in a state of disrepair. This issue has been raised with the Royal Mail.
- 10.3 All issues reported from Polling Stations, Candidates and Agents on Polling Day were brought to the immediate attention of the Returning Officer which were investigated and dealt with accordingly by the Returning Officer or an appointed Deputy Returning Officer. These included the distance of campaign signs to the proximity of the polling station, the number of tellers present at a polling and conversations between Candidates, Agents and voters at polling places.
- 10.4 A query was raised in relation to electors overseas requesting and applying for a proxy vote. Applications for a proxy vote sent electronically were accepted for this election in light of the current pandemic.
- 10.5 No further issues were reported to the DRO nor to Surrey Police.

REPORT ENDS

REVIEW OF ELECTION AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION PROCESSES

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A review of the Council's election and electoral registration processes has been undertaken by the Council's Electoral Registration Officer following the Borough, County and Police & Crime Commissioner elections held in May 2021. Meetings were held with the Deputy Returning Officers to gain their feedback on the management of postal votes, the Election Day and the Count arrangements. Feedback was requested from staff involved in all aspects of the elections which was also considered as part of the review process. The review incorporates lessons learnt during the past year and the adoption of positive measures to ensure the integrity of the Council's processes and procedures going forward.

2.0 Postal Vote Registration

2.1 The outcome of the election petition in respect of the Borough Election in the Maybury and Sheerwater Ward in May 2012 identified Woking as an area where the risk of future allegations of electoral fraud arising was higher due to the previous confirmed case of proven fraud. To ensure the integrity of the electoral register and the postal vote process the Electoral Registration Officer had adopted the approach that those electors on the electoral register who would like to apply for a postal or proxy vote were requested to provide additional photographic identification to allow the Council to verify their identity. The following identification was requested;

- proof of identification such as passport or driving licence.
- proof of residency at the property such as utility bill and bank statement.

2.2 No further cases of alleged electoral fraud have been reported and the risk of electoral fraud occurring in the Borough is now considered to be much lower. Having carefully considered the matter, the Electoral Registration Officer shall no longer request that electors provide additional photographic identification. This change shall have immediate effect. The Council's website shall be updated to reflect this change and accord with the Electoral Commissions requirement as follows;

- Your date of birth and signature are needed on this application form, and again when you use your postal vote. This information is needed to prevent fraud. If you are unable to sign this form, please contact your local electoral registration office. Return your form to your local electoral registration.

2.3 The UK government is proposing changes to the UK electoral system. The proposed changes contained in the Elections Bill seek to improve the security, accessibility and transparency of elections and campaigning. There are several proposed changes to postal voting, which build on the current checks in place to confirm a voter's identity if they are voting by post:

- A maximum period of three years on voters' application to hold a postal vote. Voters would need to re-apply at the end of that time.
- Restricting those able to hand in a postal vote to the voter, their family member or a designated carer acting on their behalf.
- Preventing someone from handing in more than two postal ballot packs at polling stations, in addition to their own. The current rules do not specify who can hand in a postal vote or how many can be returned by one person.
- Banning parties and campaigners from handling completed postal votes and postal vote envelopes.

- 2.4 It is important that changes to the postal voting system should improve both its security and maintain its accessibility. Notably these changes do not propose a change to the voter identification procedures currently in place for voting by post but build upon them.

At present a notice in writing is sent to every absent voter (postal, proxy and postal proxy voters) whose signature on the personal identifiers record is more than five years old. This is known as the absent vote refresh exercise and it takes place in January each year for those absent voters whose signatures on the personal identifiers record became more than five years old in the 12 months since the last refresh.

The above approach would minimise the risk of fraud, while ensuring everyone who wants to vote by post is able to do so easily. These proposals are welcomed as they would strengthen the protections around postal voting, and shall improve voter trust and confidence in the system.

3.0 Modern Polling (iPads)

- 3.1 The Council trialled the use of Modern Polling across all 54 polling stations within the Borough at the May elections. The overall feedback received from staff and electors was positive, the iPad's were user friendly enabling voters to be processed quickly which minimised the risk of queues forming and therefore creating a better voter experience.
- 3.2 Issues however were experienced initially at the opening of polls with regards to the iPad's registering an elector having already voted in these elections. This was due to the sensitivity of the iPad's camera scanning the QR code on the poll card before it had been presented. This caused a slight delay whilst the matter was resolved.
- 3.3 At the close of the polls a further issue arose were Presiding Officers were unable to submit the ballot paper accounts online due to the software company having insufficient network capacity. . The network capacity provided was not sufficient to accommodate all Modern Polling users across the country trying to submit the ballot paper account at the same time. This issue incurred a severe delay in the processing of polling station documentation. It is important to note that these issues did not impact upon or affect the integrity of the electoral process.
- 3.4 To continue the use of Modern Polling at future elections would require a three year commitment at a significant cost to the Council which is not recoverable. Despite the software company's assurance that the issues experienced on Polling Day have been resolved there is still uncertainty around the reoccurrence of these fundamental issues. The Electoral Registration Officer will therefore continue to monitor the development of elections software and undertake a review of the use of Modern Polling (or similar software) following the next election in May 2022.

4.0 Postal Votes Issuing Process

- 4.1 The management of the absent voting process at present is delivered in-house with the preparation and production of all associated documentation being undertaken and carried out by officers within Democratic and Legal Services. The demand on officer's time in administering the absent voting issuing process is significant.
- 4.2 Outsourcing the printing and production of the postal ballot packs to a commercial supplier would allow officers to focus on other aspects of the administration of the elections. This would ensure further resilience was available within the elections team and the potential for possible financial savings. This practice is commonplace with many other District and Borough Councils already outsourcing this element of the process. The Election Registration Officer shall investigate the outsourcing of the issuing of postal votes ahead of next year's election.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 As a matter of good practice and to improve and build upon existing processes and procedures, a thorough review of all processes and procedures in the preparation and undertaking of the Borough, County and Police & Crime Commissioner elections has been undertaken. As with every election, lessons have been learnt for future polls and minor administrative improvements shall be made prior to the next election. This was a very busy time for the Elections Team, with three separate elections falling at once and procedures having to be amended to incorporate Covid safety measures. It is pleasing to report that the election ran smoothly and no major changes need to be implemented.

REPORT ENDS

COUNCIL – 2 FEBRUARY 2022

DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACE – WARD OF ST JOHNS

Executive Summary

This report deals with the designation of a new polling place in the Borough Ward of St Johns. The Council is responsible for the designation of polling places across the Borough.

The existing polling place for the St John's East polling district (K3) in the St John's Ward is the Al Asr Education & Community Centre on Goldsworth Road. The venue has been used to host a polling station by the Council for a number of years, though does have a number of limitations, particularly in terms of accessibility for disabled voters.

During an officer review of the 2021 elections, contact was established with the Surrey History Centre, situated adjacent to the Al Asr Centre, and it was confirmed that the Centre's facilities would be available for future elections. The History Centre has available two large rooms, is fully accessible to all electors and has off-street parking.

The Council's Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel and Ward Members were consulted on the proposals. The Members of the Review Panel and Ward Councillor Howard and Ward Councillor Leach all expressed their support for the use of the History Centre as a polling station venue. Accordingly, the Council is now asked to agree the designation of the Surrey History Centre as the polling place for the St John's East polling district (K3) in the St John's Ward.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the Surrey History Centre be designated as the polling place for the St John's East polling district (K3) in the St John's Ward; and
- (ii) the Council's appreciation be expressed to the Al Asr Centre for its assistance in recent years.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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Designation of Polling Place – Ward of St Johns

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Date Published: 2 February 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for the designation of polling places across the Borough.
- 1.2 Following the 6 May 2021 elections, a review of the Council's election and electoral registration processes was undertaken by the Council's Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer. As part of the review, feedback was sought on the suitability of all polling places currently used within the Borough.
- 1.3 The current designated polling place for the St John's East polling district (K3) in the St John's Ward is the Al Asr Education & Community Centre on Goldsworth Road. The following accessibility issues to disabled voters were identified as part of the review.
- narrow corridors
 - lack of space within the polling place for motorised wheelchair manoeuvrability
 - lack of parking and parking conditions
 - no disabled access available on exiting the polling station via an alternative route due to only one ramp being available at the polling place
- 1.4 An alternative venue for the polling place has now been identified.

2.0 Polling Place Designation

- 2.1 The Returning Officer of an Authority can designate a polling station but only the Council (or suitable Sub-Committee) can designate a polling place. The Electoral Commission definitions are given below:

Polling place

- 2.2 "A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.
- 2.3 We are aware that some authorities designate the entire polling district as the polling place. However, Section 18B(4)(e) of the RPA 1983 states that 'the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station'. We therefore consider that polling places should always be defined more specifically than simply the polling district - for example, by designating the name of the polling place (normally a particular building or area and its environs)."

Polling station

- 2.4 "A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election."

Polling district

- 2.5 "A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election."

Identifying a Suitable Polling Place

- 2.6 Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:

Designation of Polling Place – Ward of St Johns

- the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors
- the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district)
- the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station

Accessibility

- 2.7 Local authorities must also comply with the following access requirements. As part of the review, they must:
- seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
 - seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled
- 2.8 The Council must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place or the designation of which as a polling place it is reviewing.

3.0 Proposed Polling Place

- 3.1 The Surrey History Centre on Goldsworth Road is located adjacent to the Al Asr Education & Community Centre and is therefore within the St John's East Polling District. The Surrey History Centre is accessible to electors from Goldsworth Road by foot and Kingsway where a large car park is available.
- 3.2 The Surrey History Centre has two conference rooms available to use as a polling station. The conference rooms are located off the main foyer and completely separate to the other facilities at the Centre. Multiple polling stations can be accommodated with ease if required and the Surrey History Centre is capable of accommodating all voters going into and out of the polling stations even in the event of a high turnout.
- 3.3 The Surrey History Centre is accessible to all those entitled to attend the polling place and has excellent disabled access with the instalment of disabled access door systems, hearing loop facilities and multiple designated parking bays.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the Council has previously approached the Surrey History Centre to explore the possibility of designating it as a polling place. However, it has only been since the Centre adopted new security measures that would allow access during all polling hours that the Centre could be considered.

4.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 4.1 Polling station hire charges are met from existing budgets.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 4.2 Designating the Surrey History Centre as the polling place for the St John's East polling district ensures that electors in the area have suitable facilities for voting.

Designation of Polling Place – Ward of St Johns

4.3 The Surrey History Centre is accessible for all electors in the polling district.

Legal

4.4 There are no specific legal implications or risks identified within the report.

5.0 Engagement and Consultation

5.1 The proposed designation of the Surrey History Centre as a Polling Place was raised with Ward Councillors and the Council's Elections and Electoral Registration Review Panel, which met on 26 January 2022.

5.2 The Members of the Review Panel and Councillor Howard and Councillor Leach all welcomed the proposals, noting the improved access arrangements that the Surrey History Centre would be able to provide.

REPORT ENDS

Appendix Title

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022-23 AND GENDER PAY GAP DATA

Executive Summary

Pay Policy

Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require local authorities to prepare an annual pay policy statement for each financial year.

The statement must specifically cover the authority's policies relating to:

- the remuneration of its chief officers;
- the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and
- the relationship between – the remuneration of its chief officers, and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers
- the definition of 'lowest-paid employees' adopted;
- the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
- remuneration of chief officers on recruitment;
- increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer;
- the use of performance-related pay for chief officers;
- the use of bonuses for chief officers;
- the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office or to be employed by the authority;
- the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers;

The statement may also cover the authority's policy relating to:

- policies for the financial year relating to the other terms and conditions applying to the authority's chief officers.

Chief Officer is defined to include:

- the head of its paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- its monitoring officer under section 5(1) of that Act;
- a statutory chief officer under section 2(6) of that Act; - a non-statutory chief officer under section 2(7) of that Act; - a deputy chief officer in section 2(8) of that Act.

The pay policy statement has to be approved by a resolution of the authority. Following approval, the statement must be published as soon as possible on the authority's website. The Council may amend the pay policy statement in-year and this also requires a resolution.

The Act specifies that the functions relating to pay accountability are not executive functions and also that section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, which gives local authorities powers to arrange for the discharge of their functions by committees, officers or other local authorities, does not apply to these functions. This means that the resolution must be approved by full Council.

Gender Pay Gap

Woking Borough Council is required by law to publish annual gender pay gap data. The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 require all employers with 250 or more employees to publish data based on the snap-shot date 31 March 2021. In addition, the Council has to depict pay quartiles by gender whereby the workforce is divided into four equal-sized groups based on hourly pay rates, with the Upper Quartile covering the highest paid 25% and the lower quartile containing the lowest paid 25%. The data has to be published on the Council's website annually. The figures set out in the following report have been calculated using the standard methodologies used in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

These provisions add to the range of transparency obligations already placed upon the Council such as the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 which already require historic expenditure on chief officers within specified pay bands to be disclosed in the annual statement of accounts

Ethnicity Pay Gap

The Government has consulted on whether organisations should collect and publish information on its Ethnicity Pay Gap and we are awaiting the outcome. The Council has calculated its Ethnicity Pay Gap for 2021.

Recommendations

The Council is invited to approve the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2022/23 and in so doing comply with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

The Council is invited to note the gender pay gap data based on the snap-shot date of 31 March 2021 and in doing so comply with The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

The Council is invited to note the ethnic pay gap data based on the snap-shot date of 31 March 2021.

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the Pay Policy Statement be approved for publication;
- (ii) the Gender Pay Gap data be approved for publication; and
- (iii) the Ethnicity Pay Gap data be noted.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers: Sustainability Impact assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment.

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Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

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Date Published: 2 February 2022

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Pay Policy Statement is provided in accordance with Sections 38 - 43 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 This Pay Policy Statement sets out Woking Borough Council's policies relating to the pay of its workforce for the financial year 2022-23.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council has developed its own local terms and conditions including pay. The local pay scale covers all employees of the Council.
- 2.2 As required by law, the Council provides all of its employees with the opportunity to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

3.0 Definition

- 3.1 For the purpose of this pay policy the following definitions will apply:

'Remuneration', in addition to salary this includes taxable earnings and non-taxable benefits (and is more particularly defined in section 46 of the Localism Act 2011).

'Chief officer' refers to the following statutory and non-statutory roles within Woking Borough Council as follows:

- Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service
- Directors
- Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer
- Senior Managers who report directly to those listed above

- 3.2 'Lowest paid Employees' refers to employees employed within grade W1 of the Council's current pay grading structure, other than apprenticeships or traineeships. This definition for the 'lowest paid employees' has been adopted because grade W1 is the lowest grade on the Council's grading structure on which employees are paid. The bottom point on this pay scale is £18,328. To enable meaningful comparison the Council uses employees on full time contracts for this definition.

4.0 Pay Framework and Remuneration

- 4.1 Remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to secure and retain high-quality employees dedicated to fulfilling the Council's business objectives and delivering services to the public. This has to be balanced by ensuring remuneration is not unnecessarily excessive. The Council has responsibility for balancing these factors. The overall pay bill is controlled within a financial envelope agreed at least annually by the Council/Executive.
- 4.2 It is essential for good governance that decisions on pay and reward packages for chief executives and chief officers are made in an open and accountable way. Our policy is to pay appropriately to attract competent and experienced senior employees to lead the organisation. Our aim is to be regarded as competitive as compared to the level of pay locally and neighbouring local authorities.
- 4.3 All Woking Borough Council employees are on local conditions. The pay and reward structure and the performance management process apply to all employees including chief officers. Targets for both objectives and behaviours are set and performance against those targets is assessed.

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

- 4.4 The Authority has a salary and grading structure for all employees which includes the grades and salaries applicable to chief officers. The grade allocated to a post is determined by the duties, level of responsibility and behaviours required as outlined in the job description, person specification and role map.
- 4.5 The grade framework comprises of 12 grades. Outside the main framework there are 4 trainee grades. All employees are placed within the grade framework on a fixed salary based on an assessment of the job role. Progression through a grade is based on an assessment of behaviour, skill and performance following the outcome of an annual performance and development review (PDR). Each employee receives an overall grading which determines the amount of performance pay to be awarded. Payments are made against a pre-determined amount to ensure the scheme remains affordable.
- 4.6 Indexation is considered annually for all employees in consultation with UNISON.
- 4.7 In addition to basic pay all chief officers and employees are eligible to receive the following benefits:
- If the officer is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme the employers' contribution.
 - Payment of an annual subscription to one professional institution where this has a clear benefit or is a requisite to the job.
 - A flexible benefit paid in monthly instalment. This can be used to purchase a public sector season ticket, obtain a vehicle through the Council's car leasing scheme or as a cash alternative. Normal tax and national insurance rules apply.
- 4.8 The Council does not have a lump sum performance related pay or bonus scheme.

5.0 Policy on the Lowest Paid Employees

- 5.1 When determining any pay award the Council considers the needs of the lowest paid and the Living Wage (outside London rate).
- 5.2 The Council is supportive of the principle of equal pay in employment and has made a commitment to involve and work positively with UNISON to develop and maintain an open and transparent process and dialogue.

6.0 Policy on the Lowest Paid Employees

- 6.1 Our policy is that the ratio is broadly in line with comparator authorities.
- 6.2 The average (median) chief officer remuneration is £73,604; the average (median) remuneration for employees other than the chief officers is £33,529. Therefore the ratio of average chief officer remuneration to the average remuneration of other employees is 2.19:1.
- 6.3 The ratio between the highest paid earner, the Chief Executive, to the average (median) remuneration of the whole workforce is 3.9.

7.0 Remuneration on Employment

- 7.1 Our policy is to appoint at, or near, the bottom taking into account the relevant skills and experience of the person appointed. Progression through the grade is as outlined in section 4 above. Appointments at chief officer level below Chief Executive are made by more senior officers with Member involvement as appropriate. On occasion the Council will request input from neighbouring authorities or other experts in the recruitment process particularly when the

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

post requires specialist knowledge. Appointments to the post of Chief Executive are made by the leading Members and approved by the Council.

8.0 Approach to the Payment of Officers in the Event of their Ceasing to Hold Office or be Employed by the Authority

8.1 The Council's redundancy framework sets out a consistent method of calculating redundancy pay which is applied to all redundant employees. The level of redundancy pay is calculated using the statutory system with a multiplier of 2.2 and no cap on weekly earnings. The payment is intended to recompense employees for the loss of their livelihood and provide financial support whilst they seek alternative employment.

8.2 Officers who leave the Council's employment, where appropriate, will receive compensation in line with the Council's redundancy payments policy or through a negotiated settlement.

9.0 The Publication of and Access to Information Relating to Remuneration of Chief Officers

9.1 The annual Pay Policy statement will be published on the website where it can be easily accessed. Information about senior officer remuneration has been published on the Council's website as part of the Final Statement of Accounts and transparency agenda. The grade framework for all employees is published on the Council's website.

10.0 Additions to Remuneration for Chief Officers

10.1 One or more chief officers will be eligible for payments for election duties (e.g. as Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer/s) which is calculated based on the number of electors in each ward in the election. There is an agreed Surrey wide scale of fees and charges which sets out the amounts used to calculate this.

10.2 Fees for borough, county and Police Commissioner elections vary according to the size of the electorate and number of postal voters. Payments for General and European elections are set by central government and are not paid by the Council as the money is reclaimed.

11.0 Policy on Employing Someone Who Has Taken Redundancy from another Authority

11.1 If there is less than a 4 week gap between someone being made redundant from another council and joining Woking Borough Council they will be required to repay their redundancy payment to their previous employer. If the gap is longer than 4 weeks they can retain their payment but their continuous service is broken, which means that they would have no eligibility for redundancy payments until they have 2 years continuous service with this authority.

12.0 Policy on Employing Someone Who is Also Drawing a Pension

12.1 The Council will consider all requests from employees who wish to draw their pension but continue working.

13.0 Policy on Additional Employments

13.1 The Council's Conditions of Service provide for employees:- to have one or more employments with the Council, in which cases the arrangements outlined above apply; private employment or outside activity conditional upon such employments or activity not prejudicing their main employment with the Council; and appointments to remunerated roles directed or authorised by the Council.

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

14.0 Gender Pay Gap

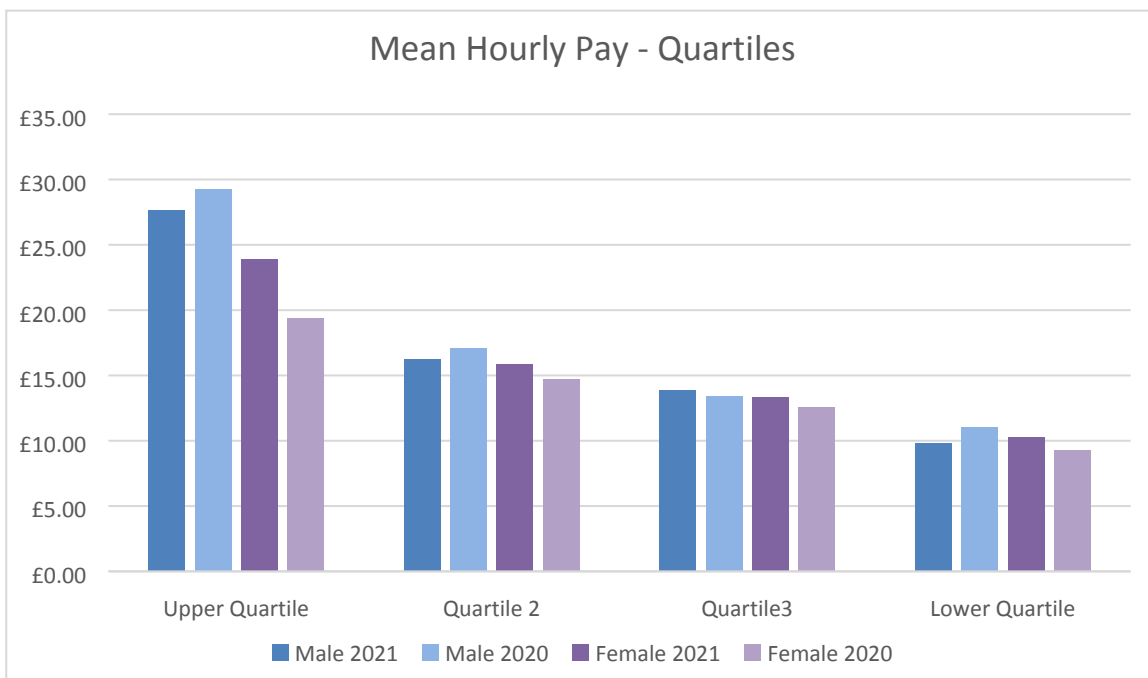
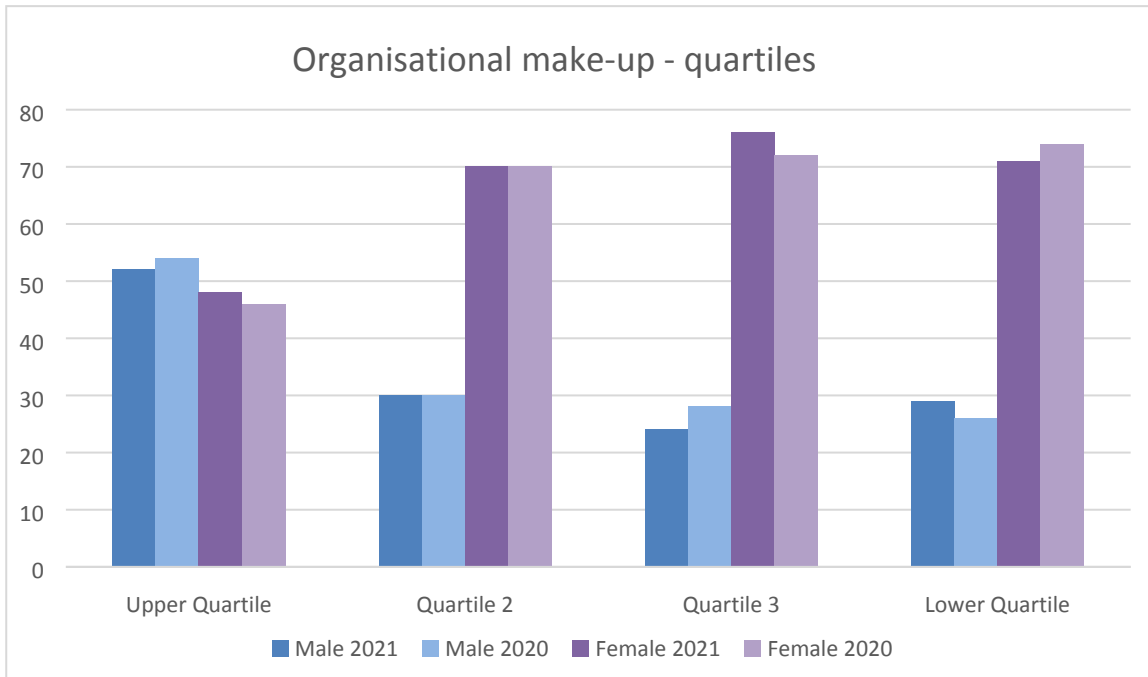
- 14.1 Woking Borough Council is required by law to publish an annual gender pay gap report. The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 require all employers with 250 or more employees to publish a report based on its figures on a snap-shot date. For public authorities this snapshot date is 31st March. This is our fifth report.
- 14.2 This is the report for the snapshot date of 31st March 2021.
- 14.3 The Mean Gender Pay Gap is the difference between average hourly earnings of men and women. The Mean Gender Pay Gap for the Council is 19.76% (19.28% for 2020). The Median Gender Pay Gap is the mid-point in the range of hourly earnings of men and women, when arranged from the highest to lowest. The Median gender pay Gap for the Council is 13.63% (10.24% for 2020).
- 14.4 The Council's Pay structure and policies ensure all employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their gender or any other characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010. The analysis shows that the Council continues to have a gender pay gap. It should be noted that historically the largest pay gap has been within the top quartile of the organisation. This continues to be skewed by the fact that there are a significant number of males within the top 25 highest paid employees.
- 14.5 As outlined, this report is based on data produced on 31 March 2021. Since that date there have been significant changes to the Council's employee profile, in particular within the upper quartile. It is anticipated that these changes will have a positive impact on the Gender Pay Gap in the future.
- 14.6 In addition the Council has to depict pay quartiles by gender. The workforce is divided into four equal-sized groups based on hourly pay rates, with the Upper Quartile covering the highest paid 25% and the lower quartile containing the lowest paid 25%.

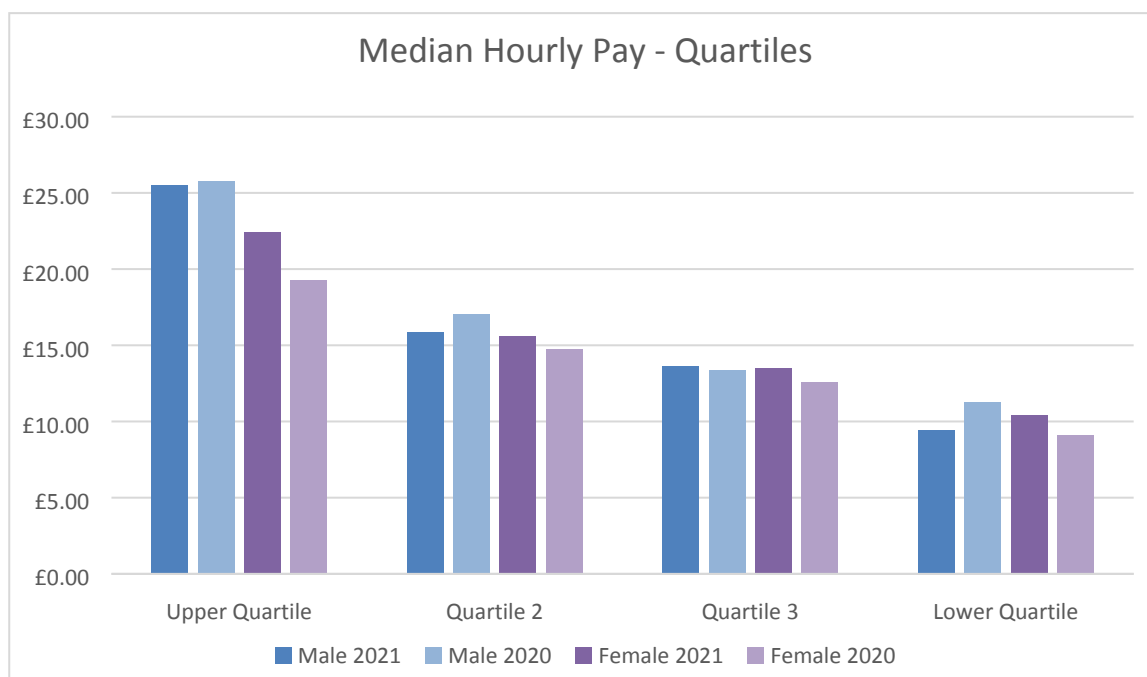
Pay Quartiles by Gender: (figures for 2020 in brackets)

Quartile	Male	Female	Description
Upper	52% (54%)	48% (45%)	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the upper quartile
Quartile 2	30% (30%)	70% (70%)	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the median but at or below the upper quartile
Quartile 3	24% (28%)	76% (72%)	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the lower quartile but at or below the median
Lower	29% (26%)	71% (74%)	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them at or below the lower quartile

- 14.7 The figures set out above have been calculated using the standard methodologies used in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data





Difference between men and women

Quartile	Mean hourly rate - male	Mean hourly rate - female	Mean gender pay gap	Median hourly rate - male	Median hourly rate - female	Median gender pay gap
Upper	£27.68 (£29.27)	£23.94 (£19.36)	13.51% (33.86%)	£25.47 (£25.77)	£22.38 (£19.24)	12.13% (25.34%)
Quartile 2	£16.25 (£17.09)	£15.90 (£14.73)	2.15% (13.81%)	£15.85 (£17.02)	£15.57 (£14.71)	1.78% (13.57%)
Quartile 3	£13.89 (£13.45)	£13.31 (£12.61)	4.17% (6.25%)	£13.61 (£13.36)	£13.46 (£12.57)	1.10% (5.91%)
Lower	£9.79 (£11.03)	£10.24 (£9.30)	-4.6% (15.68%)	£9.39 (£11.24)	£10.40 (£9.07)	-10.76% (19.31%)

(Figures for 2020 in brackets)

14.8 Across the UK as a whole, men are more likely than women to be in senior roles, especially very senior roles at the top of organisations. Generally women are more likely than men to be in front-line roles at the lower end of the organisation. This is reflected in the picture for the Council, where all but the top quartile is predominately female. Although the balance in the top quartile is improving and this trend is likely to continue. The Council's pay policy has focused on raising the level of pay for the lowest grades, to ensure that the roles are valued and paid the living wage, set by the Living Wage Foundation.

How we compare

14.9 The pattern from the UK economy as a whole is reflected in the figures found in our upper quartile where men are more likely to be in senior roles. Women are more likely to have had breaks from work that have affected their career progression, for example to bring up children.

14.10 The mean gender pay gap for the UK for 2021 was 15.4% according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures (a slight increase from 14.9% in 2020, but is still down from 17.4% in 2019). For Local Government the mean gender pay gap was 5.1% (5.9% for 2020) and the median gender pay gap was 3.3% (4.3% for 2020).

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

How we are addressing the pay gap

14.11 Woking Borough Council is actively committed to reducing our gender pay gap and has developed an Action Plan which covers 5 key areas.

- Pay and Performance – to ensure the Council adheres to its equal pay principles and pays/rewards fairly across the gender spectrum. HR will continue to analyse current pay levels and pay on recruitment to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Recruitment and Promotion – that recruiters/managers are clear on non-discriminatory practices and unconscious bias through regular reminders and training opportunities.
- Training and Development – there is equality of opportunity in terms of access to networking and training/development events. Create and develop opportunities for women specifically and seek out their views on leadership opportunities via focus groups.
- Flexible and Part-time Working – alternative working patterns are actively supported and promoted via recruitment activities.

Evidence base

14.12 Detailed analysis of the salary structure, including levels, pay grade and working hours has been carried out and no significant issues were identified indicating our pay arrangements are rational, fair and transparent. The exercise will be repeated every three years. We have carried out analysis of recruitment statistics, applications for promotion and analysis of PDR's and pay reviews. Again, no issues were identified.

Recruitment

14.13 We aim to recruit from the widest possible talent pool. We will look at whether we can improve this, including looking at language used in adverts. Our application process is blind and has no personal details available for shortlisting. HR carry out spot-checks on shortlisting to ensure no bias is taking place. Managers are trained on how to recruit using competency-based interview techniques that aim to avoid unconscious bias; ensuring all managers are consistent and competent in recruitment.

Flexible working

14.14 The pandemic has had a huge impact on the way the Council works and delivers services. Following the lockdown periods a hybrid work style was introduced to enable employees to effectively manage their health and wellbeing and work-life balance. The pros and cons of the new way of working will need to be closely monitored to ensure a mutual balance between employees fulfilling their jobs in the manner expected by the organisation whilst also enabling them to be mindful of their health and wellbeing and ensuring a good work life balance. This is also likely to have an impact on the other flexible working options available and this will be monitored by HR.

Development

14.15 We are committed to offering advancement opportunities and training to all employees, including Management Development, coaching and mentoring for those moving into senior positions. We will look at the Performance Review process and ensure it is robust and fit for purpose and that we are able to identify from within our current workforce those employees who have the potential to grow into more senior roles. We will offer training, support and development opportunities to those employees including coaching and mentoring both within and outside of our organisation. We will also gather qualitative data through a consultation exercise across the organisation to identify the barriers (and the drivers) for women employees.

Pay Policy Statement 2022-23 and Gender Pay Gap Data

Ethnicity Pay Gap

14.16 The Government has consulted on whether organisation should collect and publish information on its Ethnicity Pay Gap and we are awaiting the outcome. The Council has been calculating its Ethnicity Pay Gap since 2019.

14.17 The Ethnicity Pay Gap figures for 2021 are:

White British	342 employees / 76% (361 employees / 76.32% - 2020)
Other Ethnicity	99 employees / 22% (110 employees / 23.26% - 2020)
Not known/prefer not to say	7 employees / 2% (2 employees / 0.42% - 2020)
Mean hourly rate (White British)	£17.09 (£16.33 – 2020)
Mean hourly rate (other ethnicity)	£14.54 (£13.54 – 2020)
Mean ethnicity pay gap	14.92% (17.09% - 2020)
Median hourly rate (White British)	£14.85 (£14.44 – 2020)
Median hourly rate (other ethnicity)	£13.61 (£13.16 – 2020)
Median ethnicity pay gap	8.35% (8.86% - 2020)

Pay Quartiles by ethnicity

Quartile	White British	Other ethnicity	Not known	Description
Upper	88.4% (88.99%)	11.6% (11.01%)		Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the upper quartile
Quartile 2	79.46% (81.51%)	18.75% (16.81%)	1.79% (1.68%)	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the median but at or below the upper quartile
Quartile 3	65.18% (61.34%)	32.14% (38.66%)		Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them above the lower quartile but at or below the median
Lower	72.32% (72.81%)	25.89% (27.19%)	1.79%	Includes all employees whose standard hourly rate places them at or below the lower quartile

(Figures for 2020 in brackets)

Quartile	Mean hourly rate – White British	Mean hourly rate – other ethnicity	Mean ethnicity pay gap	Median hourly rate – White British	Median hourly rate – other ethnicity	Median ethnicity pay gap
Upper	£26.30 (£25.08)	£22.65 (£21.83)	13.87% (12.95%)	£24.40 (£23.46)	£21.45 (£20.76)	12.09% (11.51%)
Quartile 2	£16.08 (£16.32)	£15.76 (£16.49)	1.99% (-1.04%)	£14.34 (£16.75)	£15.45 (£17.71)	-7.74% (-5.73%)
Quartile 3	£13.36 (£12.81)	£13.71 (£12.85)	-2.62% (-0.87%)	£13.49 (£12.94)	£13.61 (£13.16)	-0.88% (-1.7%)
Lower	£10.28 (£9.70)	£9.73 (£9.90)	5.35% (-2.06%)	£9.86 (£9.50)	£9.69 (£9.50)	1.72% (0%)

(Figures for 2020 in brackets)

15.0 Implications

Financial

15.1 To foster a transparent pay and reward framework which is accountable and managed appropriately.

Human Resource/Training and Development

15.2 Ensure compliance with current legislation and brief managers appropriately.

Community Safety

15.3 There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

15.4 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Sustainability

15.5 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Equalities

15.6 To ensure the Council continues to comply with Equal Pay legislation.

Safeguarding

15.7 This policy complies with Safeguarding requirements.

16.0 Conclusions

16.1 The Council is invited to approve the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2021/22 and in so doing comply with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

16.2 The Council is invited note the gender pay gap data based on the snap-shot date of 31 March 2021 and in doing so comply with The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

16.3 The Council is also invited note the ethnicity pay gap data.

REPORT ENDS

COUNCIL – 10 FEBRUARY 2022

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR(S) TO COUNCIL COMPANIES

Executive Summary

This report deals with the appointment of an Independent Director to a number of Council companies to provide strategic oversight, skills and knowledge advantageous to the Board.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

RESOLVE That Terry Price be appointed as Independent Director of the following Companies:

- Thamesway Maintenance Services Limited; and
- Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited

f

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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Date Published: 2 February 2022

Appointment of Independent Director(s) to Council Companies

Appointment of Independent Director(s) to Council Companies

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Barry Maunders has held the position of Director on the Board of various Thameswey Group companies since July 2007 and also Chaired a number of the group Boards including Thameswey Limited. As an independent person he was appointed to bring oversight, experience and skills which were advantageous and appropriate to the Boards which he chaired.
- 1.2 Barry Maunders resigned his Board positions at Thameswey and Brookwood at the end of the year due to the significantly increased responsibility at his Livery Company reducing the time he had available to perform his Board duties. Firstly, the Council would like to thank Barry for his service over the years and wish him the best in his future endeavours.
- 1.3 This report deals with the appointment of Independent Directors to the vacancies now on the Boards.

2.0 Directorships

- 2.1 Barry Maunders has resigned from the following Boards.
 - Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
 - Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited
 - Thameswey Housing Limited
 - Brookwood Park Limited
 - Brookwood Cemetery Limited
 - Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited
 - Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited
 - Thameswey Solar Limited
 - Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
 - Thameswey Central Milton Keynes Limited
 - Thameswey Energy Limited
 - Thameswey Limited
- 2.2 His resignation has been lodged at Companies House and the Council now has vacancies on the Boards of its Companies.

3.0 Appointment of Independent Non-Executive Directors

- 3.1 Following Barry Maunders' resignation, the Council does not have any independent representation on the Boards of Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited (which although dormant is still a current legal entity and is not expected to be closed until the end of 2022) and Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities Limited.
- 3.2 Council is requested to resolve that Terry Price be appointed as Independent Non-Executive Director of the following Companies:
 - Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited
 - Energy Centre For Sustainable Communities Limited
- 3.3 This is an interim measure whilst the Council undertakes a review of the governance of the Council's companies and looks at a strategy to recruit further Independent Directors to provide

Appointment of Independent Director(s) to Council Companies

expertise and specialist skills to the Boards. This ensures that all Thamesway Boards have at least one Independent Director appointed to them.

4.0 Thamesway Group Protocols

4.1 The Thamesway Group Protocols have been introduced to ensure good governance of the Thamesway Group Companies. The protocols stipulate the proportions and composition of the Boards. A copy of the protocols can be found at page 281 of the Council's constitution.

4.2 The Thamesway Group Protocols states:-

"To ensure that power and information are not concentrated in one or two individuals, there should be a strong presence on all boards of Independent, Councillor and officer Directors. Accordingly Group Company Boards should seek to achieve the following proportions, 1 Independent Director, 1 Councillor Director and 2 Officer Directors but in any case Officer Directors must not be the majority."

4.3 The Thamesway Group Protocols confirm the composition of the Boards as follows:-

"Composition of the Boards

The respective Company boards should comprise of the following Directors and be reviewed annually by the Council: -

Thamesway Limited (Group Holding Company)

Councillor Directors

The Leader of the Council, or his/her nominee, who must be a Member of the Council's Executive

Council Directors appointed to the Board of any subsidiary

Independent Directors

Independent Directors recruited by the Council

Officer Directors

The Chief Executive of the Council

Officer Directors appointed to the Board of any subsidiary

Subsidiary Companies within the Thamesway Group

Councillor Directors

The Leader of the Council, or his/her nominee, who must be a Member of the Council's Executive

The Member of the Council holding the Portfolio for the relevant area of the Council's business

Any other Member of the Council

Independent Directors

Up to two Independent Directors

Officer Directors

Up to two Officer Directors"

Appointment of Independent Director(s) to Council Companies

5.0 Review of Thamesway Protocols and Governance of the Council's Companies.

5.1 A review into the current governance arrangements and protocols in place has been initiated.

5.2 It is recognised that, whilst appreciating procedures must operate in a way that protects the company's commercial interests, those procedures should ensure that the Council can carry out its functions as an investor, as a trustee of public funds and a local authority committed to both due responsibility for the exercise of its functions and for providing a vision for the Borough. New national good practice guidance on Council Company governance has also been released by both the LLG and Local Partnerships which should be reflected in the review.

5.3 Accordingly, governance arrangements shall ensure that:

- the executive can make investment decisions based upon complete and accurate consideration of business cases and business plans;
- the executive can evaluate social and financial benefits and returns on investment; and
- the Council's overview and scrutiny committees are able to exercise their powers in relation to the executive's decision making

in a manner that ensures the companies can provide full and frank financial and business reporting against their business plans and be open to an appropriate level of scrutiny without fear of commercial confidentiality being breached.

5.4 The review shall link the Council's emerging Corporate Strategy and the Group Business Plans for 2023. A report on governance arrangements shall be brought before Full Council.

6.0 Corporate Strategy

6.1 The Council's group companies undertake important functions for the Council, consistent with its Corporate Plan and emerging Corporate Strategy.

7.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

6.2 None.

Equalities and Human Resources

6.3 None.

Legal

7.3 The appointments accord with the Thamesway Group Company Protocols and ensure that there is sufficient expertise and oversight on the Boards of the various Council companies.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

7.1 None.

REPORT ENDS

