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TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE **EXECUTIVE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Executive to be held on Thursday, 14 July 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, Surrey GU21 6YL.

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.

The Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to terminate or suspend filming, if in his/her opinion continuing to do so would prejudice the proceedings of the meeting or, on advice, considers that continued filming might infringe the rights of any individual.

As cameras are linked to the microphones, could Members ensure they switch their microphones on before they start to speak and off when finished and do not remove the cards which are in the microphones.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

JULIE FISHER
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I - PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

1. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 June 2022 as published.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Urgent Business

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

4. Declarations of Interest (Pages 5 - 6)

- (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 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 Executive on those items.
- (iii) 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 Executive on those items.
- (iv) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Strategic Director - Place, Giorgio Framalico, 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 Framalico may advise the Executive on those items.
- (v) In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Strategic Director - Communities, 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 Executive on those items.

Questions

5. To deal with any written questions submitted under Section 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules. Copies of the questions and draft replies will be laid upon the table.

Matters for Recommendation

6. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) EXE22-043 – to follow
Reporting Person – Leigh Clarke
7. Company Governance EXE22-048 (Pages 7 - 46)
Reporting Person – Joanne McIntosh

Matters for Determination

8. Draft Town Centre Masterplan EXE22-044 (Pages 47 - 456)
Reporting Person – Giorgio Framalico
9. Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) - Update EXE22-052 (Pages 457 - 466)
Reporting Person – Giorgio Framalico
10. Equalities Annual Report - 2022 EXE22-034 (Pages 467 - 486)
Reporting Person – Julie Fisher

Performance Management

11. Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

Please bring to the meeting your copy of the latest Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book).

AGENDA ENDS

Date Published - 6 July 2022

For further information regarding this agenda and arrangements for the meeting, please contact Julie Northcote on 01483 743053 or email julie.northcote@woking.gov.uk



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Agenda Item 4.

Schedule Referred to in Declaration of Interests

Council-appointed directorships

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, Strategic Director - Place	
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

Louise Strongitharm, Strategic Director – Communities	
Rutland Woking (Carthouse Lane) Limited	Thameswey Developments Limited
Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited	Thameswey Guest Houses Limited
Rutland (Woking) Limited	Thameswey Housing Limited
Thameswey Limited	

EXECUTIVE – 14 JULY 2022

COMPANY GOVERNANCE

Executive Summary

Woking Borough Council is committed to maintaining strong and robust governance to ensure the decisions that are taken are made in conjunction with, and in the best interests of, the communities it serves. Over the years, there has been an increase in both the number of Council owned companies and the complexity of the Council's governance arrangements of the same. This in turn brings risks that the Council will not be able to demonstrate that it is clearly and consistently managing its differing responsibilities.

As highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reports to the 3rd February and 24th March 2022 meetings of the Executive, officers have been undertaking a review of the governance of companies as part of the medium term financial resilience assessment we had produced by the professional services firm EY. The key strategic action arising from this assessment was:

“completing the review of Governance of Companies, the strategic alignment between the Council and Thamesway group and the intelligent client capability retained within the council.”

Following this review and the wider focus nationally on local authority governance arrangements, this report outlines the Council proposals to modernise its governance arrangements with respect to its oversight of its wholly or part owned companies.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's Shareholder Representative;**
- (ii) the creation of a Shareholder Advisory Group be approved, as detailed in the report, to ensure that its companies act in the interests of the Council as shareholder and contribute to the Council's objectives;**
- (iii) the Terms of Reference of the Shareholder Advisory Group, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;**
- (iv) Directors to the Group Companies, as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report, be appointed;**
- (v) the Shareholder Liaison Service be established to lead on managing contractual arrangements with the companies and in holding of the companies to account;**
- (vi) the establishment of Head of Shareholder Liaison Service at Grade W8 and Project Officer on Grade W5 be approved;**
- (vii) delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to approve final terms and enter any Service Level Agreements where corporate functions provide support services to group companies;**

- (viii) delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to approve final terms and enter any Data Protection or Information Sharing Agreement; and
- (ix) the Constitution be updated accordingly.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The recommendations proposed will improve the governance arrangements in line with current best practice and allow the Council to closely monitor its interests within each of its companies with further clarity, transparency, and reporting. It will ensure that the Council and its subsidiaries are meeting their legal and statutory responsibilities and are practising good governance.

The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers: [Local Partnerships Local-authority company review guidance v1.pdf](https://www.localpartnerships.org.uk/localpartnerships/LocalPartnerships/LocalPartnerships%20Guidance/LocalPartnerships%20Guidance%20v1.pdf)
([localpartnerships.org.uk](https://www.localpartnerships.org.uk))

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Date Published: 6 July 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Good corporate governance requires councils to carry out their functions in a way that demonstrates accountability, transparency, effectiveness, value, integrity, and inclusivity.
- 1.2. The Governance arrangements for council owned entities should seek to ensure that:
 - the entity should have sufficient freedoms to achieve its objectives;
 - the council should have sufficient control to ensure that its investment is protected, appropriate returns on investment can be obtained and that the activities of the entity are aligned with the values and strategic objectives of the council;
 - the entity continues to be relevant and required (in its existing form);
 - and if not, appropriate steps are taken (for example, amending constitutional documents or changing form or terminating the vehicle); and
 - any so-called “Teckal” companies should remain compliant with relevant exemption requirements under EU procurement law.

2.0 Council oversight, scrutiny, and governance framework

- 2.1 The Council has several companies which it either owns or has an interest in, which were formed to deliver council objectives in a more efficient and effective manner.
- 2.2 The Council wants to ensure that good governance and accountability is in place with respect to its Council owned companies and it is keen to learn from other local authorities' experiences. Recent public interest reports from external auditors highlight where, governance arrangements were not strong enough and the recommendations in this report are aimed at covering these areas of risk. The Council seeks to ensure that its governance arrangements are amongst the best in local government and as such, proposes that its arrangements are updated and kept under continuous review. This report outlines proposed changes to the Council's current governance arrangements in line with best practice, as particularly highlighted by Local Partnerships, CIPFA and Lawyers in Local Government guidance.

3.0 Council Governance Arrangements

4.0 The Shareholder Role

- 4.1 The Council should appoint a designated “shareholder” to represent its ownership of the entity.
- 4.2 The role of the Shareholder Representative is to provide:
 - oversight of any decisions that can only be made by the shareholder, rather than left to the entity (known as “reserved matters”)
 - a mechanism to review the implementation and development of the council's commercial approach through the entities it influences and owns
 - the necessary oversight from a shareholder's perspective that the parameters, policies and boundaries that the council has established are being adhered to
 - an articulation of what success looks like in terms of achieving social outcomes and/or a return on investment
 - effective and systematic engagement between the Chair and shareholder role to assure effective performance against strategy and governance
 - a mechanism to communicate the shareholder's views to the entity
 - a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the company board and the delivery of the company performance against strategic objectives and the business plan
 - a regular review of whether the entity provides the most effective vehicle to deliver the outcomes it requires and whether there are viable alternative models which might offer a more effective means of delivering its priorities

- a holistic review of risk to the council offered by all active entities
- 4.3 The rights and duties place on the Council as a shareholder of a company will, almost always fall to be exercised as an executive responsibility. This means that decisions to be taken by the Council as shareholder fall to be decided on by the Leader. In the normal way these functions may be delegated by the Leader to the Executive or an officer and will be subject to key decision and access to information rules, call-in and review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.4 It is therefore proposed that the Leader shall be formally appointed as the Council's Shareholder Representative. This shall be documented in the Constitution.
- 4.5 The Council shall ensure that suitable training and support commensurate with the role is provided. Formal periodic meetings with the Chief Executive of the Council and Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) of the Group Company(ies) shall be arranged. These meetings shall provide an opportunity to inform subsequent company board meetings.
- 4.6 Shareholders or their designated representatives may attend company board meetings as observers, but they should not be there as board members.

5.0 The Shareholder Agreement

- 5.1 Decisions to be made by the Executive and/or Full Council, rather than left to the company itself, are known as 'reserved matters'. Reserved matters cover such things as the approval of the company's annual business plan or mid-year amendments to it, the appointment of directors, certain key financing decisions and so forth. These are established either through agreement with the company, known as a shareholders agreement, or as set out in the company's governing articles of association.
- 5.2 The relationship between the local authority (and the companies it is a member of) is governed by these and other key documents that are required to establish a local authority company, and a trading company in particular.
- The **business case** which assesses the risk involved in the proposed trading enterprise and decides whether or not it should be established and proceed to trade; the 'comprehensive statement'. It starts the process of business planning.
 - The **articles of association**, or the memorandum and articles of association as it used to be called, which is the constitution of the company. This is the legal documents required to set up a limited company and give details of its name, aims and authorised share capital, conduct of meetings, appointment of directors and registered office.
 - The **shareholders agreement**, or management agreement, which sets out the rights of the Council as the sole or co-shareholder and how it can exercise those rights. It details the powers of the board of the company and how and when the shareholder might influence those powers. It is important to note that the shareholder agreement is capable of being developed and added to as the company develops.
 - The **financial agreements** which are the commercial agreements that set out what assistance is to be provided and on what terms. This may be purely financial, such as a direct loan or a facility such as a parental guarantee, and made on commercial terms. It may also be in the form of goods, services or staff to be provided and set out in a resourcing agreement or a service level agreement, which is likely to be on a service charge or cost recovery basis. The agreements may require regular and detailed access to information and financial reporting to the Council and/or holding company.
 - The **business plan** which sets out the objectives of the business, how they are to be achieved and standards met adjusted in the light of experience and changing

circumstances. It is a comprehensive analysis of the business situation at a particular point in time. It is often referred to as the annual business plan because it is expected to be submitted for shareholder approval annually.

- 5.3 The key documents governing the Council's group companies differ from entity to entity. Where possible the Council shall seek to align the governance arrangements of its companies and have consistency in its governing documents. The rights of the Council as shareholder in respect of the Thameswey group of companies are currently outlined in the Thameswey Group Protocols together with the articles of association. The protocols have been reviewed and updated to reflect the proposals in this report. The new arrangements shall be applicable to all Council wholly owned companies not just the Thameswey group of companies. It should be noted that joint ventures are governed by separate shareholder agreements. This document shall contain a list of "reserved matters" which the group companies agree will not go ahead without the consent of all the shareholders; these reserved matters will be dealt with by the Shareholder Advisory Group or Executive/Council as appropriate. In essence, this agreement involves the companies agreeing to limit their authority to take decisions without input from the shareholder. The Thameswey Protocols shall be removed from the Constitution and the new document, governing all wholly owned companies shall be included in the Council's Constitution, under a new section: Part 6 Company Governance. A copy of this agreement can be found at Appendix 1.

6.0 Shareholder Advisory Group (SAG)

- 6.1 Best practice guidance advises that for councils operating with a cabinet system, the council should establish a company management committee which should be a sub-group of the Executive to look at the totality of a council's holdings and the decisions of that body should be subject to scrutiny.
- 6.2 With this in mind and to support the Shareholder Representative, it is proposed that a Shareholder Advisory Group (SAG), operating in the role of a company management committee, should be established to perform the shareholder function on behalf of the Council across all owned or affiliated companies. The role of this group is to provide the necessary oversight from a shareholder's perspective that the parameters, policies and boundaries that the shareholder has established for the company are being adhered to. It will therefore monitor:
- company performance against the business plan,
 - returns on investment, and
 - risks and opportunities.

It will also consider matters reserved to the authority for approval, such as varying the articles of association or appointing the auditors.

The Leader (or his or her appointee) remains the decision maker but the SAG acts as advisors in the making of those executive decisions.

- 6.3 A SAG is considered to be an effective means of governance of the companies. This is because it allows for decision making and discussion in an informed atmosphere, which also provides the Executive with:
- a mechanism to communicate the shareholders' views to the company; and
 - a means to evaluate the effectiveness of the company board and the delivery of the company performance against strategic objectives.

- 6.4 The Terms of Reference for the Shareholder Advisory Group are set out at Appendix 2. The Terms of Reference shall be included in the Council's Constitution, under a new section: Part 6 Company Governance.
- 6.5 The SAG shall be held virtually unless otherwise agreed. The SAG, shall consider (I) Thamesway, (II) Victoria Place and (III) other company matters in three separate meetings. Each shall meet once a quarter. This pattern shall continue throughout the year, with the number of meetings being kept under review. Meetings may be arranged in the evening or daytime at the convenience of the SAG.
- 6.6 The SAG will perform the shareholder's function on behalf of the Council for its companies. This committee will consist of members of the Executive (such appointments shall be made by the Leader), relevant senior officers and a co-opted member. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, as a Member of the Council from outside of the Executive, shall be invited to attend in the capacity of Observer.
- 6.7 The Director for Finance (s151 Officer) and the Director for Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer), or their deputies, will be advisors to the Group to provide open and strong advice.
- 6.8 Notably, under these proposals Members shall represent the shareholders interest via the SAG rather than being appointed as Directors of the Company. Equally, the s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer shall not be appointed as Directors. This would alleviate the need for Members to declare interests as Council appointed Directors at meetings of the Council and as such avoid any possible conflicts of interest.
- 6.9 To assist it in its functions the SAG may establish and consult standing sub-groups, such as might be required in respect of Audit; Performance and Risk; Ethical practices; or Nominations and Remuneration. It may also establish and consult ad-hoc or task and finish sub-groups in respect of any matter.
- 6.10 The SAG shall be supported by Democratic Services who shall ensure the meetings are properly managed and recorded.

7.0 Scrutiny

- 7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a significant role to play to ensure that the company is able, and the Executive has properly required the company, to make sufficient returns for the investment to be worthwhile and, indeed, ensure that the social objects set for it are not lost in the drive towards the overriding and essential requirement for the company to be economically successful.
- 7.2 The key role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to advise the Executive and hold it to account on behalf of the wider public interest and its role within the Council.
- 7.3 This creates a flow of information and accountability, in which
- the company needs to get on with the business of delivery;
 - the Executive needs to make the company decisions reserved to it and to hold the company to account for performing against them; and
 - Members as part of Overview and Scrutiny need to advise on or scrutinise the decisions of the Executive.

- 7.4 This needs to be done in a trading environment that requires them all to make speedy and reactive commercial decisions and to handle often highly valuable and commercially sensitive information.
- 7.5 Overview and Scrutiny, to fulfil its role, requires a means of access to the sensitive information and debate that inform the SAG and the Leader's decision making, without either oppressing that process or endangering its own strictly non-executive role.
- 7.6 To this end it is considered that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny is best placed to be involved, use his/her knowledge of this committee and its remit to sift the information and be alert to those matters that need to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny committees' attention and be investigated further. Accordingly, the Chair will be invited to the forum created to handle this crucial information flow, the SAG. To retain the independence required of the Overview and Scrutiny Chair, this is not membership as direct advisor as part of the decision making, but as an informed observer.
- 7.7 Overview and Scrutiny committees may then review any matter concerning the Council's companies and make proper use of its full powers and function, having had these matters drawn to its attention by, and with the benefit of, a fully informed Chair.
- 7.8 In carrying out any such review, the Government Guidance states that:
- "The local authority should ensure that its overview and scrutiny committees are able to exercise their powers in relation to the discharge of local authority functions under the relevant legislation."*
- 7.9 To this end, the legal framework for local authority companies includes an express requirement concerning the provision of information to Members of the Council, which reflects the similar provision in relation to local authorities generally. This states that a local authority regulated company "*shall provide to a Member of the Council such information about the affairs of the company as the member reasonably requires for the proper discharge of his duties.*"
- 7.10 The exception here is that the company cannot be required to provide information in breach of any enactment, or of an obligation owed to any person.
- 7.11 Should this proposal result in a significant increase in work for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is proposed that a Sub-Committee may need to be formed to solely consider matters arising from the SAG.

8.0 Shareholder Support – Shareholder Liaison Service

- 8.1 The Council's company's portfolio needs to be professionally managed with a common approach to governance, oversight, performance management and change. It is good practice for the Council to maintain a hub such as a Shareholder Liaison Service in respect of its companies, which should establish a central point where those involved with a company can access advice and share and assimilate best practice from the wider private sector.
- 8.2 To undertake this key role and in support of the SAG, the Council would establish a Shareholder Liaison Service. This service shall coordinate and lead on managing contractual arrangements with the companies and in holding the companies to account. The service shall support the SAG to ensure that the Council's investment and interests as shareholder, lender and place maker are given optimal focus and attention.
- 8.3 The Shareholder Liaison Service shall ensure that the SAG is fully supported and professionally advised.

- 8.4 The role of the Shareholder Liaison Service is to provide a professional support and advisory function to the Shareholder representative. This includes:
- a) implementing and overseeing effective internal governance processes in respect of shareholder decisions;
 - b) effectively communicating the Council's views and priorities as Shareholder;
 - c) supporting the companies' clients in achieving their ambitions through the companies;
 - d) supporting the establishment and integration of new business ventures from a shareholder perspective;
 - e) overseeing the flow of resources between the Council and its companies; and
 - f) managing responses to citizen queries in respect of the companies.
- 8.5 The service shall provide quality assurance on reporting risk assessment and key decisions to the SAG. A work programme and master dashboard shall be produced as a key source of information to support decision making and to enable constructive challenge to reports commission by the companies. In order to assure the Council that key documents are in place for all its companies, it is helpful for such documents to be held centrally. The SLS shall develop and maintain a manual so that a consistent approach is in place in respect of making the decision to establish and operate a company and permit the authority to monitor its performance effectively.
- 8.6 It is essential to ensure that the Council has the right capabilities and capacity in place to deliver the new governance arrangements. Whilst maximising the use of and reference to existing council knowledge and expertise within our staff teams, the Council will need to recruit further resources to both add capacity and bring specialist knowledge and expertise.
- 8.7 The Council has undertaken some benchmarking with other Councils on the resourcing requirements for a Shareholder Liaison Service and whilst these costs vary it is very clear that the Council is not currently adequately resourced to ensure that it can effectively client and maintain governance oversight of its interests and investments into its companies. The Council needs to establish the Shareholder Liaison Service through appointment to 2 key roles of Head of Shareholder Liaison Service at Grade W8 and Project Officer on Grade W5.
- 8.8 These roles shall work closely with subject matter experts already employed by the Council to draw on their expertise as required. For example, the finance team may be requested to advise on the Council's view on the financial results of the Council owned companies for the quarter and draw any key elements to the SAG's attention. Equally, the Legal team may be asked for an opinion in respect of contractual or governance arrangements. The Council has many subject matter experts in its departments whose advise may benefit the SAG.
- 8.9 It is anticipated that these governance arrangements will have an impact on the resources of both the Legal and Democratic Services, together with the Finance team. The budget allocated may be used to recruit further resource in these areas as necessary. The budget and resource implications would be kept under review.
- 8.10 A visual overview of the model can be found at Appendix 4.

9.0 Council appointments to the Board

- 9.1 The Board should operate openly and transparently. According to the Cadbury Report "the basic procedural requirements are that the Board should meet regularly, with due notice of the issues to be discussed supported by the necessary paperwork, and should record its conclusions".
- 9.2 Meetings on at least a quarterly basis would be considered good practice.

9.3 The Higgs Review suggests that the role of the board includes:

- promoting the success of the company by directing and supervising the company's affairs
- providing entrepreneurial leadership within prudent and effective
- controls where risk is assessed and managed
- setting strategic aims and ensuring sufficient resources (financial and human) are available to meet objectives
- reviewing management performance
- setting corporate values and standards ensuring obligations to shareholders and others are met
- The board should have processes to ensure that the entity continues to be financially viable, supported by the role of internal audit and its external auditor.
- Larger entities or holding companies should have:
 - an audit committee to provide independent scrutiny, challenge, and assurance
 - a remuneration committee, which will manage appointments and remuneration decisions (where an appointment is not reserved to the council)

9.4 The Government Guidance advised that a local authority company will be run by its board of directors answerable to the shareholders, in accordance with the articles of association, and goes on to suggest that a board of between 3 and 8 directors is most likely to be practical although this will be dependent on the circumstances of each company). The participating Local Authority should be represented on the board of its company.

9.5 The representatives who are appointed directors will participate directly in the activities of the company and are answerable to the company and have the powers and duties of company directors whilst they do so.

9.6 Appointments of an officer as a company director will be of the relevant post or office of the Council, not as an individual. This will be reflected within each of the companies' articles in that if any one of the Council appointed directors ceases to be an employee, office holder or Member of the Council, as applicable, then they automatically also cease to be a director of the company.

9.7 It is proposed that the Company board of directors for wholly owned companies shall be formed of:

- The Chief Executive of the Council;
- Independent person(s) appointed to bring oversight, experience and skills that would be advantageous and appropriate for the companies; and/or
- Other senior officers of the Council as appropriate.

9.8 A table can be found at Appendix 3 to this report, which outlines the proposed appointments (by role within the Council) to the boards. The optimal size and composition of the board shall depend upon the circumstances of the entity. At all times Council Officer directors shall be in a majority on the board.

9.9 Export House Limited and Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited are property holding companies. It is proposed to bring these companies back in house. As such, it is not considered that the Chief Executive or Independent directors need to be appointed to the boards. The composition of the boards of joint ventures are governed by the shareholder agreement and/or articles of association. Joint Ventures are composed of Council officers and Non-Council officer Directors.

10.0 Managed Services and Support Arrangements

- 10.1 The Council is required to recover the costs of any accommodation, goods, services, staff or any other thing it supplies to a company in pursuance of any agreement, or arrangement in place. It cannot subsidise the operation of the company in this way.
- 10.2 This means that the Council may enter into an agreement with the companies to provide services at cost or as a surplus service charge and that staff time and resources utilized for company purposes should be carefully accounted for.
- 10.3 Those areas of the authority's resources might include project management, initial set-up staff, human resources, audit, business continuity, communications, procurement, legal or finance and so on. The parameters of those services can be agreed through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). It is proposed that the Director of Legal and Democratic Services shall be delegated authority to enter into a SLA in respect of the provision of services to group companies. It is proposed that the Council shall charge a surplus service charge to the companies for this service. Such, charges shall be reviewed from time to time. It is anticipated that this may generate a modest income for the Council.
- 10.4 The Council as shareholder, however, does need to be assured that there are effective and robust support services in place in certain areas. This is to satisfy itself that sufficient standards of operational governance, legal and company secretarial compliance and effective financial management within the company are adhered to. The authority will reserve to itself the ability under the Shareholder Agreement to insist on supplying these services to a controlled company, at cost, if it feels that these standards are not otherwise being met or are not in its opinion likely to be met.
- 10.5 Additional agreements should be established as required, including data protection and information sharing protocols.

11.0 Openness and Transparency

- 11.1 The proposed arrangement of the SAG in relation to the composition of the boards should allow for the company's boards to operate in a commercial (confidential) fashion, while the SAG provides the necessary democratic oversight (transparency) through its meetings. It is through the discursive nature of and discourse at these meetings aided and abetted by the underlying culture that the tensions inherent within this area will be resolved in practical day to day consensual solutions.
- 11.2 It is proposed that the Council's website is updated to provide an area exclusively for Council owned companies. It would provide a high level of information and in turn transparency in respect of the companies. It would be designed to assist residents of the borough to understand, what the companies do and how we govern them.

12.0 Corporate Strategy

- 12.1 Through the operation of the SAG and its oversight of the companies business plans, the Council shall ensure that the companies business plans and practice align with the Council's corporate priorities.
- 12.2 The recommendations support the Council's aim to deliver best value for the communities of the borough and to be a high performing council that you trust to make the right decisions for you and the borough. Good corporate governance shall ensure an operating model that delivers the best outcomes from investments.

13.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 13.1 The costs of the additional 2 posts will be approximately £150,000 per annum.
- 13.2 Any costs incurred in 2022/23 will be funded from the Fit for the Future programme budget that has been established to initiate and support the key change programme activities for the Council.
- 13.3 There is an ongoing need to fund these posts beyond 2022/23 and establish a budget to enable specialist support to be commissioned as the service delivers the support required to oversee the governance of companies. These ongoing costs will be considered as part of the MTFS and Investment Programme and proposals will be brought forward in the November 2022 report of the MTFS and included as part of a range of measures to deliver an affordable, responsible and sustainable medium term budget.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 13.4 As outlined in the body of the report.

Legal

- 13.5 The Council has the power to set up companies or bodies, which they own. Section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 introduced the “general power of competence” for local authorities, defined as “the power to do anything that individuals generally may do” and which expressly includes the power to do something for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area. The generality of the power conferred by subsection (1) is not limited by the existence of any other power of the authority which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.
- 13.6 Section 4(2) of the Localism Act 2011 provides that where, in exercise of the general power, a local authority does things for a commercial purpose the authority must do them through a company.
- 13.7 Section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003 authorises the Council to do for a commercial purpose anything which it is authorised to do for carrying on any of its ordinary functions (other than where it is under a statutory duty to provide that function) however, this power is only exercisable through a company.
- 13.8 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to, the discharge of any other of its functions, whether involving expenditure, borrowing or lending money, or the acquisition or disposal of any rights or property.
- 13.9 The proposal to set up a Shareholder Committee, the Terms of Reference as set out and the ancillary arrangements outlined in this report will ensure that the Council not only acts lawfully but also that current guidance and good practice recommendations.

14.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 14.1 Internal and external stakeholders have been consulted.

REPORT ENDS

Wholly Owned Woking Borough Council Companies

July 2022

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1. Introduction
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Wholly Owned Company Protocols (“Company” or “Companies”)

1. Introduction

These protocols have been introduced to ensure good governance and management of all wholly owned companies. The Council owns a number of wholly owned companies. The operation and purpose of these companies aligns with the Council’s priorities. They create and deliver social value, address market failure, contribute to the Council’s finances and expand the overall service offering.

To the extent permitted by law, no wholly owned Company shall undertake any project or activity to the detriment of the Woking Borough Council (“Council” or “WBC”) or the wider interests of the communities which it serves.

2. Financial reporting and records

Wholly owned companies prepare and maintain their accounts in accordance with the accounting and financial reporting standards which represent the generally accepted guidelines, principles, standards, laws and regulations of the UK. The Companies management practices and business conduct benefit the localities and communities in which it operates, to the extent possible and affordable, and are in accordance with the agreed strategies of the Council.

Internal accounting and audit procedures reflect all of the company’s business transactions and disposition of assets, and has internal controls to provide assurance to the company’s board, shareholders and stakeholders that the transactions are accurate and legitimate. All required information is accessible to company auditors and other authorised parties and the Council.

3. Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

The Companies have been organised and resourced to prepare full financial activity reports as part of the statutory accounts and at Board meetings (currently 3 times a year). The Companies shall provide key information in respect of company performance against business plans, returns on investment and risk and opportunities to the Shareholder Advisory Group.

Key information in respect of the Thamesway Group is currently set out for inclusion in the Green Book.

4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all Companies

With comparisons to approved budget:

- a. New lending
- b. Loan and Interest Payments
- c. Sales
- d. Capital Expenditure

- e. Employee numbers

5. Political non-alignment

Subject to all applicable legal obligations, wholly owned Companies are committed to supporting the constitution and governance systems of the Council. The Companies do not support any specific political party or candidate for political office. The Company's conduct precludes any activity that could be interpreted as mutual dependence / favour with any political body or person, and does not offer or give any company funds or property as donations to any political party, candidate or campaign.

6. Cooperation between wholly owned Companies

Wholly owned companies shall cooperate with other group companies including applicable joint ventures, by sharing knowledge and physical, human and management resources. In the procurement of products and services, a group company gives preference to other group company entities, subject to relevant EU procurement rules, and as long as they can provide these on competitive terms relative to third parties.

7. Public representation of the company and the group

The Companies, in all their public appearances (with respect to disclosing company and business information to public, constituencies such as the media, the financial community, employees and shareholders), may be represented by any director and/or specified employee as approved from time to time by the respective company board.

8. Third party representation

Parties which have business dealings with the Companies but are not members of the group, such as consultants, contractors and suppliers, are not authorised to represent the company without the written permission of the respective board.

Third parties and their employees are expected to abide by the Group code of conduct in their interaction with, and on behalf of, a Company.

9. Use of the Company brand

The use of the Company name and trademark shall be governed by manuals and agreements issued by the respective Companies. No third party or joint venture shall use the Companies brand to further its interests without specific authorisation from the board or its authorised officer.

The brand should be consistently used in all published material and communications. An administrator will be tasked to oversee the use of the brand identity to ensure consistency and training will be arranged if needed. Any new staff will be offered a short induction session on correct use.

10. Protecting company assets

The assets of a Company shall not be misused; they shall be employed judiciously for the purpose of conducting the business for which they are duly authorised. These include tangible assets such as equipment and machinery, systems, facilities, materials and

resources, as well as intangible assets such as information technology and systems, proprietary information, intellectual property, and relationships with customers and suppliers.

11. Group Policies

The shareholders of each parent company shall recommend its board of directors adopt the policies and guidelines periodically formulated by the parent company board. Thameswey Limited operates and has approved a scheme of delegation which empowers officers of the group to make operational decisions, including committing to contracts and expenditure, within prescribed limits.

12. Intra Group Communications

Members of the board of parent company board. will receive agendas, minutes and reports from each of its subsidiary's board meetings, as soon as they become available.

13. Shareholders

All wholly owned companies shall be committed to enhancing shareholder value and complying with all regulations and laws that govern shareholder rights. The board of directors of the Companies shall inform its shareholders about all relevant aspects of the company's business.

14. Corporate citizenship

All Companies shall be committed to good corporate citizenship, not only in the compliance of all relevant laws and regulations but also by actively assisting in the improvement of quality of life of the people in the communities in which it operates. The company shall encourage collaboration with community groups.

No Company shall treat these activities as optional, but should strive to incorporate them as an integral part of its business plan.

15. Conduct

Each wholly owned Company supports the following principles of public life and the culture of the business is one of honesty and opposition to fraud and corruption. These principles are reflected in our procedures and ways of working.

There is an expectation and requirement that all individuals and organisations associated with the Companies in whatever way, such as contractors, partners and suppliers, will act with integrity and that directors and staff at all levels will lead by example in these matters ensuring adherence to legal requirements, financial regulations, codes of conduct, procedures and professional practice.

Selflessness: Thameswey should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and Integrity: Thameswey directors and staff should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity: Thameswey directors and staff should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability: Thameswey directors and staff should recognise that they are part of a body which is accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should therefore co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their office.

Openness: Thameswey directors and staff should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal Judgment: Thameswey directors and staff may take account of the views of others but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for Others: Thameswey directors and staff should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the integrity of the statutory officers of WBC and all employees of Thameswey companies and WBC.

Leadership: Thameswey directors and staff should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves confidence in the actions and operations of the Thameswey Group.

16. Concurrent employment

Directors will be required to notify the company of external appointments but do not require prior approval. Where such appointments would put a director in a position where his interests would be conflicted, they may be approved in advance by either a resolution of the shareholders or, where a company's articles of association permit, by the board of the Company concerned.

17. Communication with the Shareholder Representative and Shareholder Advisory Group

The Board attaches great importance to maintaining good relationships with all shareholders, who are kept informed of significant company developments.

The Companies shall work closely with the Shareholder Representative and Shareholder Advisory Group. The Companies shall report to the SAG when requested and in accordance with the agreed work programme on matters including but not limited to, company performance against business plans, return on investment and risk and opportunities.

18. Reserved Matters

The following matters are reserved to the Council for shareholder approval:

- a. Varying Articles of Association
- b. Varying ownership and structure
- c. Variations to shares (number of, rights, etc.)

- d. Entering contracts that are outside of the business plan or do not relate to the business
- e. Material legal proceedings outside of ordinary business
- f. Adopting and amending business plans each year and strategic plans (3 years)
- g. Appointment, removal and the remuneration of directors (members of the company board)
- h. Selection of the chair of the board
- i. Appointment of auditors
- j. Issue of dividends
 - i. as more particularly set out in a company's Articles of Association or Shareholder Agreement.

These matters shall in the first instance be considered by the Shareholder Advisory Board.

19. Board Governance

A company board should not be so large as to be unwieldy. The boards should be of sufficient size that the balance of skills and experience is appropriate for the requirements of the business and that changes to the board's composition can be managed without undue disruption. As such, the composition of the Board may vary depending upon the circumstances of the entity.

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 directors. The Shareholder Representative shall attend the meetings of the Board.

The Company board shall appoint an Independent directors to be the Chairman of the Board. The Chairman will be accountable to the shareholder if it has concerns on any matter in respect of which contact through the normal channels of chief operating officer and chief financial officer, has failed to resolve or for which such contact is inappropriate. This provision is not applicable to Export House Limited and KCSC Limited.

- a. Subject to them having completed and submitted in advance, a Non-Disclosure Agreement:
 - i. The agendas of board meetings of Companies shall be available to Members of the Council; and
 - ii. Members of the Council may attend board meetings as observers, by prior written notification to the Chairman of the relevant board.
- b. Subsidiary Company boards must submit any new proposals which cause changes to the Council Approved Parent Group Business Plan to the parent company which, if it supports the proposal, will recommend accordingly to the WBC Executive for consideration and recommendation thereon to the Council for approval.

20. Composition of the Boards

The Composition of the Boards has been determined by Full Council. Any changes to the composition of the Boards shall be done so to ensure the directors appointed have sufficient skills and experience to run it. The composition of the Board may vary depending on the circumstance of the entity. Council Officers shall at all times be in a majority. Any changes to the composition of the Board shall be agreed by Full Council.

Election of Chairman

The Companies shall ensure that an Independent Director shall be elected Chairman of the respective Company.

Quorum

A quorum for each board meeting shall be at least one third of directors present which must comprise at least 1 Independent Director, and 1 Officer Director of the relevant board. In respect of those boards in which do not have an Independent Director (Export House Limited and KCSC Limited) both Officer Directors must be present.

Alternate Directors

All Directors of subsidiary companies may appoint an Alternate Director of the same Director class (Independent, Councillor or Officer) in the event that he/she cannot attend a board meeting. The Alternate Director must be a Director of the parent company.

21. Company Board Meetings

Company board meetings will usually be held in person. In the event that exceptional circumstances necessitate a paper, email, telephone, video, electronic or other form of meeting permitted by the Articles or Company law, the Company shall in the notice of the meeting state the reasons for the meeting in a different form and record in the minutes of the said meeting the reasons and the decision reached at the meeting. The minutes of the said meeting will be published as soon as possible and reported to the next normal board meeting of the Company.

22. Website communication

To the extent possible to preserve commercial confidentiality, Company agendas and minutes will not be published.

Tracked Changes version – ~~Thameswey Group Protocols~~ ~~Wholly Owned Woking Borough Council Companies~~

~~July 2022~~
~~January 2018~~

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~~Protocol Group~~

~~Wholly Owned Company Thameswey Group Protocols (“Company” or “Companies”)~~

~~1. Protocol Group~~

~~The Thameswey Group Protocol has been introduced in order to ensure good governance and management of the Thameswey Group of Companies. It has been agreed and is reviewed by a Working Group appointed by the Council in its role as Group Shareholder.~~

~~2. Introduction~~

~~These protocols have been introduced to ensure good governance and management of all wholly owned companies. The Council owns a number of wholly owned companies. The operation and purpose of these companies aligns with the Council’s priorities. They create and deliver social value, address market failure, contribute to the Council’s finances and expand the overall service offering. Thameswey Group of companies (“Company” or “Group”) focuses on the development and management of projects that increase the use of sustainable energy, tackle fuel poverty, reduce water waste and encourage green transport both inside and outside the Borough of Woking, provide affordable homes and develop land and property in support of the Council’s strategies. The Thameswey Group is committed to benefiting the sustainable economic development of the Borough of Woking.~~

To the extent permitted by law, no ~~wholly owned Thameswey Ce~~company shall undertake any project or activity to the detriment of the Woking Borough Council ("Council" or "WBC") or the wider interests of the communities which it serves.

3. Financial reporting and records

~~Wholly owned companies Thameswey~~ prepares and maintains ~~their its~~ accounts in accordance with the accounting and financial reporting standards which represent the generally accepted guidelines, principles, standards, laws and regulations of the UK. The ~~Companies ameswey's~~ management practices and business conduct benefit the localities and communities in which it operates, to the extent possible and affordable, and are in accordance with the agreed strategies of the Council.

Internal accounting and audit procedures reflect all of the company's business transactions and disposition of assets, and has internal controls to provide assurance to the company's board, shareholders and stakeholders that the transactions are accurate and legitimate. All required information is accessible to company auditors and other authorised parties and the Council.

~~Thameswey operates under a system of delegated authority which is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose.~~

4. Page Break Performance and Financial Monitoring Information

The ~~Companies Thameswey Group~~ ~~haves~~ been organised and resourced to prepare full financial activity reports as part of the statutory accounts and at Board meetings (currently 3 times a year). ~~The Companies shall provide key information in respect of company performance against business plans, returns on investment and risk and opportunities to the Shareholder Advisory Group.~~

~~Key information in respect of the Thameswey Group is currently set out for inclusion in the Green Book. Key information, set out in (5) below is prepared for inclusion in the Council's Green Book on a monthly basis. Thameswey Limited also provides a monthly performance report to all Boards. This report is regularly reviewed by the Thameswey Limited Board.~~

5. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all ~~Thameswey Ce~~companies

With comparisons to approved budget:

- i. New lending
- ii. Loan and Interest Payments
- iii. Sales
- iv. Capital Expenditure
- v. Employee numbers

6. Political non-alignment

Subject to all applicable legal obligations, ~~wholly owned Companies are Thameswey is~~ committed to supporting the constitution and governance systems of the Council. The ~~Companies ameswey~~ ~~does~~ not support any specific political party or candidate for political office. The ~~Ce~~company's conduct precludes any activity that could be interpreted as mutual dependence / favour with any political body or person, and does not offer or give any company funds or property as donations to any political party, candidate or campaign.

7. Cooperation between wholly owned Thameswey Cecompanies

~~Wholly owned companies shall Thameswey companies~~ cooperate with other ~~group Thameswey group~~ companies including applicable joint ventures, by sharing knowledge and physical, human and management resources.

In the procurement of products and services, a ~~group company Thameswey~~ company gives preference to other ~~group Thameswey~~ company ~~entitiesies~~, subject to relevant EU procurement rules, and as long as they can provide these on competitive terms relative to third parties.

8. Page Break Public representation of the company and the group

The ~~Companies Thameswey group~~, in all ~~their its~~ public appearances (with respect to disclosing company and business information to public, constituencies such as the media, the financial community, employees and shareholders), may be represented by any director and/or specified employee as approved from time to time by the respective company board.

9. Third party representation

Parties which have business dealings with the ~~Companies Thameswey group~~ but are not members of the group, such as consultants, contractors and suppliers, are not authorised to represent ~~the a Thameswey~~ company without the written permission of the ~~respective Thameswey Limited~~ board.

Third parties and their employees are expected to abide by the Group code of conduct in their interaction with, and on behalf of, a ~~Thameswey C~~company. ~~Thameswey companies are encouraged to sign a non-disclosure agreement with third parties to support confidentiality of information.~~

10. Use of the ~~Company Thameswey~~ brand

The use of the ~~Company Thameswey~~ name and trademark shall be governed by manuals and agreements issued by ~~the respective Companies. Thameswey~~. No third party or joint venture shall use the ~~Companies Thameswey~~ brand to further its interests without specific authorisation from the board ~~of Thameswey Limited~~ or its authorised officer.

The brand should be consistently used in all published material and communications. An administrator will be tasked to oversee the use of the brand identity to ensure consistency and training will be arranged if needed. Any new staff will be offered a short induction session on correct use.

11. Protecting company assets

The assets of ~~a Thameswey a C~~company shall not be misused; they shall be employed judiciously for the purpose of conducting the business for which they are duly authorised. These include tangible assets such as equipment and machinery, systems, facilities, materials and resources, as well as intangible assets such as information technology and systems, proprietary information, intellectual property, and relationships with customers and suppliers.

12. Page Break Group Policies

The shareholders of each ~~parent Thameswey~~ company shall recommend its board of directors adopt the policies and guidelines periodically formulated by the ~~parent company board. Thameswey Limited board~~. Thameswey Limited operates and has approved a scheme of delegation which empowers officers of the group to make operational decisions, including committing to contracts and expenditure, within prescribed limits.

14. Intra Group Communications

Members of the board of ~~parent company board Thameswey Ltd.~~ will receive agendas, minutes and reports from each of its subsidiary's board meetings, as soon as they become available.

13. Shareholders

~~All wholly owned companies Thameswey Limited and its subsidiaries~~ shall be committed to enhancing shareholder value and complying with all regulations and laws that govern shareholder rights. The board of directors of ~~the Companies a Thameswey~~ company shall inform its shareholders about all relevant aspects of the company's business.

15. Corporate citizenship

~~All Thameswey C~~companies shall be committed to good corporate citizenship, not only in the compliance of all relevant laws and regulations but also by actively assisting in the improvement of quality of life of the people in the communities in which it operates. The company shall encourage collaboration with community groups.

~~No A Thameswey C~~company shall ~~not~~ treat these activities as optional, but should strive to incorporate them as an integral part of its business plan.

16. Conduct

~~Each wholly owned Company Thameswey~~ supports the following principles of public life and the culture of the business is one of honesty and opposition to fraud and corruption. These principles are reflected in our procedures and ways of working.

There is an expectation and requirement that all individuals and organisations associated with ~~the Companies Thameswey~~ in whatever way, such as contractors, partners and suppliers, will act with

integrity and that directors and staff at all levels will lead by example in these matters ensuring adherence to legal requirements, financial regulations, codes of conduct, procedures and professional practice.

Page Break

Selflessness: Thameswey should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and Integrity: Thameswey directors and staff should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity: Thameswey directors and staff should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability: Thameswey directors and staff should recognise that they are part of a body which is accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities and should therefore co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their office.

Openness: Thameswey directors and staff should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal Judgment: Thameswey directors and staff may take account of the views of others but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for Others: Thameswey directors and staff should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the integrity of the statutory officers of WBC and all employees of Thameswey companies and WBC.

Leadership: Thameswey directors and staff should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves confidence in the actions and operations of the Thameswey Group.

17. Concurrent employment

~~Councillor Directors and Independent~~ Directors will be required to notify the company of external appointments but do not require prior approval. Where such appointments would put a director in a position where his interests would be conflicted, they may be approved in advance by either a resolution of the shareholders or, where a company's articles of association permit, by the board of the ~~Thameswey~~ Company concerned.

18. ~~Page Break~~ **Communication with the Shareholder Representative and Shareholder Advisory Group by Thameswey with Council committees and Councillors**

The Board attaches great importance to maintaining good relationships with all shareholders, who are kept informed of significant company developments.

~~The Companies shall work closely with the Shareholder Representative and Shareholder Advisory Group. The Companies shall report to the SAG when requested and in accordance with the agreed work programme on matters including but not limited to, company performance against business plans, return on investment and risk and opportunities. .~~

- ~~a. All Councillors will have access to all agendas & reports subject to commercial confidentiality and as such need to have signed a current Non Disclosure Agreement prior to receiving any board papers or attending meetings.~~
- ~~b. To aid transparency, Thameswey will list dates of Board meetings on the Thameswey web site.~~
- ~~c. Summary briefings will be given to Councillors and presentations will be made of the financial year results to date against the Thameswey business plan at the same time as the annual business plan approval. This briefing will include a summary of previous period~~

~~activity and expectations for the forthcoming period. Other meetings to discuss company direction will be held on an ad hoc basis. Regular dialogue will help to ensure that the company's strategy is understood and that any queries or other issues are addressed in a constructive way.~~

~~d. All company announcements and presentations (subject to confidentiality arrangements) will be made available on the Thameswey website which should also contain corporate and customer information, updated on a regular basis together with answers to frequently asked questions.~~

~~The chief operating officer, chief financial officer and directors should be closely involved in shareholder relations and report back to the board the views of WBC and any communication from WBC to ensure that, both executive and non-executive directors, have an understanding of the view. The chairman and the other directors are available to meet the major shareholder on a mutually agreed basis. The board seeks to encourage a more active interest and contribution from shareholders.~~

19. ~~Page Break~~ Reserved Matters

The following matters are reserved to the Council for shareholder approval:

- (a) Varying Articles of Association
- (b) Varying ownership and structure
- (c) Variations to shares (number of, rights, etc.)
- (d) Entering contracts that are outside of the business plan or do not relate to the business

- (e) Material legal proceedings outside of ordinary business
- (f) Adopting and amending business plans each year and strategic plans (3 years)
- (g) Appointment, removal and the remuneration of directors (members of the company board)
- (h) Selection of the chair of the board
- (i) Appointment of auditors
- (j) Issue of dividends

as more particularly set out in a company's Articles of Association or Shareholder Agreement.

These matters shall in the first instance be considered by the Shareholder Advisory Board.

20. Board Governance

A company board should not be so large as to be unwieldy. The boards should be of sufficient size that the balance of skills and experience is appropriate for the requirements of the business and that changes to the board's composition can be managed without undue disruption. As such, the composition of the Board may vary depending upon the circumstances of the entity.

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 directors. The Shareholder Representative shall attend the meetings of the Board. ~~-, 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 in the majority.~~

The Company Thameswey Ltd. board shall will appoint ~~an one of the~~ Independent directors to be the Chairman of the Board. The Chairman will be accountable to the shareholder if it has concerns on any matter in respect of which contact through the normal channels of chief operating officer and chief financial officer, has failed to resolve or for which such contact is inappropriate. This provision is not applicable to Export House Limited and KCSC Limited.

Whilst recognising that most shareholder contact is with the chief operating officer and chief financial officer, the chairman and other directors as appropriate will maintain sufficient contact with WBC to understand its issues and concerns.

a. ~~The Chairman will ensure that the views of the shareholder are communicated to the Thameswey Ltd. board as a whole. The Chairman and WBC may discuss governance and strategy. Independent directors should be offered the opportunity to attend meetings with WBC. The Chairman will attend sufficient meetings with a range of representatives of WBC to listen to their views in order to help develop a balanced understanding of the issues and concerns of WBC.~~

a. Subject to them having completed and submitted in advance, a Non Disclosure Agreement: -

i. ~~The agendas of board meetings of Companies Thameswey Limited and its subsidiaries shall be available to Members of the Council; and~~

ii. ~~Members of the Council may attend board meetings as observers, by prior written notification to the Chairman of the relevant board.~~

b. ~~Subsidiary Company boards must submit any new proposals which cause changes to the Council Approved Parent Thameswey Group Business Plan to the parent company Thameswey Limited which, if it supports the proposal, will recommend accordingly to the WBC Executive for consideration and recommendation thereon to the Council for approval.~~

21. Page Break Composition of the Boards

~~The Composition of the Boards has been determined by Full Council. Any changes to the composition of the Boards shall be done so to ensure the directors appointed have sufficient skills and experience to run it. The composition of the Board may vary depending on the circumstance of the entity. Council Officers shall at all times be in a majority. Any changes to the composition of the Board shall be agreed by Full Council. respective Company boards should comprise of the following Directors and be reviewed annually by the Council:-~~

~~Thameswey 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 Thameswey 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~~

~~Page Break Associated Companies~~

~~Where Thameswey Limited has less than 51% of the shares of an Associated Company the composition of the board will be determined by the Council, or in accordance with the arrangements determined by the Council.~~

~~Election of Chairman~~

~~Thameswey Limited and its subsidiaries shall ensure that an~~ The Companies shall ensure that an Independent Director shall be is elected Chairman of the respective Company.

Quorum

A quorum for each board meeting shall be at least one third of three directors present which must comprise at least 1 Independent Director, ~~1 Councillor Director~~ and 1 Officer Director of the relevant board. In respect of those boards in which do not have an Independent Director (Export House Limited and KCSC Limited) both Officer Directors must be present.

Alternate Directors

All Directors of subsidiary companies may appoint an Alternate Director of the same Director class (Independent, Councillor or Officer) in the event that he/she cannot attend a board meeting. The Alternate Director must be a Director of the parent company. ~~Thameswey Limited.~~

Additional Directors

~~The shareholder of a Thameswey Group subsidiary may appoint an Additional Director in the event that a director of the subsidiary is absent and has not appointed an Alternate Director. The Alternate Director must be a Director of Thameswey Limited.~~

~~The shareholder of Thameswey Limited may appoint an Additional Director in the event that a director of Thameswey Limited is absent and has not appointed an Alternate Director.~~

22. Company Board Meetings

Company board meetings will usually be held in person. In the event that exceptional circumstances necessitate a paper, email, telephone, video, electronic or other form of meeting permitted by the Articles or Company law, the Company shall in the notice of the meeting state the reasons for the meeting in a different form and record in the minutes of the said meeting the reasons and the decision reached at the meeting. The minutes of the said meeting will be published as soon as possible and reported to the next normal board meeting of the Company.

23. Page Break Website communication

To the extent possible to preserve commercial confidentiality, ~~Thameswey Group C~~company agendas and minutes will not be published on the Group website.

End

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL
SHAREHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Overview

The purpose of the Shareholder Advisory Group is to advise the Leader in the exercise of his/her responsibility for the Council's functions as corporate shareholder of a company or group of companies and in their role to represent the interests of the Council as Shareholder Representative at meetings of a company.

Decision making

The Leader (or other Executive member appointed by the Leader for this purpose) may make decisions concerning companies in which the Council is or is proposed to become a shareholder, either:

- (a) in Executive; or
- (b) in the presence of the Shareholder Advisory Group.

Membership and Arrangements

The Shareholder Advisory Group shall consist of the Leader (or other Executive member appointed by the Leader for this purpose) in the presence of:

- (a) Such Members of the Executive as are appointed by the Leader (which shall be at least two);
- (b) One co-opted members, who will be an independent person providing relevant expertise and appointed on merit;and
- (c) Relevant senior officers of the Council as are appointed by the head of paid service (or their deputies); together with
- (d) The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as a Member of the Council from outside of the Executive, to act in the capacity of Observer.

The Service Director for Finance (s151 officer) and the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services (monitoring officer), or their deputies, will be advisors to the Group to provide open and strong advice.

Other members of the Executive (who are not directors of any of the companies concerned) may attend and vote as substitutes in the event that an appointed member of the Shareholder Advisory Group is unable to attend

Restrictions on Membership

As the Shareholder Advisory Group is to advise and discharge executive functions in relation to company matters and the role of the Shareholder Representative, only Executive members can be members of the Shareholder Advisory Group with voting rights, although other Executive members and non-Executive members can be invited to attend, without voting rights.

Meetings

The Shareholder Advisory Group shall meet on a basis agreed by itself and normally in private.

The quorum shall be the Leader (or other Executive member appointed by the Leader for this purpose) in the presence of a minimum of:

- (a) one other Executive Member;
- (b) one independent co-optee; and
- (c) one senior officer appointed to the Group (or their appointed deputy).

An invitation to attend must have been provided to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or their nominated deputy) at least three clear days in advance of the meeting taking place. This notice period may be waived if the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or their nominated deputy) so agrees.

An invitation to attend must also have been provided to the section 151 officer and the monitoring officer (or their nominated deputies), which will normally be at least three clear days in advance of the meeting taking place.

The Leader (or appointee) will chair the Shareholder Group and a Vice Chair will be selected from the elected members of the Shareholder Group.

Sub Groups

To assist it in its functions the Shareholder Advisory Group :

1. may establish and consult standing sub-groups, such as might be required in respect of:
 - (a) Audit and Risk;
 - (b) Ethical practices; or
 - (c) Nominations and Remuneration
2. may establish and consult ad-hoc or task and finish sub-groups in respect of any matter; and
3. may establish and consult stakeholder groups on any particular aspect or the generality of the objects of the trading companies

A sub-group or stakeholder group may contain such co-opted members, advisors or observers as the Shareholder Advisory Group sees fit.

Functions

1. Monitor the performance of a company in relation to its Business Plan and, in particular, the company's performance:
 - (a) in financial matters
 - (b) against the social goals of the company as set out in the company's Objects, Business Case or Business Plan; and
 - (c) against the values of the Council.

2. Evaluate and monitor:
 - (a) the financial and social returns on investment (be that shareholding, loans or direct investment); and
 - (b) risks and opportunities including those arising from joint ventures or new opportunities.
3. Consider matters reserved to the Council for shareholder approval, such as:
 - (a) Varying Articles of Association
 - (b) Varying ownership and structure
 - (c) Variations to shares (number of, rights, etc.
 - (d) Entering contracts that:

are outside of the business plan or do not relate to the business

- (e) Material legal proceedings outside of ordinary business
- (f) Adopting and amending business plans each year and strategic plans (3 years)
- (g) Appointment, removal and the remuneration of directors (members of the company board)
- (h) Selection of the chair of the board
- (i) Appointment of auditors
- (j) Issue of dividends

as more particularly set out in a company's Articles of Association or Shareholder Agreement.

Relationship

The Shareholder Advisory Group as it considers appropriate in accordance with its functions described above, may:

1. report and make formal recommendations to the Leader, directly or to the wider Executive;
2. make reports to and consult Overview and Scrutiny (including full Council) or
3. make reports to and consult the Standards and Audit Committee, in relation to that Committee's particular functions.

Directorships

Thamesway

<p>Thamesway Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) Paul Grimshare Terry Price William Prescott</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Place Strategic Director of Communities Strategic Director of Corporate Resource</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Thamesway Developments Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) Terry Price Recruit another Independent Director</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Communities Strategic Director of Place</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Thamesway Housing Limited Thamesway Guest Houses Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) Terry Price Recruit another Independent Director</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Corporate Resource Strategic Director of Communities</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Thamesway Energy Limited Thamesway Central Milton Keynes Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) William Prescott Paul Grimshare</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Corporate Resource Strategic Director of Place</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Thamesway Solar Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment)</p>

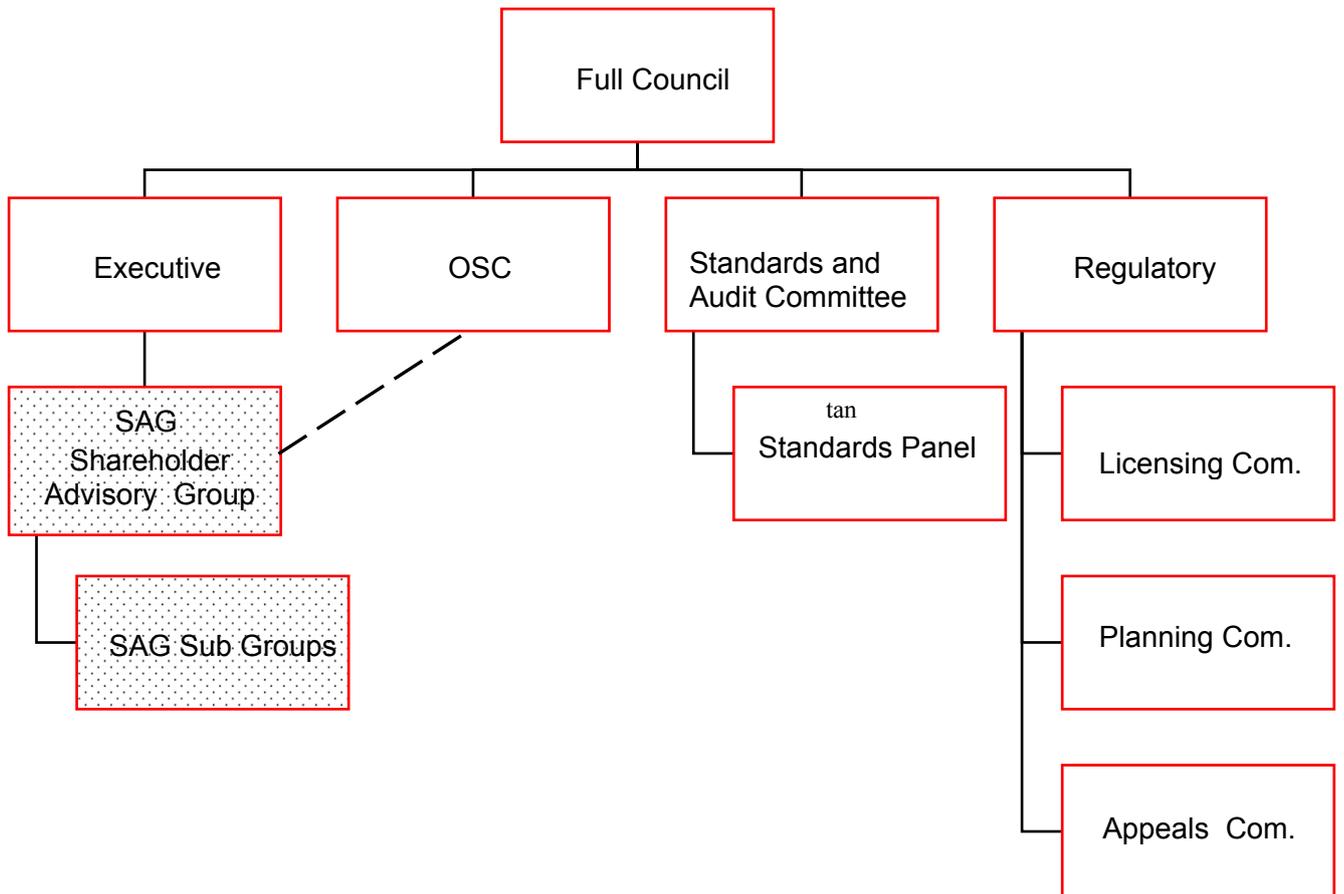
Company Governance

<p>Thameswey Sustainable Communities Limited</p>	<p>Paul Grimshare</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Place</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Thameswey Maintenance Services Limited Energy Centre For Sustainable Communities Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) Terry Price</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Corporate Resource</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Joint Venture</p> <p>Rutland (Woking) Limited Rutland Woking (Carthouse Lane) Limited Rutland Woking (Residential) Limited</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Communities</p> <p>Non Council James McAllister Marc Riggs</p> <p>Jonathan Riddings (Company Secretary)</p>

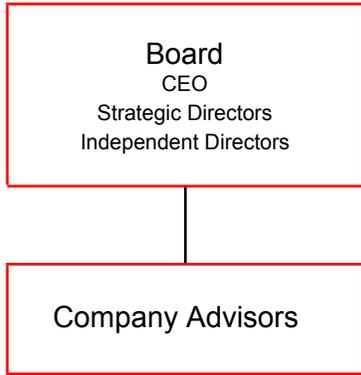
<p>Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited Brookwood Cemetery Limited Brookwood Park Limited</p>	<p>Independent (Individual Appointment) Chris Reid Shahid Azeem</p> <p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Corporate Resource Strategic Director of Place</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Export House</p> <p>(Property holding company only – proposed to bring back in house)</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role)</p> <p>Strategic Director of Place Assistant Director (Property)</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited</p> <p>(Property holding company only – proposed to bring back in house)</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role)</p> <p>Strategic Director of Place Assistant Director (Property)</p> <p>Clyde Secretaries Limited (Company Secretary)</p>

Company Governance

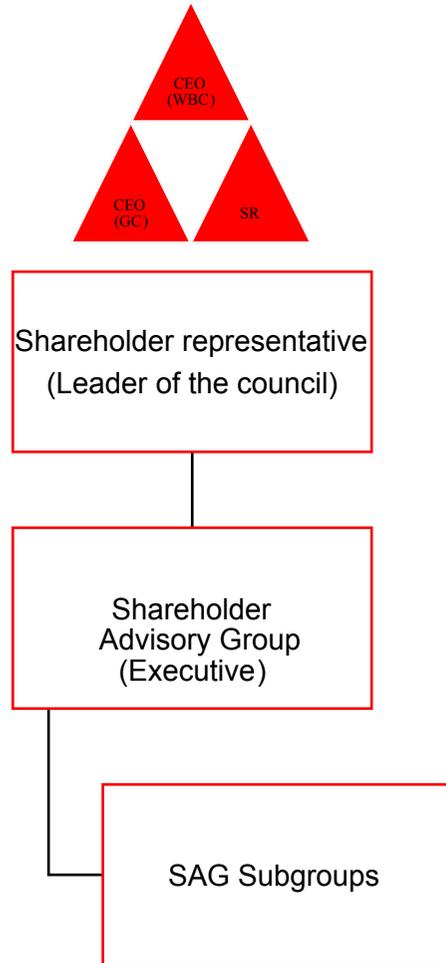
<p>Joint Venture</p> <p>Woking Shopping Limited</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role) Strategic Director of Place Assistant Director (Property)</p> <p>Non-Council Paul Hearn Peter Robinson</p>
<p>Joint Venture</p> <p>Victoria Square Woking Limited Victoria Square Residential Limited VSW Hotel limited</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role) Chief Executive Strategic Director of Corporate Resource</p> <p>Non-Council John Kingsbury</p> <p>John Robinson Peter Robinson</p> <p>Paul Hearn (Company Secretary)</p>
<p>Joint Venture</p> <p>LAC 2021 Limited (Dormant)</p>	<p>Council (Appointment by Role) Strategic Director of Place</p> <p>Non WBC Council Ray Lee (Elmbridge BC) Nicholas Stevens (Surrey Heath BC)</p>



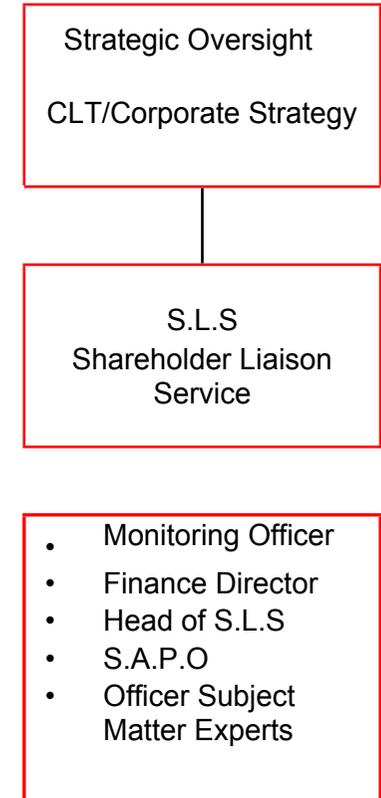
Group Company



Members



Officer



EXECUTIVE – 14 JULY 2022

DRAFT TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Executive Summary

The Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2021 asked Officers to prepare the Town Centre Masterplan with the purpose of providing an overarching framework to help guide development and investment decisions in the Town Centre. The Executive specifically requested that public engagement should be central to the Masterplan preparation process. The Draft Masterplan has been completed accordingly and is attached as Appendix 1. An accompanying Site Analysis of each allocated and Housing Infrastructure Fund sites is in Appendix 2. An Executive Summary of the Draft Masterplan is in Appendix 3. A Consultation Plan setting out how the community will be consulted and engaged during the consultation period is in Appendix 4. The contents of the Masterplan reflect views expressed by the Residents' Panel and key stakeholders during an initial community engagement. A summary of the comments made during the early engagement is in Appendix 5. The LDF Working Group has considered the draft Masterplan on 5 July 2022. Officers are satisfied that the preparation of the Masterplan meets statutory requirements, and the Executive is requested to approve it for public consultation between 25 July 2022 and 16 October 2022.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the contents of the Draft Woking Town Centre Masterplan and the accompanying Site Analysis and Consultation Plan be noted and approved for public consultation and engagement between 25 July 2022 and 16 October 2022; and
- (ii) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director – Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to approve any minor amendments to the Masterplan and the accompanying documents before it is published for community consultation and engagement.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To give the public an opportunity to comment on the Draft Town Centre Masterplan and for their comments to be considered before the Masterplan is adopted.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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Portfolio Holder: Councillor Liam Lyons
Email: cllrliam.lyons@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder: Councillor Gary Elson
Email: cllrgary.elson@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 6 July 2022

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Executive at its meeting on 15 July 2021 asked Officers to prepare the Town Centre Masterplan with the purpose of providing an overarching framework to help guide development and investment decisions in the Town Centre. The Executive specifically requested that public engagement should be central to the Masterplan preparation process. The Draft Masterplan has been completed accordingly and is attached as Appendix 1. An accompanying Site Analysis of each allocated and Housing Infrastructure Fund sites is in Appendix 2. An Executive Summary of the Draft Masterplan is in Appendix 3. A Consultation Plan setting out how the community will be consulted and engaged during the consultation period is in Appendix 4. The contents of the Masterplan reflect views expressed by the Residents' Panel and key stakeholders during an initial community engagement. A summary of the comments of the Residents' Panel is in Appendix 5. The Working Group has already scrutinised an earlier draft of the Masterplan, and their comments are incorporated in this latest version.

1.2 The vision for the Masterplan has been informed by suggestions made by the Residents' Panel and key stakeholders during the initial engagement:

Woking Town Centre will be:

- the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub and a location for inward investment with a flourishing diverse, innovative, and digitally enabled economy,
- a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities;
- undergoing a significant change to be shaped by the Town Centre Masterplan, this change includes the provision of a range of shops, homes, jobs, cultural, health and leisure facilities to meet the needs of residents and modern businesses whilst enhancing the heritage and environmental assets of the area;
- a place where it is expected that development will be of exemplary design within the framework of the Townscape Strategy for the Town Centre and with green infrastructure embedded as essential and integral part of the design;
- a place where development is accessible to the disabled and all other users; and
- a place where development will be informed by appropriate public engagement.

1.3 The vision provides a clear sense of focus and direction for the key requirements and expectations of what is needed for development to achieve to be acceptable. The report requests the Executive to approve the draft Masterplan for a 12-week consultation and engagement from 25 July 2022 – 16 October 2022. This will give the public sufficient time to comment and for the comments to be considered before the draft Masterplan is finalised for adoption. It is also an opportunity to test whether the issues the community wanted to be addressed by the Masterplan are adequately covered where possible.

1.4 The Masterplan covers a range of topics that residents and key stakeholders want the Masterplan to address. Below is a summary of what each of the topics is broadly about. However, Members are encouraged to read the Masterplan in full to understand its detailed requirements and how they will apply to day-to-day planning and investment decisions.

1.5 The Masterplan is informed by robust evidence base. The Council appointed GL Hearn to undertake a Housing Market Assessment to assess the capacity of the Town Centre to accommodate the nature and type of housing being proposed at the Town Centre and over what period. The Study concluded that there is sufficient demand for the nature and type of housing and the Town Centre is well placed as a location to meet that need. Members were invited to receive updates and presentations on the Housing Market Assessment by GL Hearn.

The Housing Market Assessment has been completed and Members have received a copy of the Study Report. The Townscape Strategy and the Site Analysis undertaken by Allies and Morrison have also been completed (subject to any minor amendments of editorial nature) and are an important and an integral part of the Masterplan (see Appendices 1 and 2). Like the Housing Market Assessment, Members have already received a presentation on the Townscape Strategy by Allies and Morrison.

- 1.6 The Site Analysis sets out development principles for each site, including the height of development on the site. This is further work requested by the Working Group. The work on heights has been informed by a design-led approach which provides a justifiable and defensible approach. There is a risk of a successful challenge if heights proposed are not justified.
- 1.7 A significant part of the Town Centre Masterplan had been prepared in-house. Apart from the Townscape Strategy, all the other topics were undertaken in-house by Officers. The Working Group has considered the in-house work at its meeting on 14 June 2022. All Members were invited to this meeting and their comments are already incorporated in this latest version of the Masterplan.
- 1.8 Given the extent of the Working Group's involvement, scrutiny and oversight of the Masterplan preparation process to date, the Executive is requested to approve the draft Masterplan for community engagement and consultation.

2.0 Summary of content covered by the Masterplan

- 2.1 It was agreed earlier in the process that community engagement would be central to the preparation of the Masterplan. An early engagement was undertaken to seek views from the Residents' Panel and key stakeholders on what they envisage the Town Centre to be and the issues they wish the Masterplan to address. A range of issues were raised that has informed the type of Masterplan and the topics covered within it. Some of the key stakeholders that were engaged include Ward Councillors, Political Group Leaders of the Council, local business groups, Surrey County Council, statutory consultees, Network Rail and local businesses.
- 2.2 The following is a summary of the topics covered in the Masterplan. Members are reminded that by law, the content of the Masterplan should be in general conformity with the development plan for the area:
 - **Townscape Strategy** - The design quality of new development in Woking town centre has a direct bearing on its success. In supporting relevant Local Plan policy, the masterplan promotes high quality design in new development. In doing so, it is important that a proper account is taken of the existing character of Woking town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan defines new character areas across the centre which will help developers to do just this.

The town centre has seen some new very tall buildings. Tall buildings in the right locations can bring significant benefits to Woking. High density developments in central locations takes pressure off releasing more sensitive land in less central locations. But the town centre needs a coherent and a strategic approach to where new tall buildings should be located. The Woking Town Centre masterplan presents an evidence-based building heights framework for the whole town centre, identifying areas that might be better or less-well suited to new tall buildings.

- **Sustainable construction** – The Council has declared a climate emergency, pledging to accelerate its effort to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 in line with national targets. The Masterplan sets out clear policy requirements that development must achieve to be acceptable. It highlights opportunities that exist to assist in achieving the requirements and provides good practice examples as a guide.
- **Green Infrastructure and biodiversity** – Green infrastructure provision has a positive bearing on the health and wellbeing of the community. There are significant opportunities to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity at the town Centre. The Masterplan provides an overview of the current green infrastructure provision, good examples of what could be achieved and the requirements that development will be expected to achieve to be policy compliant.
- **General Infrastructure** – It is important for development to be supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a timely manner. The Council has undertaken an Infrastructure Needs Assessment, which has informed the Masterplan. The Masterplan sets out infrastructure requirements that development should contribute to provide.
- **Heritage Assets** – Woking has a rich heritage that needs to be conserved. It includes Listed Buildings, ancient monuments, and Conservation Areas. The Masterplan makes sure that development proposals take full account of the heritage assets of the area and their settings with the aim of enhancing them.
- **Leisure and Culture** – Woking has a diverse and rich leisure and culture assets with significant opportunities to be enhanced on the back of future development proposals and partnership working between the public sector and the development industry. The Masterplan sets out how this can be achieved.
- **Flood risk and surface water drainage** – Development has the potential to adversely affect surface water runoff and flood risk if measures are not taken at the earliest stages of a scheme's development to help avoid or minimise the effect. The Masterplan is clear on the sources of flooding, provides examples of practical measures that can be applied and sets out clear requirements that development should consider to be acceptable.
- **Economy** – The Town Centre is the primary focus for economic growth in the borough to maintain its status as an economic hub. The period of the pandemic has had an impact on the economy of the town centre and in particular, on retail and hospitality. For example, the way people shop and working patterns are changing, and measures should be put in place to respond to these changes. The Masterplan responds to these challenges by setting out measures to facilitate sustainable economic growth and how developers can work in partnership to deliver that.
- **Housing** – The Council has a policy obligation and a statutory duty to meet several housing requirements, including planning to meet locally identified housing needs. The Masterplan ensures that the housing development that comes forward is sustainable, embedding appropriate and adequate green infrastructure and is design-led within the framework of a well-considered Townscape Strategy. It also sets out a Townscape Strategy that will help determine anticipated capacities for the HIF sites taking a design-led approach.
- **Transport** – congestion is a key concern of residents and key stakeholders that needs to be addressed. Development should be accessible to all transport modes, and given the location of the Town Centre, by walking, cycling and public transport in that order before car-based travel. The Masterplan has specific proposals to help achieve this goal.

- **Delivery** – The Masterplan should be deliverable. This section of the Masterplan sets out how the provisions of the Masterplan will be delivered.
- **Site Analysis** – The Site Analysis takes a design-led approach in assessing how individual allocated and HIF sites could be managed within the overall Townscape Strategy. It sets key development principles covering access, land uses, public realm, relationship with surroundings, massing and height.

3.0 How the Draft Masterplan has been prepared

- 3.1 This section of the report deals with engagement undertaken in preparing the draft Masterplan up to this stage and the engagement that will be undertaken when the Masterplan is published for consultation.
- 3.2 The Council had been committed to make sure that the community and its stakeholders take some ownership of the Masterplan. The commitment to prepare the Masterplan was by a cross-party consensus of the Council. Members were appropriately briefed and engaged to provide a steer on what type of Masterplan they want for the Town Centre. Three options for the Masterplan were considered, and Members agreed that their decision on the preferred option should be informed by community and stakeholder engagements.
- 3.3 The initial engagement focused on the concept of Master planning rather than its detailed contents. In parallel to this initial consultation, the story about the journey to date in establishing the current pattern of spatial distribution of development was explained and discussed to seek views on whether the trajectory of the spatial distribution of development as set out in the Core Strategy should continue. Given the importance of the initial engagement, and the necessity to reach as many sections of the community as possible, a specialist consultant was engaged to work with the Council to undertake one to one engagement with key stakeholders. The outcome of the engagement was used to inform the preferred option for the Masterplan, and the Working Group received a report on that.
- 3.4 The initial engagement also sought views on the HIF housing requirement. Given the scale of the housing provision, it was deemed appropriate to seek views from the community about the overall scale of the housing to be provided and how it should be spatially managed. The Masterplan addresses this by using the design-led approach of the Townscape Strategy to estimate the anticipated capacities for each of the HIF sites (see Appendix 2). This approach is not influenced by housing numbers but rather by what is appropriate in design terms for the sites. Whilst the Site Analysis demonstrates that the overall quantum of the HIF housing ask could not be met on the 13 identified HIF sites, the Townscape Strategy provides a robust framework for other windfall sites to come forward. The Council will continue to monitor delivery and respond to future trends.
- 3.5 A digital engagement platform was used to provide a civic site for engagement and consultation. The platform, the Woking Community Forum, was used for the Residents Panel engagement sessions and to seek views on the Masterplan.
- 3.6 There has been significant Members' engagement. The Portfolio Holder, the Shadow Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the LDF Working Group received regular updates throughout the preparation of the Masterplan. All the above were engagement undertaken prior to the Draft Masterplan being prepared and agreed for formal engagement and consultation.
- 3.7 The Masterplan will be published for formal consultation and engagement between 25 July and 16 October 2022. The Consultation Plan in Appendix 4 provides specific details on the events that will be undertaken to reach all sections of the community. The Consultation Plan ensures that the community engagement meets all statutory requirements as set out in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), but more importantly, it goes beyond that to help reach all section of the community. A variety of consultation methods will be employed,

as set out in Appendix 4, to ensure effective, fair and comprehensive consultation. The proposed consultation methods are well tailored to the various sections of the community to encourage them to respond. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) provides guidance on consultation requirements for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents. The Consultation Plan takes that into account.

- 3.8 Some of the key engagement activities which is planned to be undertaken include the opening of a pop-up shop in the town centre, exhibitions and a video walking tour setting out the overall ambition for the place, and how residents can engage on the proposal. Further digital options are being considered such as the use of a digital map for residents to pin ideas and views on.

4.0 Status of the Masterplan

- 4.1 The Masterplan will have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document and as such must meet prescribed statutory consultation requirements before it can be adopted. By legislation, its contents should be in general conformity with the development plan for the area, in this case, the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations DPD and the Development Management Policies DPD. Officers are satisfied that these requirements have been met.

5.0 Next stages

- 5.1 Subject to the recommendations of the Executive the Draft Masterplan and the accompanying documents will be published for a series of community consultation and engagement. The report includes a Consultation Plan (see Appendix 4) setting out how the Council will engage with the community and stakeholders during the consultation period. Statutory consultation requirements will be completed alongside positive engagement with Neighbourhood Forums, residents' Associations, neighbouring authorities, local businesses and statutory consultees. Further to this, several key engagement activities will be undertaken which is planned to include the opening of a pop-up shop in the town centre, exhibitions and a video walking tour setting out the overall ambition for the place, and how residents can engage on the proposal. Further digital options are being considered such as the use of a digital map for residents to pin ideas and views on.
- 5.2 The Masterplan will be published for twelve weeks consultation period instead of the normal six weeks to take account of the holiday period/season and to give the community sufficient time to respond. The consultation period is scheduled between **25 July 2022 and 16 October 2022**. A report on representations received with a recommendation to adopt the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be considered by the **LDF Working Group**, the **Executive and Council in early 2023**.
- 5.3 The Portfolio Holder, the Chair of the LDF Working Group and the Leader of the Council will continually be briefed on progress with the preparation of the Masterplan until it is adopted. This will give them the opportunity to ask questions and for any concerns to be addressed.
- 5.4 There will be pre-consultation publicity to let people know about the consultation. For example, there will be an article to be included/published in the Woking Magazine on the preparation of the Masterplan and progress so far. This will be widely distributed across the borough.

6.0 Woking for all strategy 2022 - 2027

6.1 The Masterplan supports the following objectives of the Woking for All Strategy 2022 - 2027:

Engaged Communities – A healthy, inclusive and engaged community-

- Reducing social inequality – the masterplan will guide the delivery of new housing and affordable housing developments and support both the Homelessness and Housing Strategy.
- Engaging our communities – engagement will be central to the preparation of the masterplan.

Healthier Communities – An enterprising, vibrant and sustainable borough-

- Promoting a strong economy – setting a vision for the town centre will promote investment, support business retention and promote Woking as a destination for business to relocate to.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of all residents – the masterplan will set out areas of open space, health and leisure provision and support the town centre as a cultural hub. The masterplan will support the emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Improving the Borough's biodiversity and green infrastructure – the masterplan will set out the quality and quantity of open space.
- Sustainable development – The masterplan will highlight the vision of a sustainable and inclusive town centre and identify opportunities for energy efficiency and generation.

Prospering Communities – An innovative, proactive and effective Council -

- Strengthening partnerships – the masterplan has/will be developed following engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders and the wider community.
- Effective use of resources – setting a clear vision of the town centre would support the effective use of limited resources, in particular, the reuse of previously developed land.

7.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

7.1 The Executive has approved a budget of £100,000 for the preparation of the Masterplan. Members should note that a significant section of the Masterplan has been prepared in-house by Officers of the Council. The cost of these is being met from existing Service Plan budgets. The indirect benefits that the Masterplan is likely to generate would far outweigh the cost of preparing the Masterplan.

Equalities and Human Resources

7.2 There are no equalities and human resources implications for preparing the Masterplan.

Legal

7.3 Planning law requires the Masterplan to be prepared in accordance with the development plan for the area. Care has been taken to ensure that this is adhered to.

8.0 Engagement and Consultation

8.1 See Section 3 above.

REPORT ENDS

Woking

Town Centre Masterplan

July 2022

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Executive Summary

The Executive of the Council committed to prepare the Town Centre Masterplan at its meeting on 15 July 2021. In doing so, it placed public engagement at centre stage in the Masterplan preparation process. The Residents' Panel and key stakeholders were invited to give their views on what they envisage the Town Centre to be in 10 years' time. The following is the vision that residents and key stakeholders wish for the Town Centre:

Woking Town Centre will be:

- the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub and a location for inward investment with a flourishing diverse, innovative, and digitally enabled economy,
- a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities;
- undergoing a significant change to be shaped by the Town Centre Masterplan, this change includes the provision of a range of shops, homes, jobs, cultural, health and leisure facilities to meet the needs of residents and modern businesses whilst enhancing the heritage and environmental assets of the area;
- a place where it is expected that development will be of exemplary design within the framework of the Townscape Strategy for the Town Centre and with green infrastructure embedded as essential and integral part of the design;
- a place where development is accessible to the disabled and all other users; and
- a place where development will be informed by appropriate public engagement.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide an overarching framework to help guide development and investment decisions in the Town Centre to achieve the above vision.

The Masterplan covers a range of topics that residents and key stakeholders want the Masterplan to address. The Masterplan covers them in detail. Below is a summary of the headlines under each topic. However, all are encouraged to read the Masterplan in full to understand its detailed requirements and how they will apply to day to day planning and investment decisions.

Townscape strategy

What it is about

The design quality of new development in Woking town centre has a direct bearing on its success. In supporting relevant Local Plan policy, the masterplan promotes high quality design in new development. In doing so, it is important that a proper account is taken of the existing character of Woking town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan defines new character areas across the centre which will help developers to do just this.

The town centre has seen some new very tall buildings. Tall buildings in the right locations can bring significant benefits to Woking. High density developments in central locations takes pressure off releasing more sensitive land in less central locations. But the town centre has until now lacked a strategic approach to where new tall buildings should be located. The Woking

Town Centre masterplan presents an evidence-based building heights framework for the whole town centre, identifying areas that might be better or less-well suited to new tall buildings.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- Update and establish a new Woking town centre character framework to help ensure new development takes proper account of its local context.
- Establish a high-level public realm and movement framework which identifies where improvements can be made to the town centre in the context of major identified development sites.
- Establish a building heights and tall buildings strategy for Woking town centre, to help ensure the form and scale of new development is appropriate and tall buildings are located only in the most appropriate locations.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- New development will be assessed against the character area, public realm and movement framework, and building heights guidance outlined in the Townscape Strategy of this Masterplan.
- To help guide development and ensure the right balance is made between making the best and most efficient use of town centre land and respecting local context, a series of studies have been undertaken on each of the Local Plan site allocations and HIF sites. These studies, whilst not representing a blueprint for development, provide the Council and potential applicants with guidance on how developments could respond to their local context whilst delivering high density and high-quality developments. Please see Appendix 1.

Sustainable construction

What it is about

The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, pledging to accelerate its efforts to become carbon neutral across its own estate and operations by 2030, and by 2050 across the wider Borough. The Masterplan sets out clear policy requirements that development must achieve to be acceptable, to help ensure these targets are met. It highlights opportunities that exist to help achieve the requirements and provides good practice examples as guidance.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- A well-designed town centre and buildings that conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials.
- Design should respond to the impacts of climate change by maximising energy efficiency and minimising carbon emissions to contribute towards net zero targets
- by 2050.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will be required to follow the energy hierarchy by reducing demand for energy through integrated approach to solar gain, securing efficient supply of heat and power, considering feasibility of on-site renewable energy generation.
- Large scale non-residential or mixed-use proposals will be required to conduct a BREAM assessment and achieve at least a Very Good rating;



- New development should incorporate measures to reduce water demand and for residential development, this should not exceed 110 litres per person per day;
- Development should incorporate electric vehicle charging points.
- Unless otherwise justified to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, development will be required to connect to the existing network of CHP.

Flood risk and surface water drainage

What it is about

Water is a natural part of our environment. However, the Town Centre is highly urbanised, with little natural or permeable space to absorb rainwater. Development has the potential to adversely affect surface water runoff and flood risk, and measures should be taken at the earliest stage of development to avoid or minimise flood risk. The Masterplan sets out the sources of flooding and provides examples of practical measures that can be used to ensure that surface water flood risk is not increased. It sets out clear requirements for development to meet or consider to be acceptable.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- The inclusion of SuDS within all development in the TCMP area will help to reduce flood risk to the multiple catchments the area drains to as well as helping to improve water quality to our rivers as required by the Environment Act 2021.
- Our Plan to achieve the objectives
- Development will be required to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. This should be considered and incorporated from the start of the development process.

- Development creates green/ blue streets, meaning that highways are designed to drain via rain gardens and surface water tree pits, where appropriate. An example of this has begun at Chertsey Road.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

What it is about

Green infrastructure makes a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community. There are significant opportunities to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity in the Town Centre. The Masterplan provides an overview of the current green infrastructure provision, good examples of what can be achieved and requirements that development will be expected to achieve to be policy compliant.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To take proactive steps to support 'bigger, better and joined up' habitats, green ways and spaces.
- To be tenacious in the long-term effort to reduce our impacts on the environment and to plan for sustainable growth.
- To increase people's access to enjoy greenspaces, recognising the well-being lift this gives, whilst protecting and enhancing our habitats.
- To ensure that planned development is supported by infrastructure including new natural and recreational assets.
- To increase the area of the overall tree, shrub and canopy cover of the Town Centre and ensure successful establishment and long-term growth potential as well as a diversity of suitable tree species.

- To work collaboratively with partners in all sectors to achieve the objectives.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will be required to provide on-site measures for new natural and formal spaces, greenways and habitats on-site. Where on-site provision is not feasible, developer contributions will be sought to meet the requirements off-site;
- Providing pocket parks to help enliven streets and public spaces. Informal and inclusive play should be part of this to create child-friendly space for all.
- Development should help create clear links between the urban core of Woking and its surrounding natural open spaces. One such link is the Basingstoke Canal, where integration with the town centre would be improved.
- Early consideration of green infrastructure and biodiversity requirements in the design of development and street-scene improvements, continuing throughout development, including during construction and future maintenance is encouraged.
- Development will be expected to meet national and/or local policy requirements for biodiversity net gain, for example through new trees, shrubs and hedges, increasing canopy cover over the town centre; green and eco-roofs and walls; bird nesting and bat/ bird roosting features to increase habitat provision.

General Infrastructure

What it is about

It is important for development to be supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a timely manner. The Council has undertaken an Infrastructure Needs Assessment, which has informed the Masterplan. The Masterplan sets out infrastructure requirements that development should contribute to provide.

Objectives of what it seeks to achieve:

- To work in partnership with providers to ensure that development in the Town Centre is supported by the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure in a timely manner.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- Work in partnership to deliver Woking integrated transport project.
- Replacement of Victoria Arch and improvement to the road network in its vicinity.
- Work in partnership with Network Rail to deliver significant improvement to rail infrastructure, including the Woking Flyover.
- Deliver Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Heritage Assets

What it is about

Woking has a rich heritage that needs to be conserved as a distinct part of the town's development. Heritage assets include Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The Masterplan makes sure that development takes full account of the heritage assets of the area and their settings, with the aim of enhancing them.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To conserve heritage assets, and retain them as a valuable part of Woking's evolving built environment;
- Prevent inappropriate development and loss or damage to heritage assets.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development should conserve heritage assets as a valuable part of a dynamic town centre. Development will be required to assess its impacts on heritage assets and their



setting, including the Conservation Area and incorporate appropriate measures to enhance the assets.

- Preventing development that involves loss or damage to heritage assets and take steps to enhance and restore them where beneficial to the asset and its setting.
- Relocate Town Gate to enhance public realm in the area.

Leisure and Culture

What it is about

Woking has diverse and rich leisure and culture facilities, but there are also significant opportunities for enhancement, partnership working between the public sector and the development industry. The Masterplan sets out how this can be achieved.

Objective of what it seeks to achieve

- To ensure the town centre is a leisure and culture destination that provides for the needs of its residents, workers and visitors.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- To make better use of existing cultural and leisure spaces through co-location.
- To work with community groups and businesses to expand and maximise the benefits of performing arts
- To maximise the connection between culture and heritage.

Economy

What it is about

The Town Centre is the primary focus for economic growth in the Borough to maintain its status as an economic hub. The period of the pandemic has had an impact on the economy

of the town centre, particularly on retail and hospitality. For example, the way people shop and working patterns are changing, and measure should be put in place to respond to these changes. The Masterplan responds to these challenges by setting out measures to facilitate sustainable economic growth and how developers can work in partnership to deliver that.

Objectives that it seeks to achieve

- To deliver a balance mix of uses including residential, commercial, leisure, culture, green spaces, as well as health and other public services.
- To have a vibrant and dynamic town centre where people want to live, work and visit.
- To have a town centre that is agile to respond and adapt to changing economic circumstances.
- To create a Town Centre environment that is conducive for inward investment.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- To make sure the Town Centre continue to be the primary focus for sustainable growth. In particular, to accommodate new development on previously developed land
- To promote and market a positive vision for the Town Centre
- To provide housing at the Town Centre as key part of the mix of Town Centre uses to ensure it continue to be dynamic and vibrant

Housing

What it is about

The Council has a policy obligation and a statutory duty to meet several housing requirements, including planning to meet locally identified housing needs. The Masterplan

ensures that housing development that comes forward is sustainable, including appropriate green infrastructure, and design-led within the framework of a well-considered Townscape Strategy. It also sets out a Townscape Strategy that will help determine anticipated capacities for the HIF sites taking a design-led approach.

Objectives for housing include:

- Ensuring the comprehensive delivery of the housing requirement in the Core Strategy earmarked for the Town Centre.
- To use all endeavours to facilitate the delivery of the HIF housing ask.
- To provide housing at the Town Centre as key part of the mix of Town Centre uses
- Improving the delivery of affordable housing
- Ensuring that the design and location of new housing contributes to the Town Centre's vitality and viability
- Providing a mixture of housing tenures and sizes in every part of the Town Centre
- To make sure the Town Centre continue to be the focus of new development

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- To work in partnership to seek the redevelopment of the Day's Aggregates Yard to unlock the site for development of town centre uses, including housing.
- To improve the delivery of Affordable Housing
- To make sure that all policy and statutory housing requirements are met
- To seek the provision of private outdoor amenity spaces in housing developments.
- To require development with access core serving four or more dwellings to provide an access control system with entry phone.
- Requiring dwellings entered at the seventh floor (eighth storey) and above should be served by at least two lifts.

Transport

What it is about

Congestion is a key concern of residents and key stakeholders that needs to be addressed. Development should be accessible to all transport modes, and given the location of the Town Centre, by walking, cycling and public transport in that order before car-based travel. The Masterplan has specific proposal to help achieve this goal.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To substantially improve movement within the town centre
- To reduced town centre highway congestion
- To improve cycling and walking facilities linking the town centre under the Victoria Arch to the southern part of Woking town and around the railway station
- To replace Victoria Arch. The project will support Network Rail objectives such as Woking Station redevelopment, and future Flyover.
- The Council will work with Surrey County Council to explore the feasibility of introducing Liveable Neighbourhoods where feasible.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will contribute to the delivery of the Woking Integrated Transport Project and the sustainable transport package;
- The Council will deliver the replacement of Victoria Arch as part of the HIF project
- Development will be required to contribute to recover part of the cost of Victoria Arch Widening Scheme;
- Development should facilitate the delivery of the Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The changes that have occurred since the Town Centre was established to date have been significant. Often the changes have been ad-hoc in responding to circumstances and community needs of the times without detailed attention to how they were coordinated. Whilst the Town Centre Masterplan looks ahead in shaping future development and investment, it is important to understand the historic context of the town's evolution to appreciate the key features that are worth conserving and to provide an effective linkage between the past, the present and the future. Given the volume of proposed future changes identified by the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) project, it is important that the changes are well coordinated, sustainable, well designed and appropriately innovated without losing the history and heritage assets that we all value and cherish. The Basingstoke Canal and the opening of the Railway Station in 1838, with links to London was a major influence on the development of the Town Centre. What is now the Albion Square was an arrival point into the town and the Town Centre. The Albion Hotel (where Albion House is now located) was originally built in 1856-7, and replaced in 1899 by a newer hotel. Today the building is called Spaces, which differs considerably as illustrated by [Figs 1 and 2](#).

From the middle of the 1800s the town's development began, first with the High Street, containing a collection of shops including a Post Office, grocers, chemists, butchers and draper and milliner. Some of these were converted from cottages, and some were new buildings. Buildings now situated on the High Street date from 1870 and have a high degree of historical significance to the town ([Fig 2](#)).

From the 1890s Chertsey Road began to take over as the town's main shopping street, and buildings were gradually constructed. Five shops were erected on what had been part of the grounds of the Albion Hotel and these were supplemented around 1898 by shops on the corner of Chobham Road and the opposite side of Chertsey Road. Broadway, which was originally the western extent of Maybury Road, started to develop at the same time, and contained the town's first telephone exchange.



Fig 1 Albion Hotel



Fig 2 High Street



Fig 3 Spaces - Budgens from upper part of High Street



By 1934 the Ordnance Survey map shows that at this point, much of the town centre was built. The general street pattern and built form and layout is very similar to how it was in 1934, despite changes to individual and collections of buildings.

The Town Centre continue to undergo significant change, and some of the changes such as Victoria Place have been dramatic in their impact on the general character of the area. The changes have evolved, often organically without the necessary coordination of effectively linking the past with the future. There is the risk that the Town Centre will lose its identity and sense of history if current trajectory continues, and as such local residents and key stakeholders have been requesting for a well-planned led approach to future development – A Masterplan.

The need for the ‘Town Centre Masterplan’ is therefore a request made by residents, developers, local businesses, and key stakeholders. The Council has listened and has committed to preparing the Masterplan that will provide the necessary framework to ensure sustainable development of the Town Centre. The Council has an up-to-date Core Strategy and a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) that provides the strategic policy context for the preparation of the Masterplan. The Core Strategy identifies the Town Centre as the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub with a flourishing, diverse and innovative economy and a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services, and facilities.

Not only is the Town Centre expected to perform these functions, but it is also a hub for local people and a place to socialise and enjoy culture and recreation. The development of a dynamic and successful Town Centre is central to the achievement of sustainable development in the Borough. For example, it limits the amount of land that has to be found in the Green Belt to meet future development needs.

The Council has been concerned to make sure that the Masterplan strikes a good balance between the various expectations of residents and stakeholder and the often conflicting needs and impacts of development. To understand these tensions, the Council has undertaken a series of targeted engagement sessions to seek the views of a cross section of the community through Residents’ Panel engagement sessions and one to one engagement with local businesses and key stakeholders on what they want their Town Centre to be in the next ten years. The outcome of the engagement has been captured to inform the community’s vision for the Town Centre:

Woking Town Centre will be:



the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub and a location for inward investment with a flourishing diverse, innovative, and digitally enabled economy,



a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities;



undergoing a significant change to be shaped by the Town Centre Masterplan, this change includes the provision of a range of shops, offices, homes, jobs, cultural, health and leisure facilities to meet the needs of local residents and modern businesses whilst protecting the heritage and environmental assets of the area;



a place where it is expected that development will be of exemplary design within the framework of the Townscape Strategy for the Town Centre and with green infrastructure and biodiversity embedded as an essential and integral part of the design;



a place where development is accessible to the disabled and all other users; and



a place where development will be informed by appropriate public engagement.

The Town Centre has great strengths to help deliver the vision of the Masterplan. It has a productive, thriving and an innovative economy, it is in close proximity to two international gateways – Heathrow and Gatwick, it is a location for the headquarters' of world class businesses, skilled labour force and a local political leadership that is committed to the preparation and delivery of the Masterplan.

2 Purpose of the Masterplan

The purpose of the Town Centre Masterplan is to produce an overarching one stop planning document with a townscape strategy that will provide the necessary framework to help guide development and investment decisions within the Town Centre to achieve the vision. The Masterplan cascades boroughwide policies and strategies to how they would apply in the Town Centre geographical area. With its south east of England location, Woking is at the centre of one of the fastest growing economic areas outside of London, and with its entrepreneurial businesses, highly qualified skilled force and exceptional communication links to international gateways such as Heathrow and Gatwick, there is potential to drive growth, which the Masterplan will provide certainty. The Town Centre is more than just a shopping centre. Whilst retail will continue to play a key role in the regeneration of the Town Centre, the Masterplan would also seek to create a Town Centre where people would want to live and work, a Town Centre which is a destination for leisure and culture and a place where people would want to socialise and have a range of experiences.

The geographical definition of the Town Centre which the Masterplan relates is as set out by the Proposals Map of the Core Strategy/ Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). This is illustrated by the Location Plan opposite.

The Council has and continues to invest significantly to improve the attractiveness of the Town Centre and help create the conducive environment for businesses to

invest. This includes about £25M of investment towards an integrated transport package, the landscaping of key streets such as Commercial Way, a Cycle Hub by the Railway Station, the Victoria Square public realm, the £700M Victoria Place development, which has recently opened and the on-going delivery of the £95M Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) project to replace the Victoria Arch. The Council is also working in partnership with Network Rail to deliver significant improvements to the rail infrastructure, including the Woking Flyover and a new Platform Six. This investment provides a good foundation for the sustainable delivery of the Masterplan.

The pandemic has no doubt had an impact on the way people live and work such as on the acceleration of on-line shopping and hybrid working. The Council has and continue to provide a wide range of support to help local businesses through the challenging times. The challenges are covered in detail under specific topics in the Masterplan, but overall, the Masterplan will help provide certainty for businesses to invest and a conducive environment for people to live, work, visit and socialise.

The Council is aware of its promotion and marketing role in highlighting the opportunities that exists in the Town Centre, and will be making every necessary effort to work with stakeholders and businesses to highlight the advantages and opportunities that the Masterplan offers for inward investment.



Fig 4 Town Centre boundary

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3 Content of the Masterplan

3.1 Key themes

The Masterplan covers the following key themes:

- The Planning Policy context
- How our Masterplan has been prepared
- Townscape strategy
- Sustainable construction
- Heritage
- Economy
- Housing
- Leisure and culture
- Green infrastructure
- Flood risk and surface water management
- General infrastructure
- Transport
- Delivery

Under each of these themes the following is covered:

- An overview of the current situation;
- Existing opportunities and constraints;
- The objective to be achieved;
- The Plan to deliver the objectives, which developers, partners and stakeholders will be required to contribute.

Whilst each of these themes are deliberately structured to be self-contained, they are also interrelated to provide a comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable development of the Town Centre.

3.2 Planning Policy Context

The Town Centre Masterplan will have status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Being an SPD, it will have to be in general conformity with the requirements of the development plan. The development plan in this regard comprises of the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations DPD and the Development Management Policies DPD.

The Council has an up to date adopted Core Strategy. It provides the strategic policy context for the preparation of the Masterplan. Policy CS1 (A Spatial Strategy for Woking Borough) of the Core Strategy identifies the Town Centre as the primary focus of sustainable growth. The Core Strategy directs most new development to previously developed land in the Town Centre which offers the best access to a range of services and facilities to minimise the need to travel. The Town Centre is a sustainable location for the future direction of development. The Core Strategy encourages high density development that could include tall buildings in the Town Centre in a way that builds on its overall character and appearance and does not compromise that of nearby areas. This approach to the spatial distribution of development across the Borough is intended to minimise the amount of land that would be needed to be released from the Green Belt to meet future development needs.

In quantitative terms, Policy CS2 (Woking Town Centre) of the Core Strategy earmarks the Town Centre to accommodate 2,180 new dwellings, 27,000 sq.m of office floorspace and 75,300 sq.m of retail floorspace between 2010 and 2027. In addition to these figures, the Council has accepted a Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) award of £95M to replace the Victoria Arch. The award requires the Council to deliver housing on its own sites (the Triangle site, Poole Road site and Concorde/Griffin House) and use its best endeavours to deliver an additional 10 sites, yield an anticipated total of 3,304 new dwellings in the Town Centre by 2030 over and above what has been committed in the Core Strategy.

Presently, Woking's housing need is significantly more than what it is required to provide. The housing need for the area using the Government's standard method of calculation is 431 dwellings per year. The Council is providing 292 dwellings per year with significant unmet need that is being met in Waverley and Guildford boroughs.

3.3 How the Masterplan has been prepared and consultation and engagement

The key principles that have underpinned the preparation of the Masterplan include:

- A commitment to early and an on-going community and stakeholder engagement and consultation
- An overriding aim to achieve sustainable development;
- Place making ethos to ensure the Town Centre is a place where people want to live, work and visit;

Each key principle is not mutually exclusive. They interact and integrate to provide certainty and confidence for business investment

The Council had been committed to make sure that the community and its stakeholders take ownership of the Masterplan. In this regard, community and stakeholder engagement had been central to the preparation of the Masterplan. The commitment to prepare the Masterplan was by a cross-party consensus of the Council. Members were appropriately briefed and engaged to provide a steer on what type of Masterplan they want for the Town Centre. Three options for the Masterplan were considered, and Members agreed that their decision for the preferred option should be informed by community and stakeholder engagements.

The preparation of the Masterplan was the beginning of the process of establishing a new dialogue with the local community about what they envisage the Town Centre to be by 2030 and the role that they think the

Masterplan could play to achieve that. The initial engagement focused on the concept of Master planning rather than the detailed contents of the Masterplan. In parallel to this initial consultation, the story about the journey to date in establishing the current pattern of spatial distribution of development was explained and discussed to seek views on whether the trajectory of the spatial distribution of development as set out in the Core Strategy should continue. Given the importance of the initial engagement, and the necessity to reach as many sections of the community as possible, a specialist consultant was engaged to work with the Council to undertake one to one engagement with key stakeholders. The outcome of the engagement was used to inform the preferred option for the Masterplan.

A significant part of the Masterplan had been written in-house by the Council. A multidisciplinary project team across the Council was set up to coordinate the preparation of the Masterplan and to take ownership of its delivery.

There has been significant Members' engagement. The Portfolio Holder, the Shadow Portfolio Holder and the Chair of the LDF Working Group received regular updates throughout the preparation of the Masterplan.

All the above engagement was undertaken prior to the Draft Masterplan being prepared and agreed for formal engagement and consultation.

The Masterplan will have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document and as such must meet prescribed statutory consultation requirements before it can be adopted. The draft Masterplan was reported to the LDF Working Group (5 July 2022) and the Executive of the Council (14 July 2022) to seek their comments and an authority to

formally consult the wider public. The public and stakeholders were given sufficient time to engage in the process between 25 July 2022 and 19 September 2022. Representations received were considered before the Masterplan was finalised. The Final Draft Masterplan will be reported to the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group, Executive and Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) before the end of 2022.

A Consultation Plan setting out details of consultation and engagement events undertaken on the Draft Masterplan is in Appendix XXX.

The Masterplan has been prepared with the overall goal to achieve sustainable development and create a place that people would like to live, work and visit. In this regard, the Masterplan brings together social, economy and environmental considerations into development decisions. It covers key themes such as climate change, green and blue infrastructure, economy, housing, heritage, transport, culture and leisure.

The Masterplan is informed by robust evidence base and several other strategies and programmes of the Council. For example, it is linked to the digital strategy, economic strategy, Woking 2050, Destination Woking, housing strategy and the Design SPD. Readers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these documents. Most importantly, the Masterplan is informed by representations received from residents, businesses and stakeholders throughout its preparation.



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4 Overview

The Woking Townscape Strategy is the central component in the Woking Town Centre Masterplan. In outlining a strategy within which Woking can attract investment and accommodate high density new development in appropriate locations, it takes a context-led approach and is based on an understanding of the town centre's environmental attributes.

The Woking Townscape Strategy has been composed in the following way:

1. **Urban analysis** - providing a map-based overview of town centre conditions including movement, land use, public realm and open space, heritage and landmarks, building types, urban grain, density and building heights.
2. **Town centre character framework** - providing a review and update of the character areas across the town centre included in the Woking Design SPD. This character framework provides the basis of subsequent masterplanning guidance and advice, particularly relating to building heights.
3. **Public realm and movement framework** - providing a pedestrian and cycling orientated movement and public realm framework which is relevant to all major developments that come forward in the town centre and the area immediately surround it.
4. **Building height strategy** - providing an evidence-based building height which sets out potentially suitable building heights for new development within each of the town centre character areas. The strategy also - using map-based analysis of factors which are considered to be make locations more suitable for, or more sensitive to, tall buildings - identifies locations which are considered to be potentially suitable for new tall building development.

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction



Fig 5 Existing plan of Woking Town Centre



5 Urban Analysis

5.1 Woking Town Centre

This section provides a comprehensive overview of environmental analysis of the town centre.

The analysis presented covers the following aspects of the town centre:

- Movement
- Land use
- Public realm and open space
- Heritage and landmarks
- Building types
- Urban grain
- Density
- Building heights

Plans at town centre scale are presented for each, supported by a concise commentary. This analysis forms an important context for the townscape strategy - enabling and informing a review of the town centre character areas - and wider town centre masterplan.

Allocated and opportunity sites

The masterplan is prepared in the context of a series of sites having been identified for potential redevelopment. Sites are allocated in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) and Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) project. These sites are shown on the plan opposite, as follows:

- UA2 Trizancia House, UA3 Chester House
- UA4, UA6 High Street and Commercial Way
- UA5 The Cornerstone
- UA8 Former Goldsworth Rd Arms
- UA9 113-129 Goldsworth Road
- UA10 MVA House (HIF8)

- UA11 1-7 Victoria Way (HIF8)
- UA13 30-32 Goldsworth Road (HIF8)
- UA14 Poole Road industrial estate (HIF12)
- UA15 The Big Apple (HIF11)
- UA16 Chertsey House
- UA17 Griffin House, UA18 Concord House (HIF10), Chobham Road (W1)
- UA25 101-121 Chertsey Road
- UA28 29-31 Walton Road
- UA30 Walton Road Youth Centre
- UA31 Car Park (East) Station (HIF2)
- UA32 Royal Mail Depot (HIF1)
- UA33 Coal Yard (HIF3)
- UA34 Quadrant Court
- UA35 The Crescent, UA36 Somerset House (HIF6)
- HIF4 Police Station
- HIF5 Station Plaza
- HIF9 BHS
- HIF7 The Triangle
- **HIF13 Church Gate**
- **Station sidings (W2)**

Building on the guidance and advice contained in the masterplan, design, massing and capacity studies on each of these key sites have been undertaken, set out in Appendix 1.

- HIF site
- Local Plan site allocation
- Windfall site

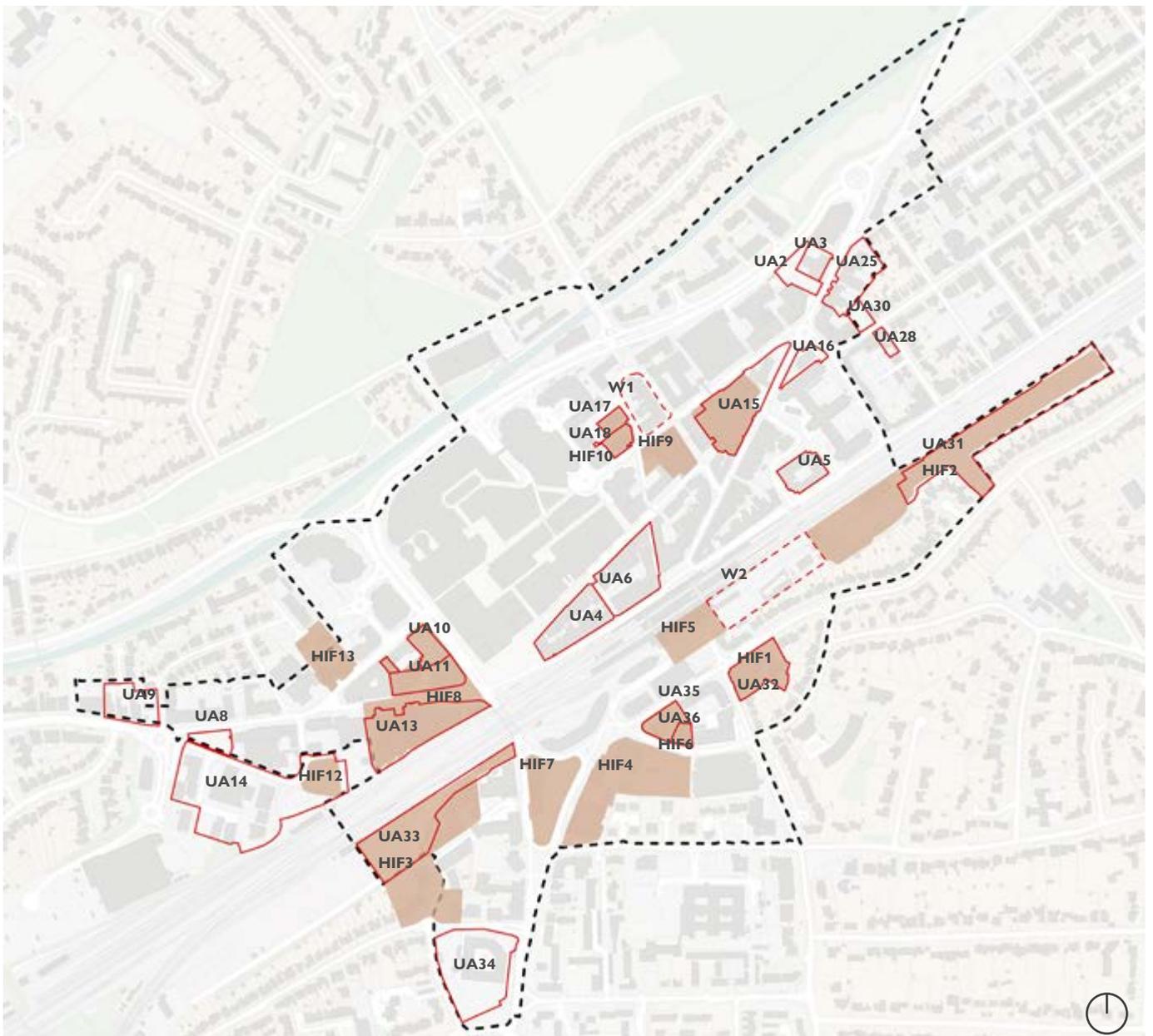


Fig 6 Allocated development and opportunity sites in Woking town centre

5.2 Movement

The dedicated Transport chapter provides more detail on the town centre’s movement context, but an assessment of movement, accessibility and the network of routes and pathways to and through the town centre is important to understand.

The commercial and civic core of the centre including Commercial Way, Mercia Way and Jubilee Square, have seen a radical transformation over the last ten years following an ambitious public realm investment programme. This work, completed a number of years ago, saw investments in pedestrian and cycle facilities along key pedestrianised streets.

Local bus services provide connections with surrounding towns and villages and Woking Railway Station supports high quality and frequent services to London Waterloo.

With good strategic road access to the M25 to the east via Junction 11, the M3 to the north via Junction 3 and the A3 to the south, vehicular routes converge to join the A320 at Victoria Way which is the main vehicular axis through the centre. The town’s principal car parks are generally accessed directly from Victoria Way.

Woking town centre is a highly accessible and sustainable location for new development.

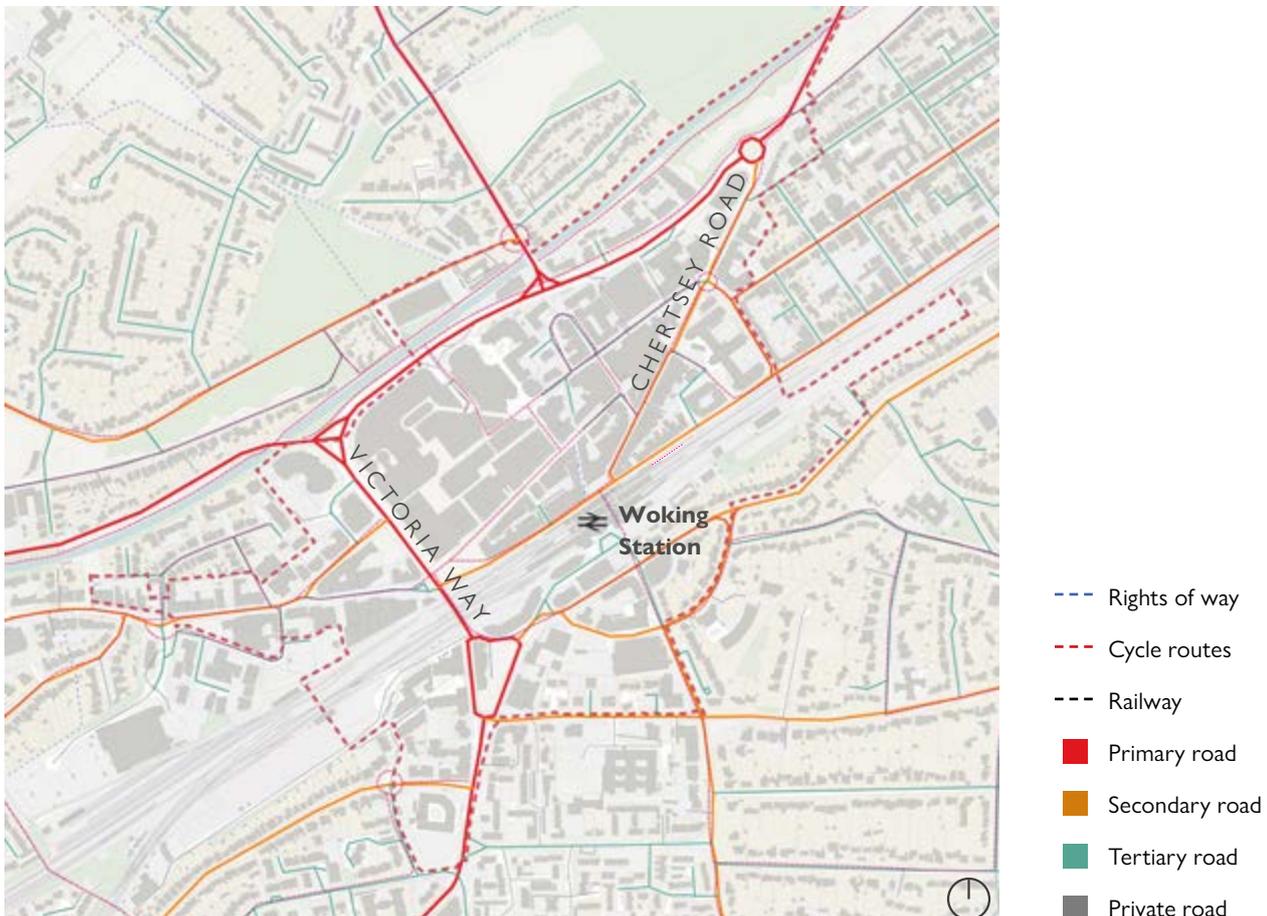


Fig 7 Existing movement plan within Woking town centre with the heirarchy of routes highlighted

5.3 Land Use

Commercial uses dominate the town centre. The retail core centres on Jubilee Square and the Victoria Place Shopping Centre. Major office developments are focused to the east of the centre.

The centre has seen major and very high density residential-led mixed use development around the station on the south side of the line and as part of the recent Victoria Square development on Victoria Way.

In recent times, west of Victoria Way, the Goldsworth Road area has also emerged as a focus for regeneration with major schemes still coming forward.

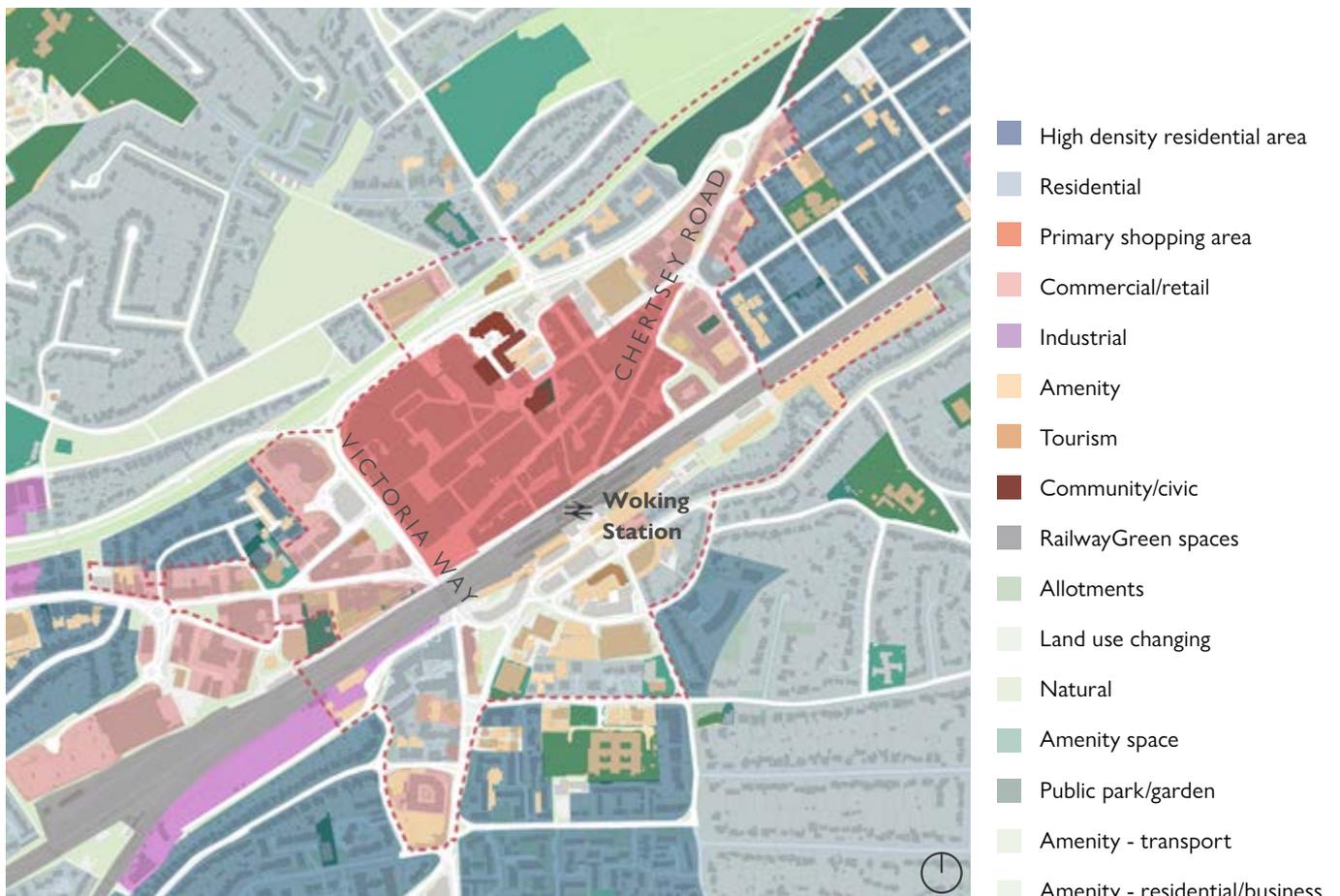


Fig 8 Existing land uses within Woking town centre and the peripheries

5.4 Public Realm and Open Space

Whilst there is very little green open space within the boundary of Woking town centre, the Basingstoke Canal corridor passes through the north of the centre, north of Victoria Way and provides a wonderful escape and respite from the urban character of the town centre.

Good quality access to Brookhouse Common is provided directly from Victoria Way to the north east of the centre and provides a link to the Saturn Trail which is a 15km bike and walking path that follows the Basingstoke Canal through the centre.

The quality of the central streets and urban spaces has benefited from a recent major programme of investment and improvement which was completed in around 2015. This programme saw the transformation of Commercial Way, Mercia Way and Jubilee Square.

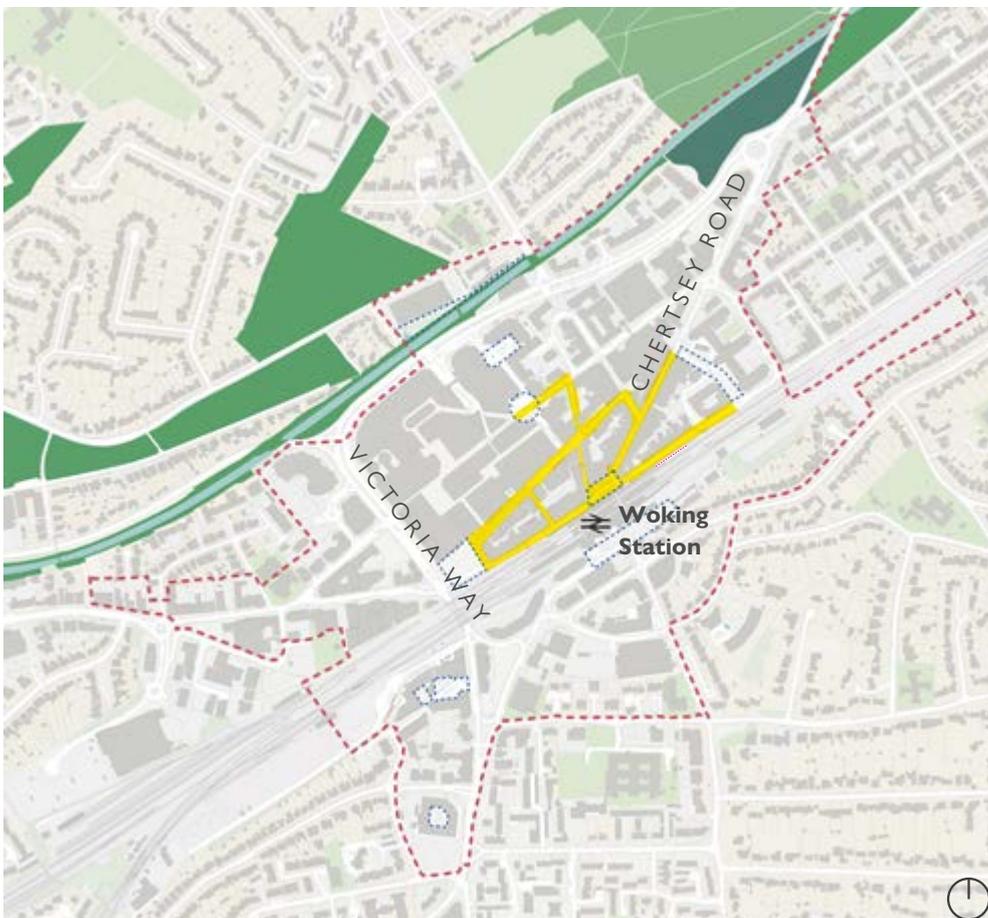


Fig 9 Existing public realm and open spaces plan with the key public spaces highlighted

5.5 Heritage and Landmarks

Whilst the Woking Town Centre Conservation Area, focused along the western end of Chertsey Road, acknowledges the historic grain and character of the centre, the town's three listed buildings are situated beyond its boundary.

Christ Church, designed by W.F. Unsworth and dating from 1889, is Grade II listed and occupies a prominent position in the centre and forms one corner of Jubilee Square. The Woking War Memorial enjoys a prominent position in the centre of Jubilee Square.

The Signal Box building is also Grade II listed and sits in the operational railway corridor between the tracks.

The Basingstoke Canal corridor is also captured within its own conservation area and locally listed buildings are distributed throughout the centre, with the main concentration being along Chertsey Road.



Fig 10 Existing heritage plan emphasizing locally and Grade II listed buildings

5.6 Building Types

The Woking borough-wide Character Study of 2010 categorises urban areas of the entire borough by age of building and development type.

Whilst high level analysis, it is useful in the context of a townscape strategy and town centre masterplan that should respond positively to exiting character.

The vast majority of the town centre is placed in the 'town centre redevelopment' category, but it is notable that the western end of Chertsey Road is flagged for its historic character.

This analysis is particularly useful in the context of the review of the town centre character areas.



Fig 11 Existing building uses categorized by era

5.7 Urban Grain

Analysis of urban grain often reveals the degree to which historic streets and buildings have been retained in centres. Larger floor-plate modern developments and town centre regeneration schemes often result in consolidated urban blocks and a more coarse form of development. The permeability of town centres can sometimes suffer as blocks are fused and routes lost.

This more coarse grain of development is evident west of Jubilee Square as a result of the Victoria Square Shopping Centre and the recent Victoria Way development.

In contrast, the finer grain character of the Chertsey Road corridor is evident with buildings defining clear street edges with yards and private spaces to the rear.

The analysis also reveals the relatively underdeveloped character of the Christchurch Way area of the centre.



Fig 12 Existing Urban Grain

5.8 Density

Floor Area Ratio is a useful measure of urban density, showing how densely developed different urban blocks are. A ratio of 1.0 would represent the site being completely covered by a single storey building. If exactly half of the plot was covered by a two storey development, the FAR would also be assessed to be 1.0.

The very high density nature of recent major town centre regeneration schemes of Victoria Way and Goldsworth Road are clearly evident.



Fig 13 Floor area ratio shown per urban block

5.9 Building Heights

Building heights are directly related to urban density. The recent cluster of tall buildings on Victoria Way are evident in this plan, with prevailing shoulder building heights tending to be in the range between 7 and 15 storeys.

The larger office and retail developments in the town tender to be between 5 and 7 storeys with the prevailing heights of existing development in the more historic Chertsey Road and eastern part of the town typically ranging between 2 and 4 storeys.

South of the railway line, heights vary with more recent regeneration schemes also tending to be tall.

Beyond the commercial and mixed use core town centre, residential uses prevail, typically of two storeys.



Fig 14 Existing building heights within Woking town centre, defined by the number of storeys

6 Town Centre Framework

6.1 Character Area Framework

The character areas within Woking town centre were established in 2014 during the preparation of the Woking Design SPD. Based on the analysis presented and reviewed above and in the context of some recent major developments since the production of the Design SPD, these boundaries can be reviewed and revised.

The plan opposite outlines these revised boundaries, taking account of grain, heritage assets, density of development and the distribution of land uses.

In the sections that follow present the characteristics of each of these character areas in turn.

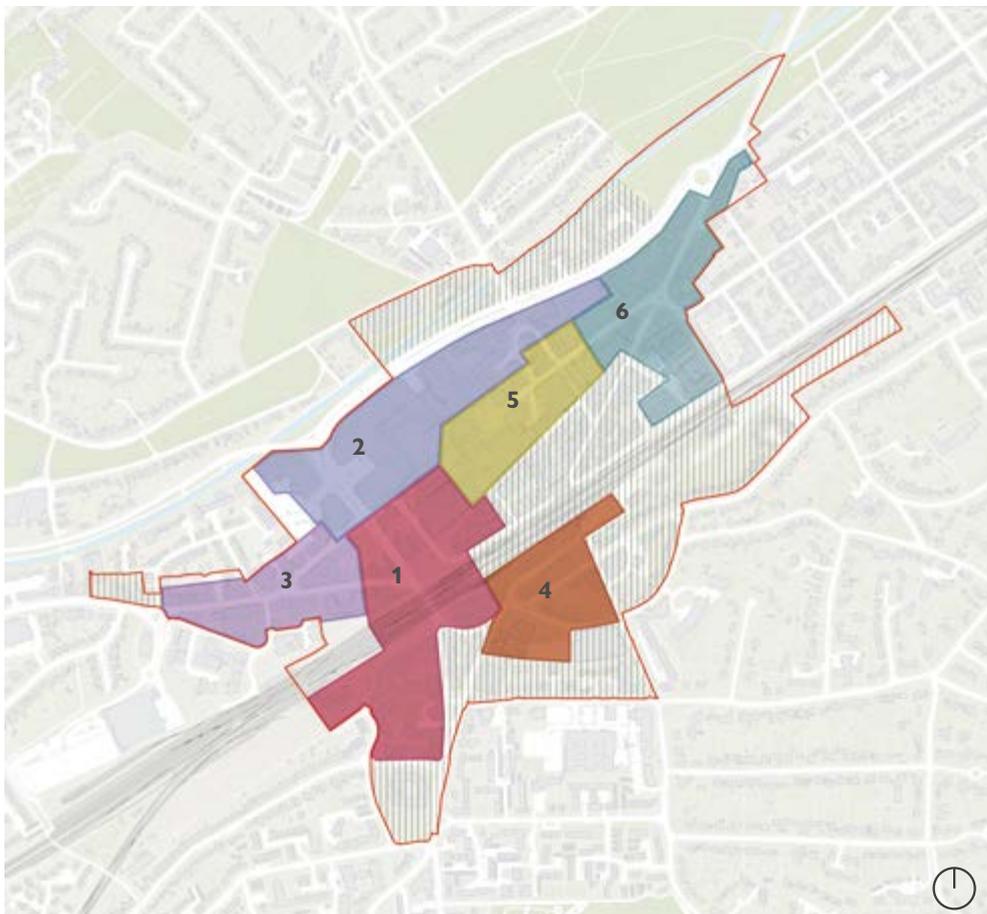


Fig 15 Character area boundaries from 2014

- Area 1 - Victoria Way South
- Area 2 - Victoria Way North
- Area 3 - Goldsworth Road
- Area 4 - Station approach
- Area 5 - Church Street
- Area 6 - Chertsey Road
- Area 7 - Historic Quarter

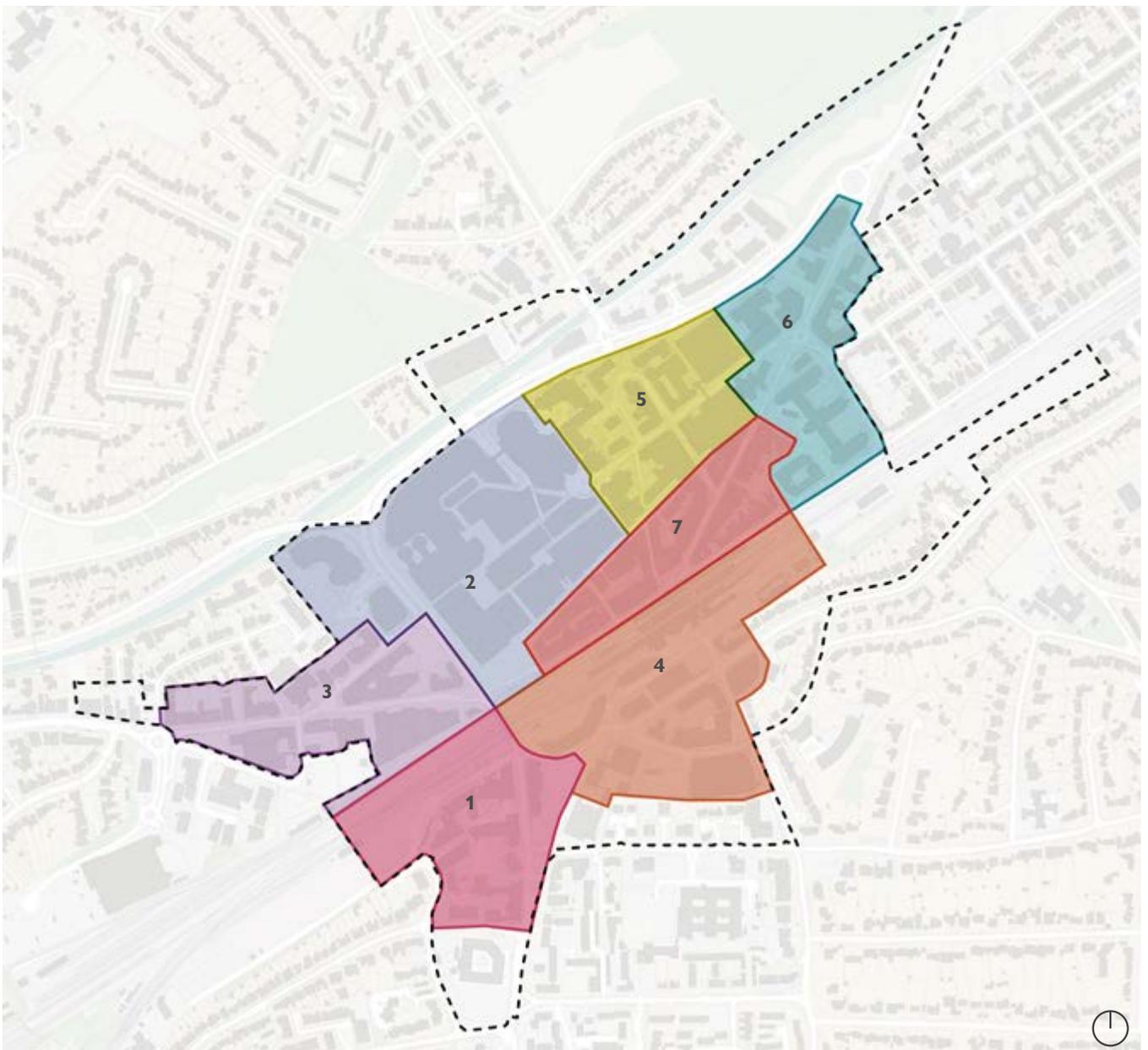


Fig 16 Existing revised character area boundaries

6.2 Victoria Way South Character Area



Existing condition

The site acts as a gateway to the town centre, increasing in height and density towards the centre with existing tall buildings including a recently completed housing-led scheme with a tower of over 20 storeys.

Key issues

- Precedent of tall buildings.
- Low rise context at fringe areas.
- Poor quality streetscape and public realm along Victoria Way, including the railway underpass.
- Railway reduces overshadowing but constrains movement.
- Locally listed row of shops.
- Existing planning permission for additional 19 storey building (Altura).

Features

1. New Central - 23 storey tower
2. Locally listed row of shops, Guildford Road 2/3 storeys



Fig 17 Aerial view of Victoria Way South looking northwards

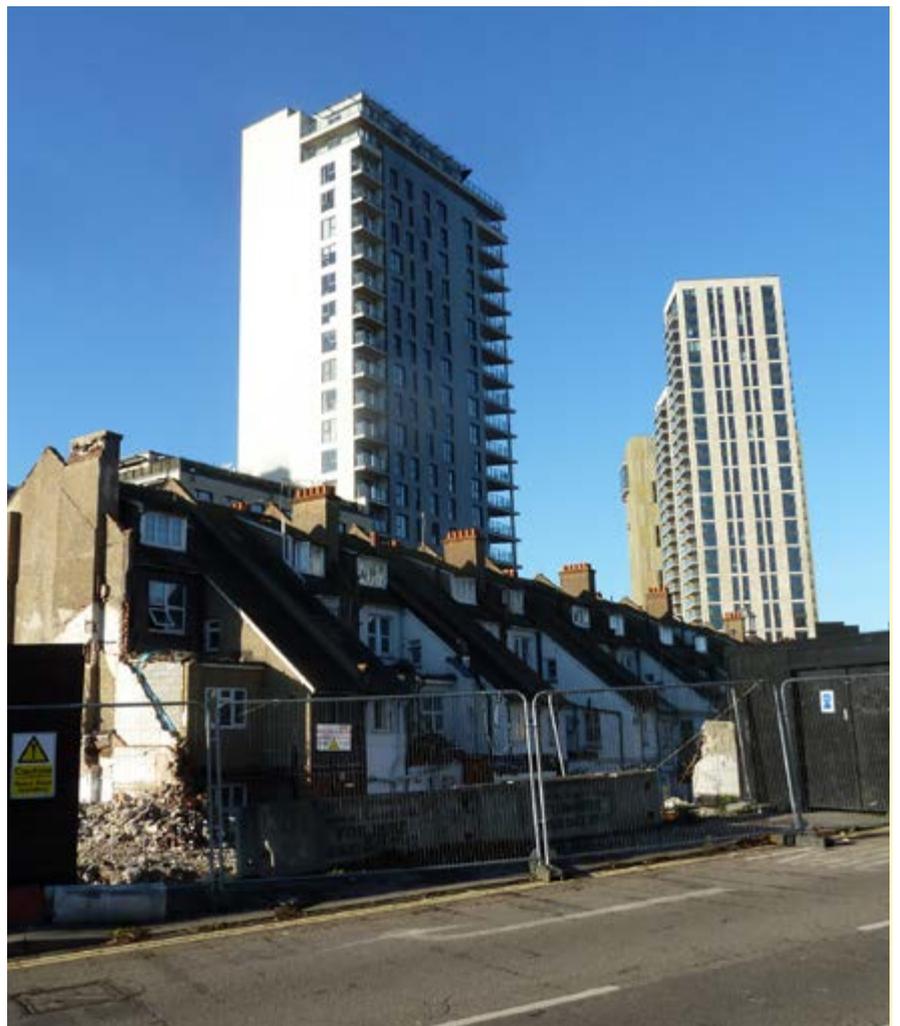


Fig 18 Street level views of Victoria Way South



Victoria Way South Character Area - Street Views



Fig 19 Street view looking northwards along Guildford Road

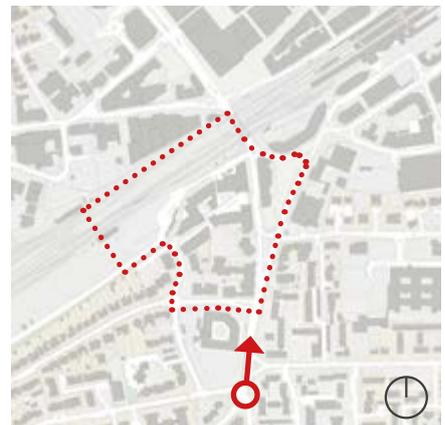
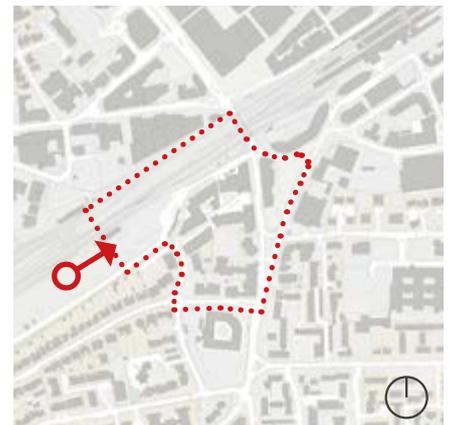




Fig 20 Street view looking eastwards along Downside Goods Yard



6.3 Victoria Way North Character Area



Existing condition

Victoria Way is characterised by large footprint commercial buildings and new residential towers. At the western end, the Peacocks Shopping Centre has resulted in an inward looking, consolidated urban block with extensive blank frontages facing onto Victoria Way and limited pedestrian connections. East of the shopping centre, urban blocks become more defined while continuing the theme of poor street frontages - primarily due to the civic uses leading towards Jubilee Square.

Features

1. Emerging tall building cluster
2. Peacocks Shopping Centre

Key issues

- Limited connections east-west across Victoria Way which acts as a barrier to the town centre.
- Need for better connections north-south of Victoria Way towards the canal.
- Undefined block structure due to shopping centre.
- Northern edge suits tall buildings due to low risk of overshadowing the town centre or surrounding residential areas.
- Little active frontage to Victoria Way.
- Narrow pavements and constricted public realm along Victoria Way.
- Proximity to the historic quarter and emerging tall building cluster results in conflict.
- Proximity to the listed Christ Church.



Fig 21 Aerial view looking southwards showing the existing condition including potential cluster of tall buildings



Fig 22 Photographs of the existing area condition



Victoria Way North Character Area - Street Views

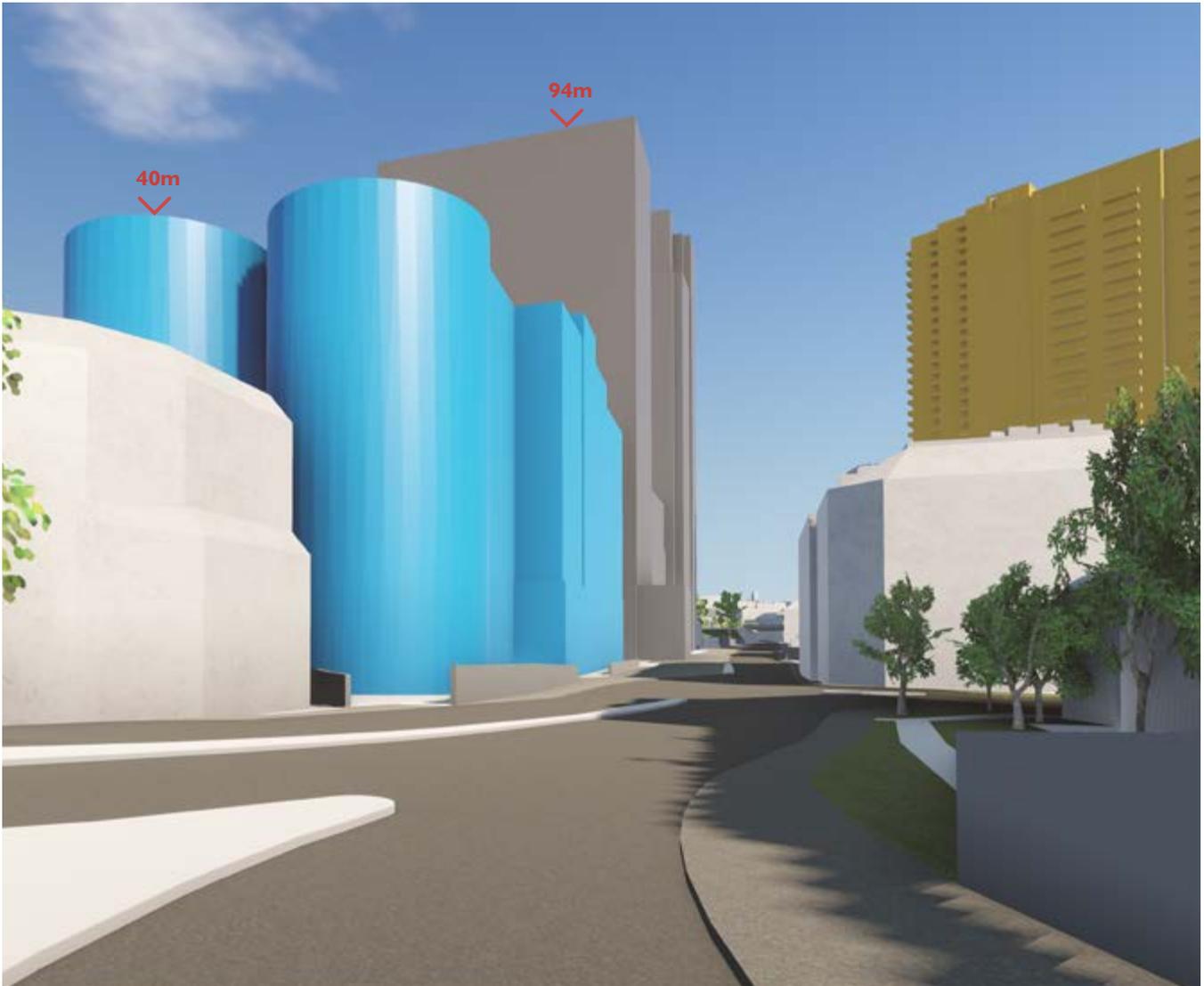


Fig 23 Street view looking southwards down Victoria Way

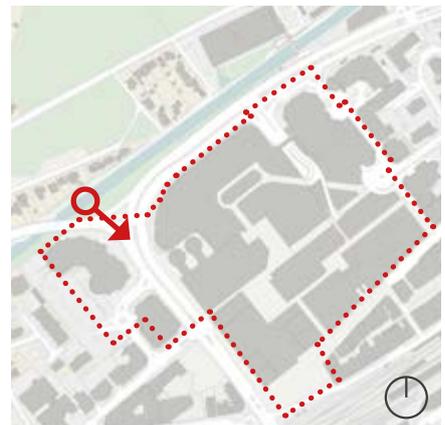
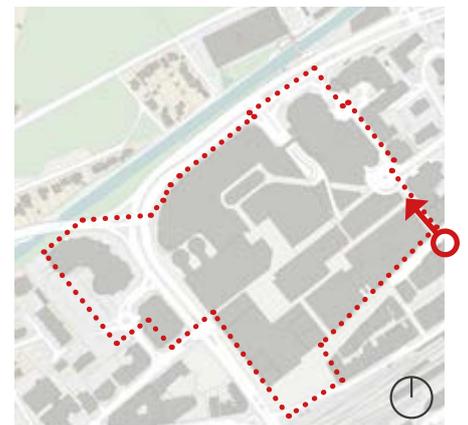
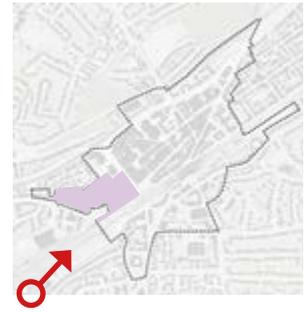




Fig 24 Street view looking eastwards along Downside Goods Yard



6.4 Goldsworth Road Character Area



Existing condition

Area 3 acts as a link between typologies, from industrial buildings to the south to residential in the north, with a consented tall building cluster along Victoria Way. Goldsworth Road is primarily characterised by 4-5 storey office and business buildings which provide lack of animation at street level.

Key issues

- Proximity to emerging tall building cluster on Victoria Way
- Poor quality public realm with the need of improving access to the town centre across Victoria Way
- Must avoid over shadowing residential buildings to the north.

Features

1. Consented tall building cluster along Victoria Way



Fig 25 Aerial of Area 3 looking north-east showing the consented tall building cluster



Fig 26 Photographs of the existing area condition



Goldsworth Road Character Area - Street Views



Fig 27 Street view looking eastwards down Goldsworth Road towards Victoria Way

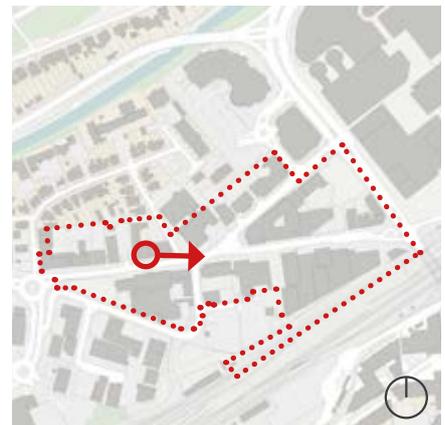
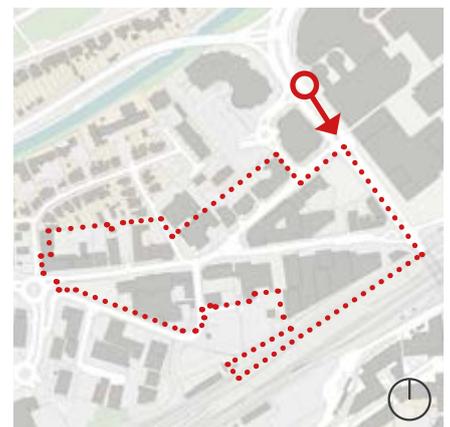




Fig 28 Street view looking southwards down Victoria Way



6.5 Station Approach Character Area



Existing condition

The Station Approach area varies considerably in scale with variation in heights, ranging from 3-4 storey apartment buildings, to a new 16 storey housing development, gradually increasing towards the station. Generally, the area provides poor quality public realm with a lack of animated frontages at street level.

Key issues

- Setting of the listed police station will need to be respected.
- Significant development sites at point of transition from low-rise context to recent tall buildings.
- Large amount of surface and decked parking.
- Topography is a factor in this area with a change in level across some sites - land rises to the south.

Features

1. Listed police station
2. Magistrates Court (vacant)
3. Existing 16 storey building
4. Vacant site with planning consent
5. Railway station
6. Car park



Fig 29 Aerial view of Area 4 looking north west

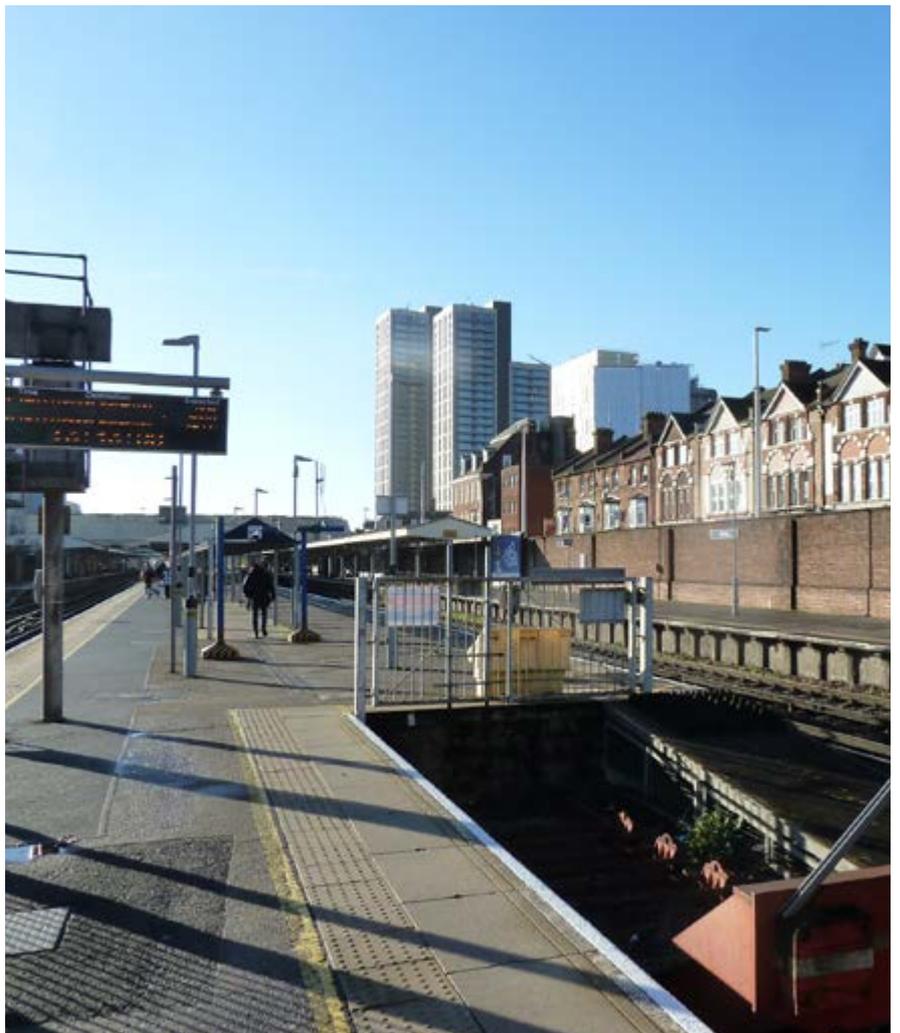


Fig 30 Street views showing the existing condition of Station Approach



Station Approach Character Area - Street Views

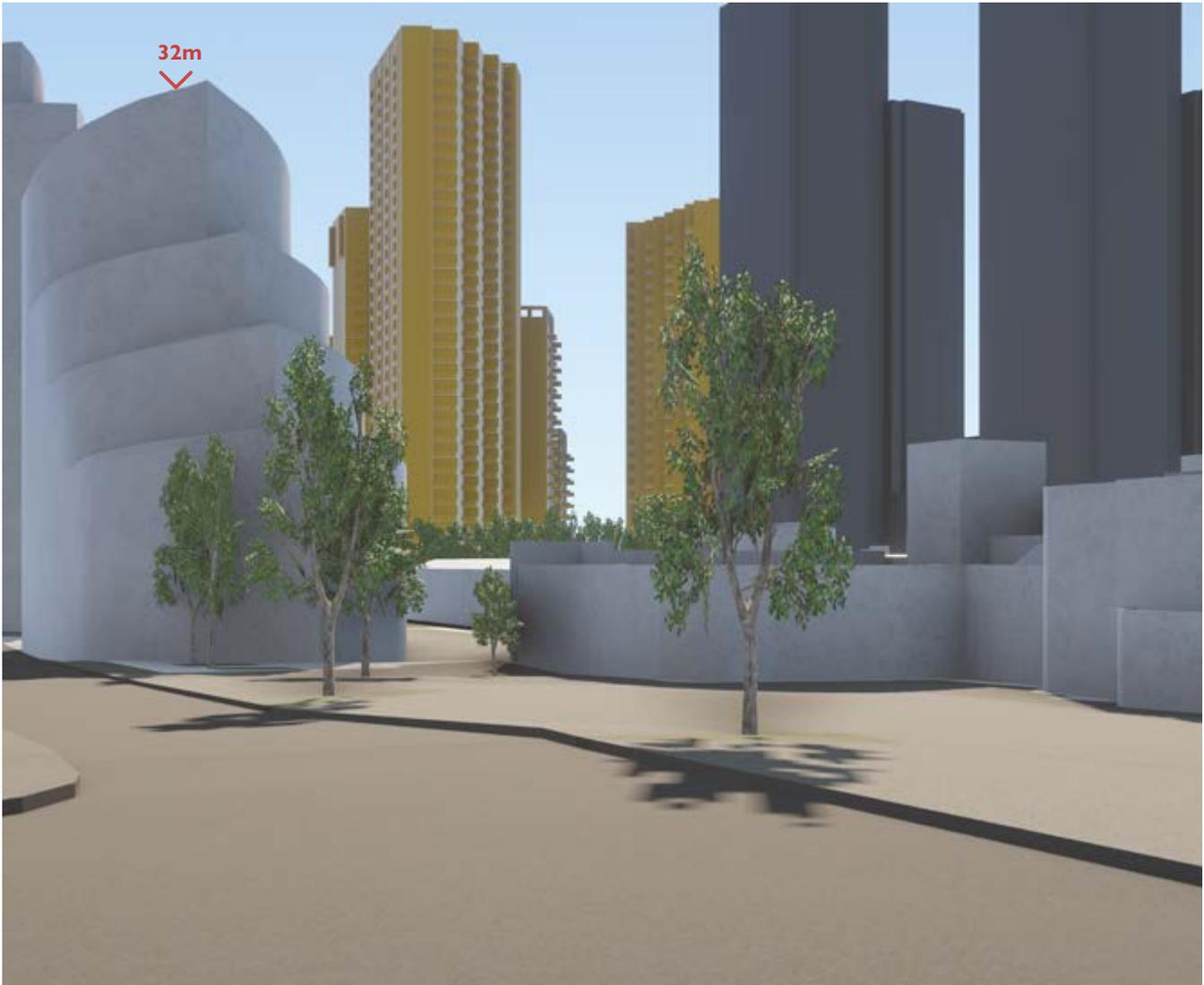


Fig 31 Street view looking west towards the station forecourt

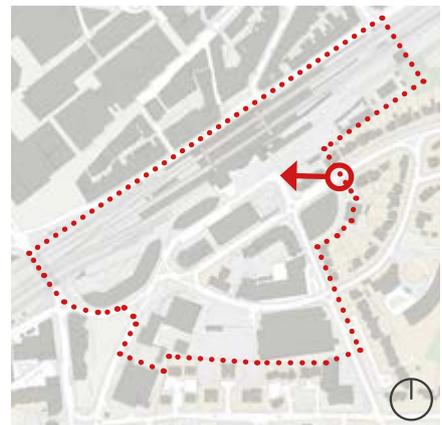
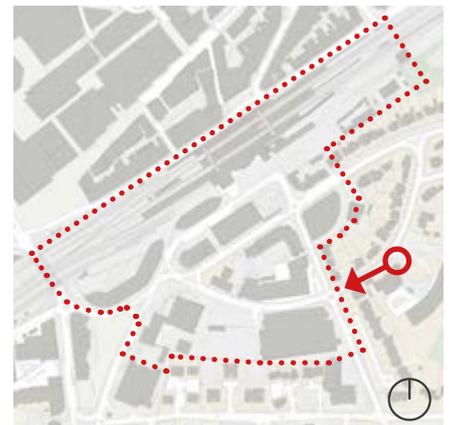




Fig 32 Street view looking west along Heathside Crescent, showing the new residential development



6.6 Church Street Character Area



Existing condition

Buildings in the Church Street area are typically between 3 to 5 storeys, but large footprint buildings with little active frontage mean that many of these area overbearing. Christ Church is centrally located and Woking Town Centre Conservation Area borders the area to the south. The area extends into the Peacocks and Wolsley Place Shopping Centres.

Key issues

- Setting of Christ Church.
- Relationship with Woking Town Centre Conservation Area.
- Lack of clear urban block structure along Christchurch Way.
- Office buildings with little active frontage to the public realm.
- Impact of Wolsley Place / Peacocks shopping centres.
- Back of BHS site is inactive
- Lack of green space

Features

1. Christ Church (Grade II listed)
2. Export House
3. Albion House
4. Jubilee Square

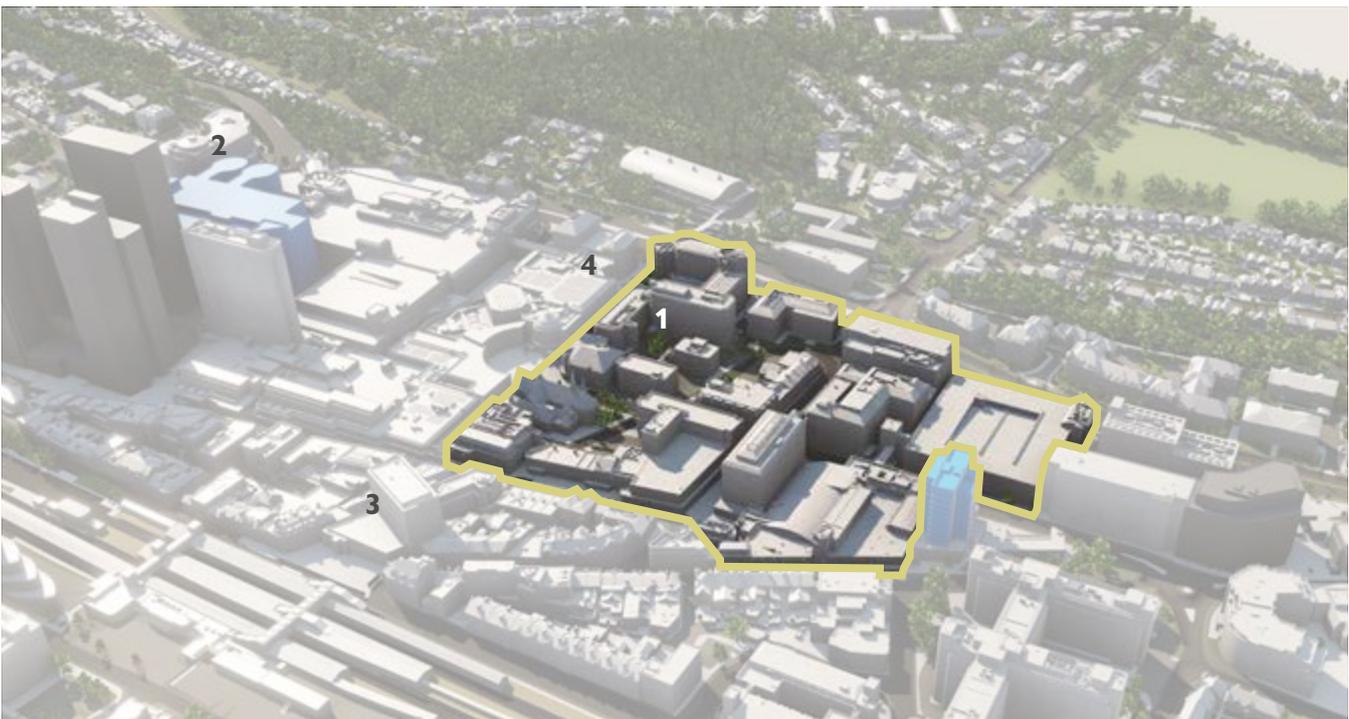


Fig 33 Aerial view looking north west looking north west towards Woking's civic cluster

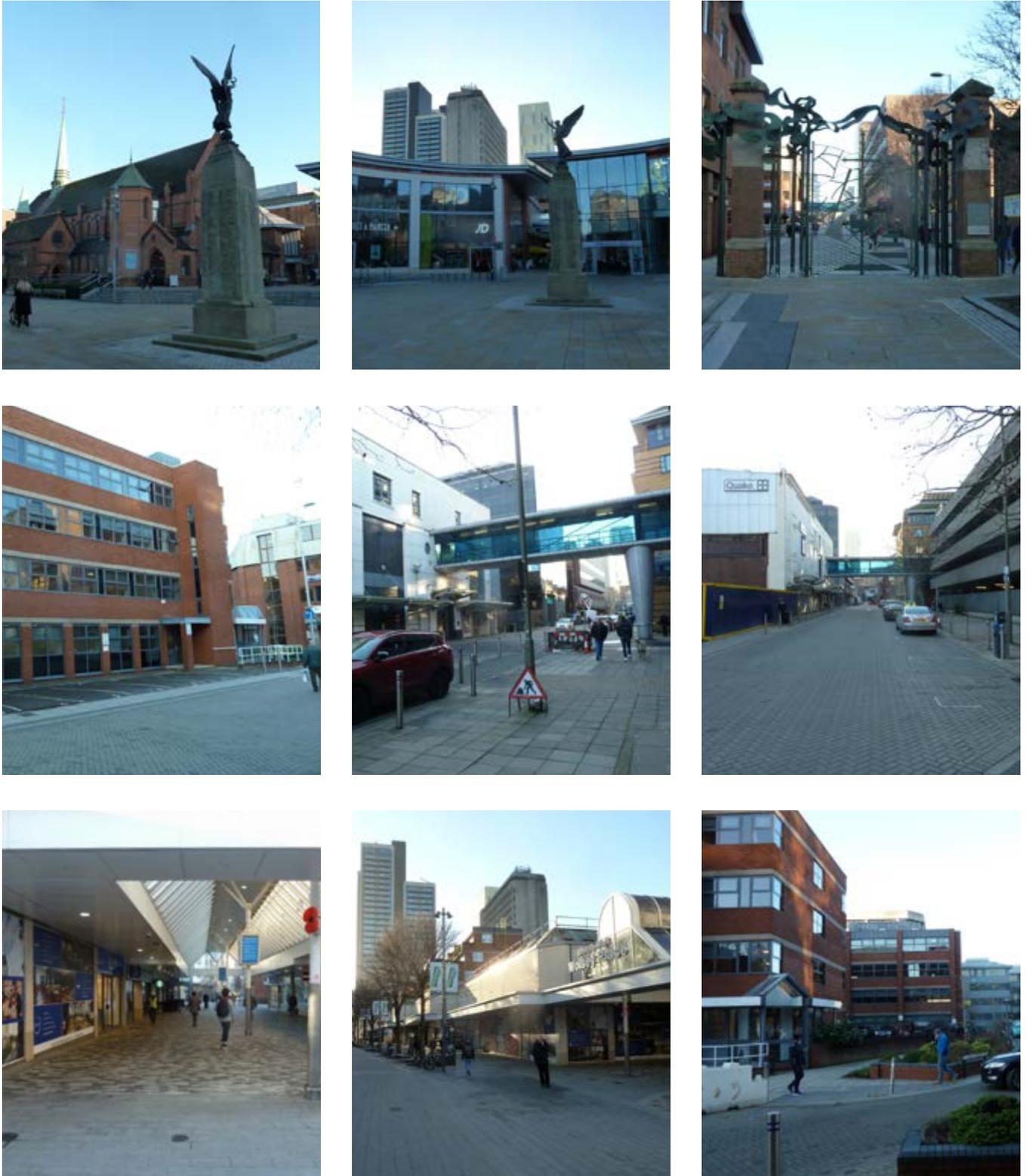


Fig 34 Photographs of the existing area condition



Church Street Character Area - Street Views



Fig 35 Street view facing west down Church Street

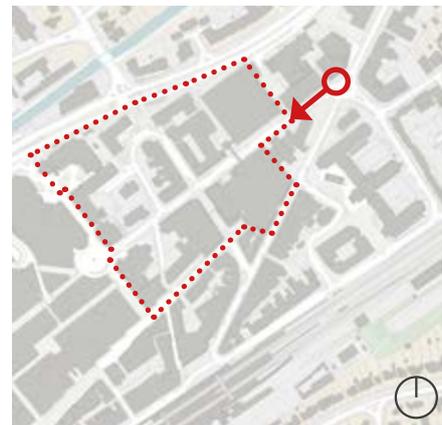
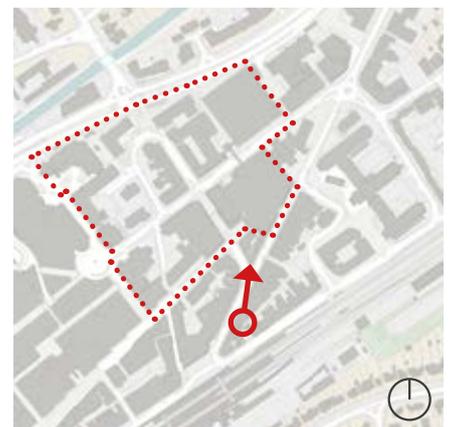
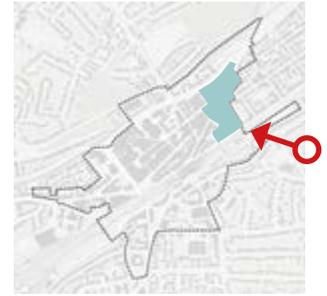




Fig 36 Street view facing north showing the junction between Chobham Road and Chertsey Road



6.7 Chertsey Road Character Area



Existing condition

Chertsey Road forms a key approach and gateway to the core town centre. The heights of buildings range from 2 to 10 storeys with the tallest building (a 10 storey housing-led development on Church Street) recently constructed. Area 6 is outside the core commercial part of the town centre and comprises mainly offices, a hotel and some more recent residential developments.

The majority of office buildings have a poor relationship to the public realm including a lack of active frontage.

Key issues

- Gateway to town centre.
- Recent development of 10 storeys.
- Lack of active frontage.
- Poor contribution to public realm.

Features

1. Enterprise Place
2. Duke House offices
3. William Booth Place

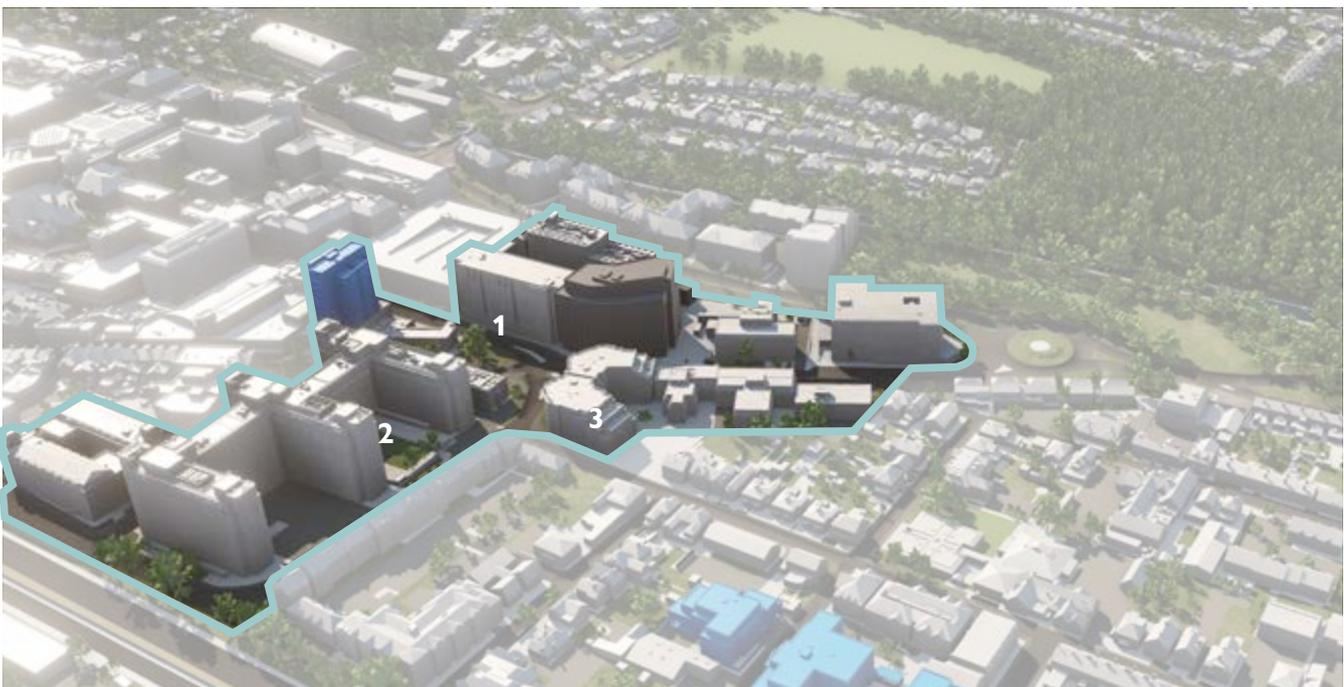


Fig 37 Aerial view facing west showing a key gateway into the town centre

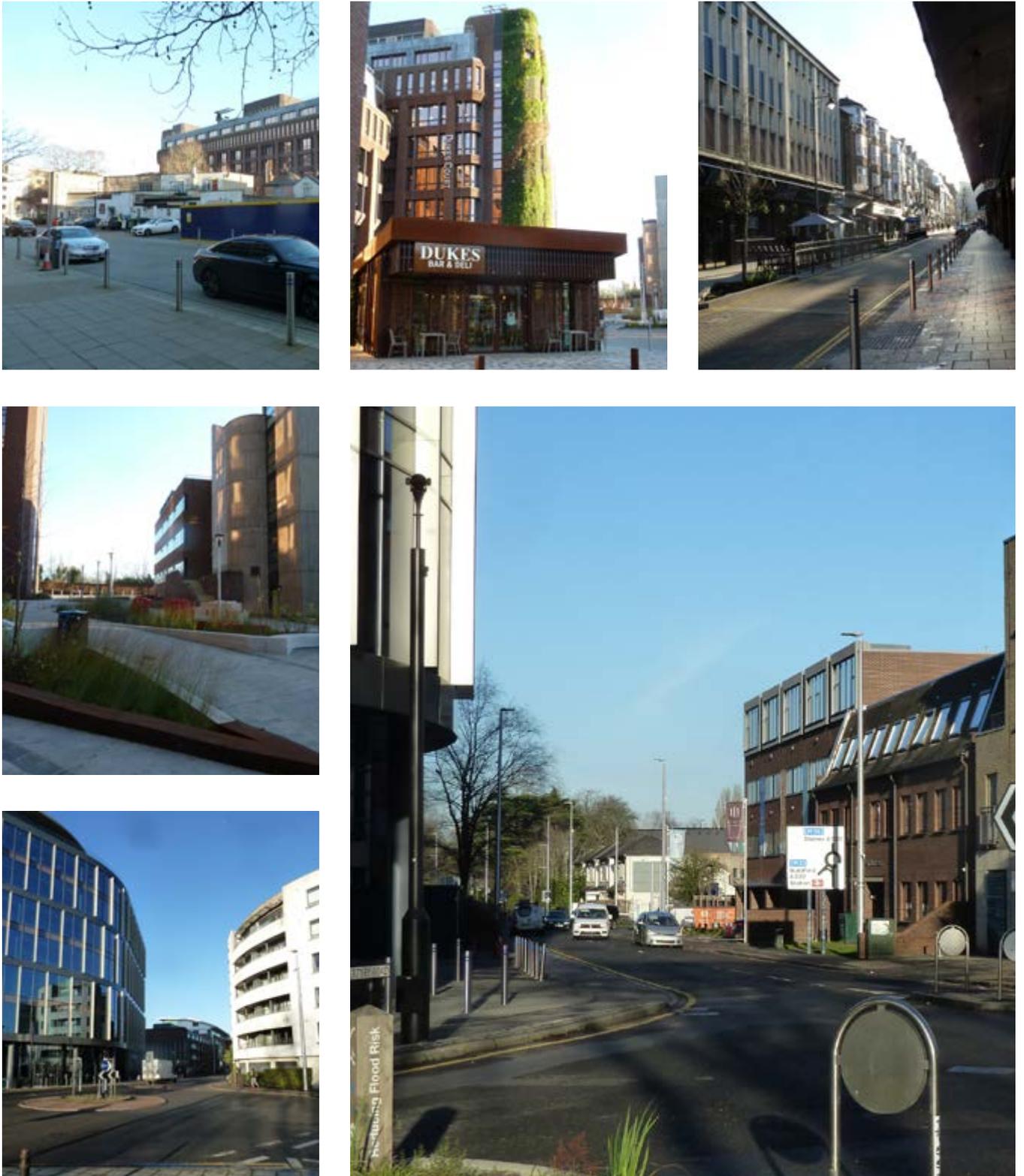


Fig 38 Photographs of the existing area condition



Chertsey Road Character Area - Street Views



Fig 39 Street view looking south west down Chertsey Road

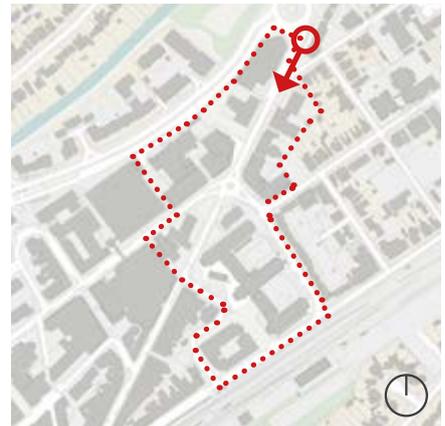
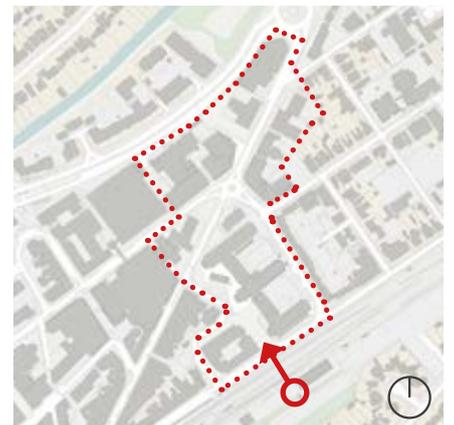


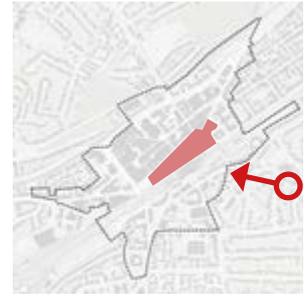


Fig 40 Street view facing north along Duke Street showing the new residential scheme under construction





6.8 Historic Quarter Character Area



Existing condition

The historic quarter is predominantly low rise with a recently refurbished co-working building sitting at 9 storeys. The area is the first impression upon first arrival to Woking, with the character being of Victorian

Key issues

- Gateway to town centre.
- Recent development of 10 storeys.
- Lack of active frontage.
- Poor contribution to public realm.

Features

1. Enterprise Place
2. Duke House offices
3. William Booth Place
4. Albion House

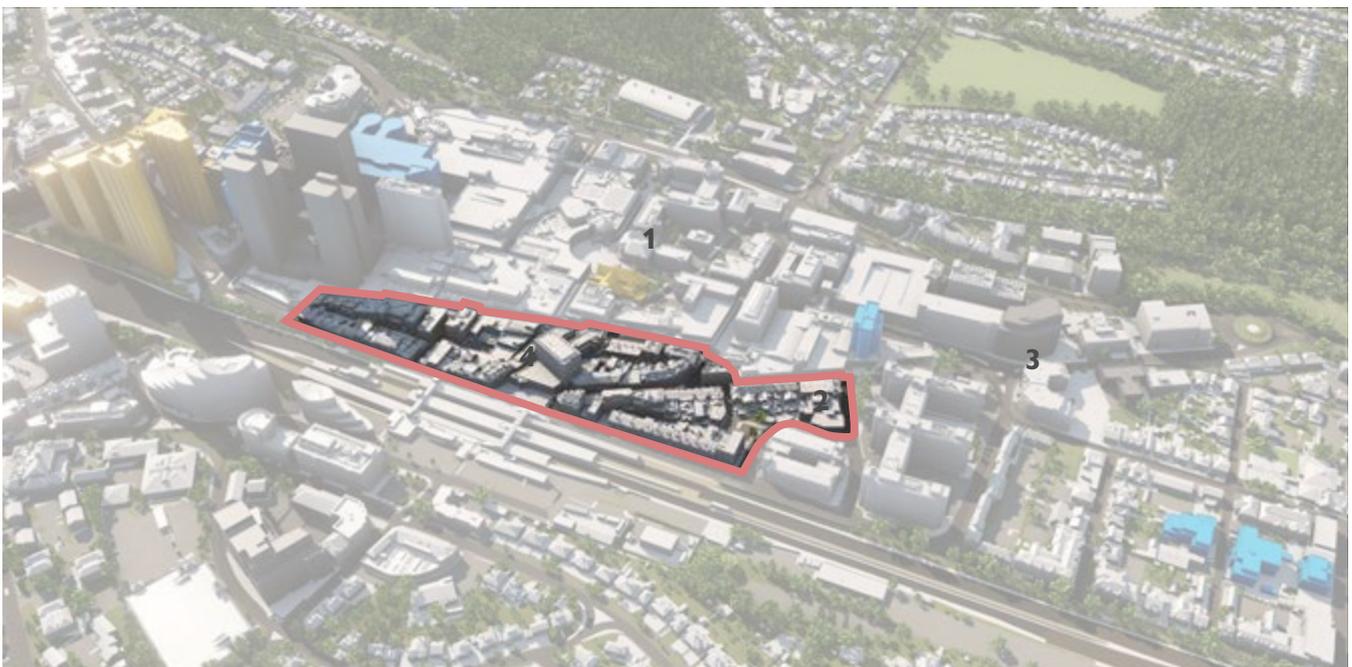


Fig 41 Aerial view facing west



Fig 42 Photographs of the existing area condition



Historic Quarter Character Area - Street Views



Fig 43 Street view looking west along The Broadway towards the station

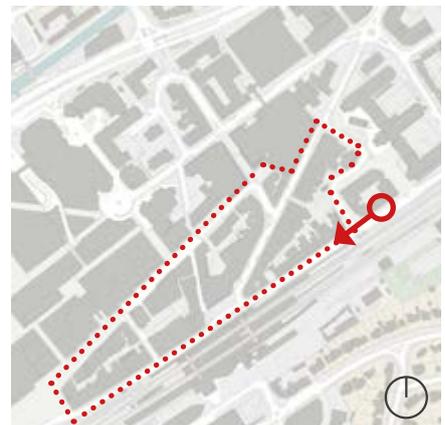
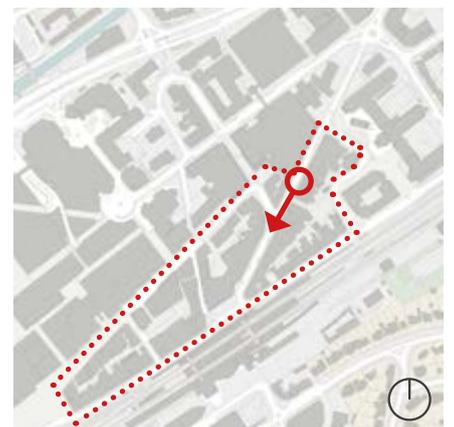




Fig 44 Street view down Chertsey Road towards the station forecourt





7 Public realm and movement framework

The quality of a town centre's public realm framework is critical to its long term success. As investment comes and new development is delivered, ensuring the public realm sees equivalent levels of investment is essential.

Informed by a renewed understanding of the town centre, a refresh of its character areas and knowledge of the recent major investments in the town, the Woking Town Centre Mastetplan's public realm framework takes a high level and strategic perspective on the town's public realm network. It identifies a number of key issues and opportunities across the town where targeted improvement and investment will help ensure the spaces between the buildings, through which people move and meet, spend time and relax. A high-quality public realm, with good quality pedestrian and cycle connections which link different parts of the town centre together will help to attract and retain visitors and users into the centre and thereby bring more support to the shops, services and businesses that are located there.

Key opportunities include:

1. Improving the quality of pedestrian crossings across Victoria Way, particularly between the major developments at Victoria Square and the Goldsworth Road area;
2. Remodelling of the major junction between Victoria Way and Chobham Road which currently diverts pedestrian underground to an underpass and is a heavily engineered environment designed almost exclusively for the car.
3. Improving the quality of the connections between the town centre and the gateway to the town from Chobham Road to the north. Major redevelopment sites around the Christchurch Way and Chobham Road area just north of Church Street East could deliver significant improvements in this regard;
4. Improvements to the public realm at the Stanley Road, Chertsey Road roundabout to the east of the town centre. There are major opportunity sites in this area of the town, and these should support the opportunity to deliver public realm improvements including widening of pavements, retention of existing and planting of new trees, and extending the zone where greater priority is given to pedestrians.
5. Some of the major identified development sites present opportunities to create new or reinstate lost pedestrian connections.
6. The creation of a new station square and forecourt along Station Approach.
7. The widening of Guildford Road immediately south of the railway lines and improvement of the pedestrian environment leading towards the station.

- ⊙ Crossing improvement
- ▨ Public realm improvement
- ⊞ Existing public open space
- Proposed public open space
- Main (A) road
- Potential for public art
- ⊞ Town centre boundary
- Development site
- ➔ Key town centre approach
- Pedestrian priority
- ⊞ Station
- ≡ Victoria Arch scheme



Fig 45 Proposed public realm and movement improvements

8 Methodology

Woking town centre has been the subject of numerous development proposals for tall buildings in recent years. Some have already been delivered, some are currently under construction and others have been refused or not supported. The Woking Design SPD provides some high-level guidance on tall buildings in the town centre but this falls short of an evidenced-based townscape strategy for building heights and tall buildings in the town. For some time now, there has been a need to devise a building height and tall building strategy for Woking to help promote high density development in appropriate locations whilst protect other less appropriate locations from their potentially adverse townscape impacts.

Informed by environmental and GIS mapping analysis, this section outlines such a strategy. Firstly, based on the revised character areas identified above, an assessment is made of the degree to which locations are considered appropriate for tall buildings. This assessment is a relative one, covering all urban blocks across the town centre. The degree to which a location is considered appropriate is based on a largely objective assessment of a range of factors relating to its relative suitability for, or sensitivity to, taller forms of new development.

Once this 'appropriateness' assessment has been made, further analysis of existing prevailing building heights helps to determine thresholds for each part of the centre above which new development would be considered tall.

This step is important because tall is a relative term. A four story building in a street wholly comprising two storey houses might be considered by many to be tall, whereas a new ten storey building in a central location adjacent to developments of eight storey buildings might not be considered to represent a tall building in that context.

The '**sensitivity**' analysis takes account of:

- Distribution of conservation areas;
- Distribution of listed buildings;
- Distribution of areas of finer urban grain;
- Areas characterised by low building heights;
- Proximity to public open spaces;
- Pedestrianised streets.

The '**suitability**' analysis takes account of:

- Existing tall building clusters;
- Walking distance from Woking Station;
- Gateway approaches where character changes;
- Major urban routes with a more robust character.

The chapter ends with a summary plan which identifies locations considered to be more or less appropriate for taller buildings, taking account of the layered analysis outlined across the following pages.

8.1 Sensitivity to Tall Buildings

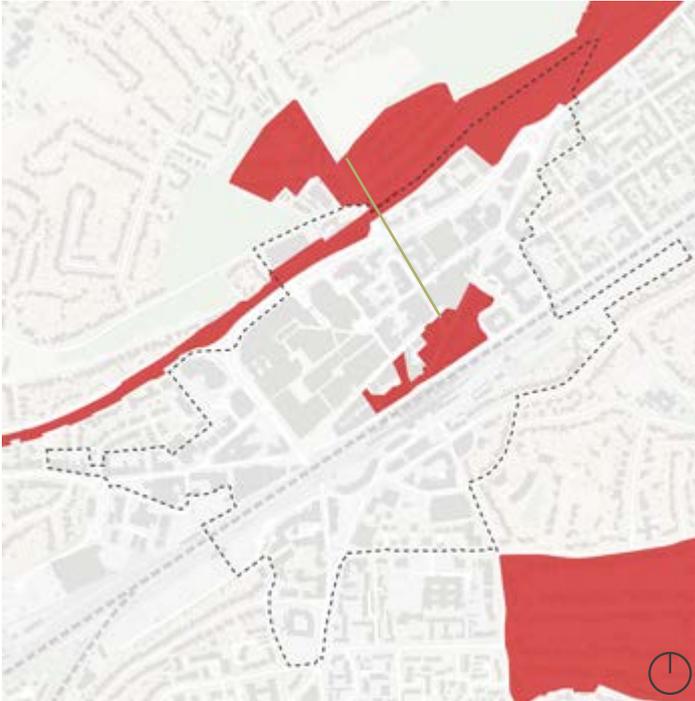


Fig 46 Conservation areas in and around Woking town centre

Conservation Areas

Two conservation areas cover parts of Woking town centre. The Woking Town Centre Conservation Area is focused on the western end of Chertsey Road, either side of the railway station. The Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area follows the axis of the canal across the borough although typically doesn't extend too far from its immediate channel.



Fig 47 Statutorily & locally listed buildings in the town centre

Listed Buildings

There are three Grade II listed buildings in the town centre, with the most prominent in townscape terms being Christ Church on Jubilee Square. The sensitivity analysis presented here shows the distribution of statutorily and locally listed buildings in the town centre (and beyond) together with the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) around Christ Church. All represent significant sensitivities regarding the prospect of negative townscape impacts associated with new tall buildings.

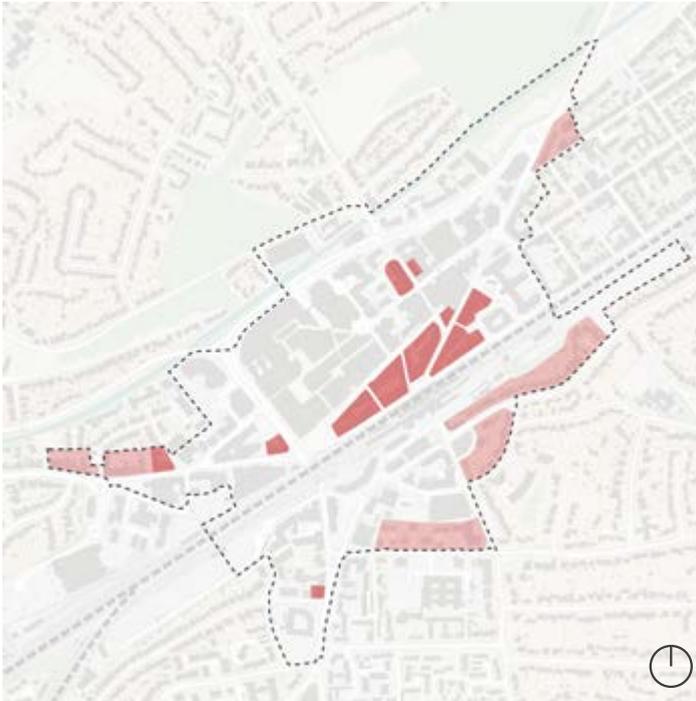


Fig 48 Areas characterised by finer urban grain in the town centre

Fine Urban Grain

Much of Woking's townscape has been redeveloped in relatively recent times. As a result there are only relatively few areas where Victorian or Edwardian townscape character prevails. The best quality areas of Victorian character are protected by the Woking Town Centre Conservation Area but there are other pockets of finer grain townscape which are worthy of recognition in this sensitivity assessment.



Fig 49 Areas characterised by low rise buildings in the town centre

Areas of Low rise

Whilst more recent developments have introduced tall buildings to the centre, the prevailing heights of commercial developments tend to be higher than the surrounding housing areas. However there are some parts of the town centre which are currently characterised by low rise forms of development which would make them more sensitive to the potentially adverse townscape impacts of new tall buildings.

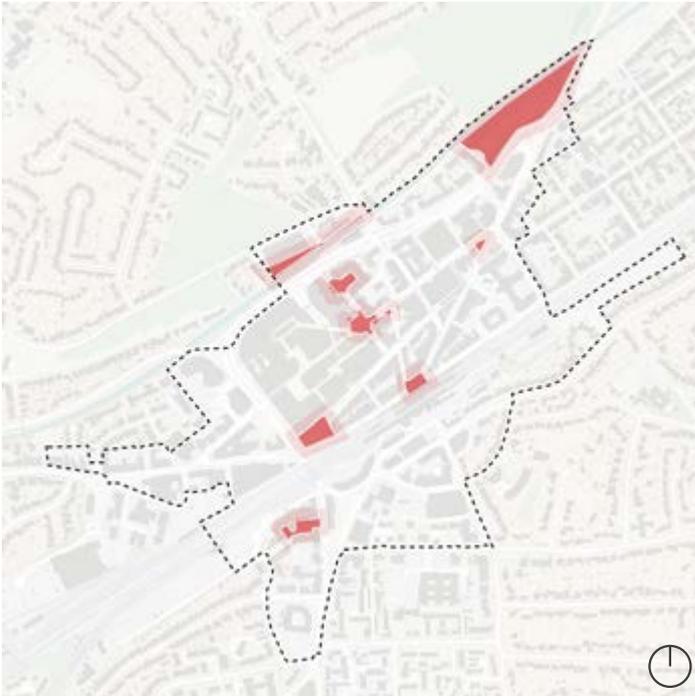


Fig 50 Publicly accessible open space in the town centre

Publicly accessible open space

Open space is generally in short supply in Woking Town Centre with the exception of Brookhouse Common. There are however a network of hard landscaped urban spaces which are popular spaces for people gathering. These spaces and their immediate environs are considered sensitive to the potentially adverse impacts of new tall developments in view of potential overshadowing and wind effects. The design of new development in these locations should take account of the micro-climate impacts of new buildings at the ground and lower floors.



Fig 51 Streets where there is significant priority given to pedestrians

Pedestrianised Streets

There has been much recent investment in many of the key town centre pedestrianised streets in Woking town centre. Similar to open spaces, the design and comfort of these spaces are critical to the overall success of the town centre. These important central pedestrianised streets are therefore vulnerable to potentially adverse impacts of new tall development at street level and the design of new buildings should be tested to ensure the delivery of acceptable micro-climate conditions at street level.

8.2 Suitability to Tall Buildings



Fig 52 Existing tall building cluster

Existing tall building clusters

The presence of existing concentrations of tall buildings makes those areas less sensitive and therefore more suitable to that form of development. With the recent Victoria Way development and emerging schemes in the Goldsworth Road area, an cluster of taller buildings is emerging in this part of the centre which also extends south of the railway line.

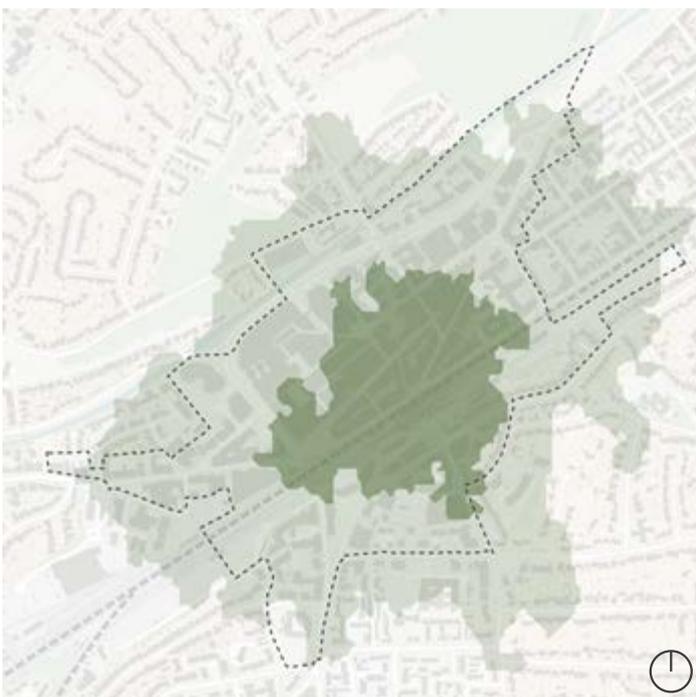


Fig 53 Walking isochrone to Woking Station

Access to public transport

Accessibility to good public transport facilities and services is a key factor underpinning any given area's suitability for more dense forms of development. Woking town centre is well served by public transport, with local bus services supporting links to outlying towns and villages and Woking railway station support superb rail services to London and the south coast.

To objectively assess the accessibility of the centre, the adjacent plan shows local walking isochrones from Woking railway station. It demonstrates that the station is accessible to pedestrians from right across the whole of the centre.



Fig 54 Woking's townscape town centre gateway

Gateway approaches

Woking is a compact centre with established residential areas right up to its border. The main approaches to the centre therefore present gateway locations at the point of transition from hinterland to central areas. These gateway locations might be more suitable for taller forms of development given their gateway role in local townscape terms.

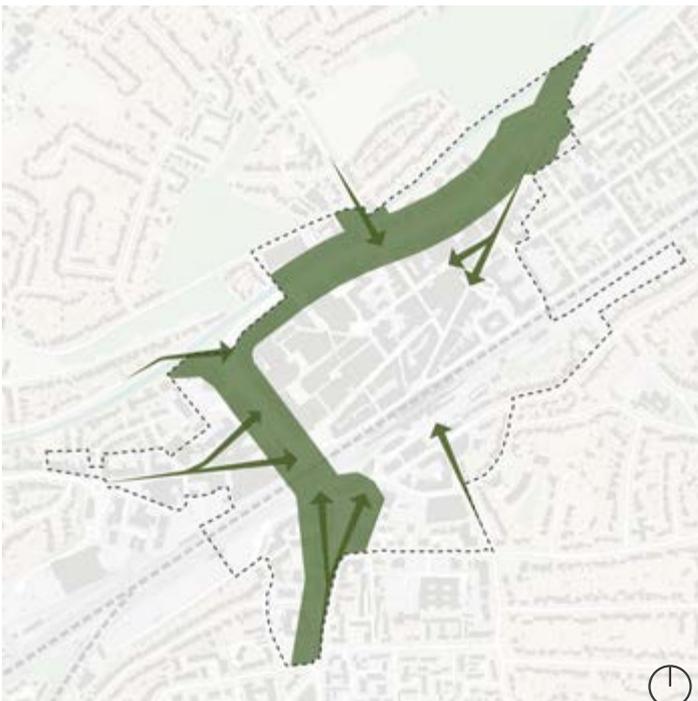


Fig 55 The major urban routes around the town centre

Major routes

Victoria Way is the primary vehicular route passing through the centre. This is a busy and urban route carrying significant amounts of traffic. It acts as a threshold to the more pedestrian orientated core town centre. In so doing, its axis around the centre may be more suitable to taller forms of development given its urban character.

8.3 Sensitivity

The plan below presents the composite picture of sensitivities across Woking town centre.

A concentration of sensitivities can be seen to cluster around the central cluster on the north side of the railway around the Woking Town Centre Conservation Area and the Grade II Christ Church building. The fringes of the town centre as it transitions across towards established residential neighbourhoods are also seen as being sensitive.

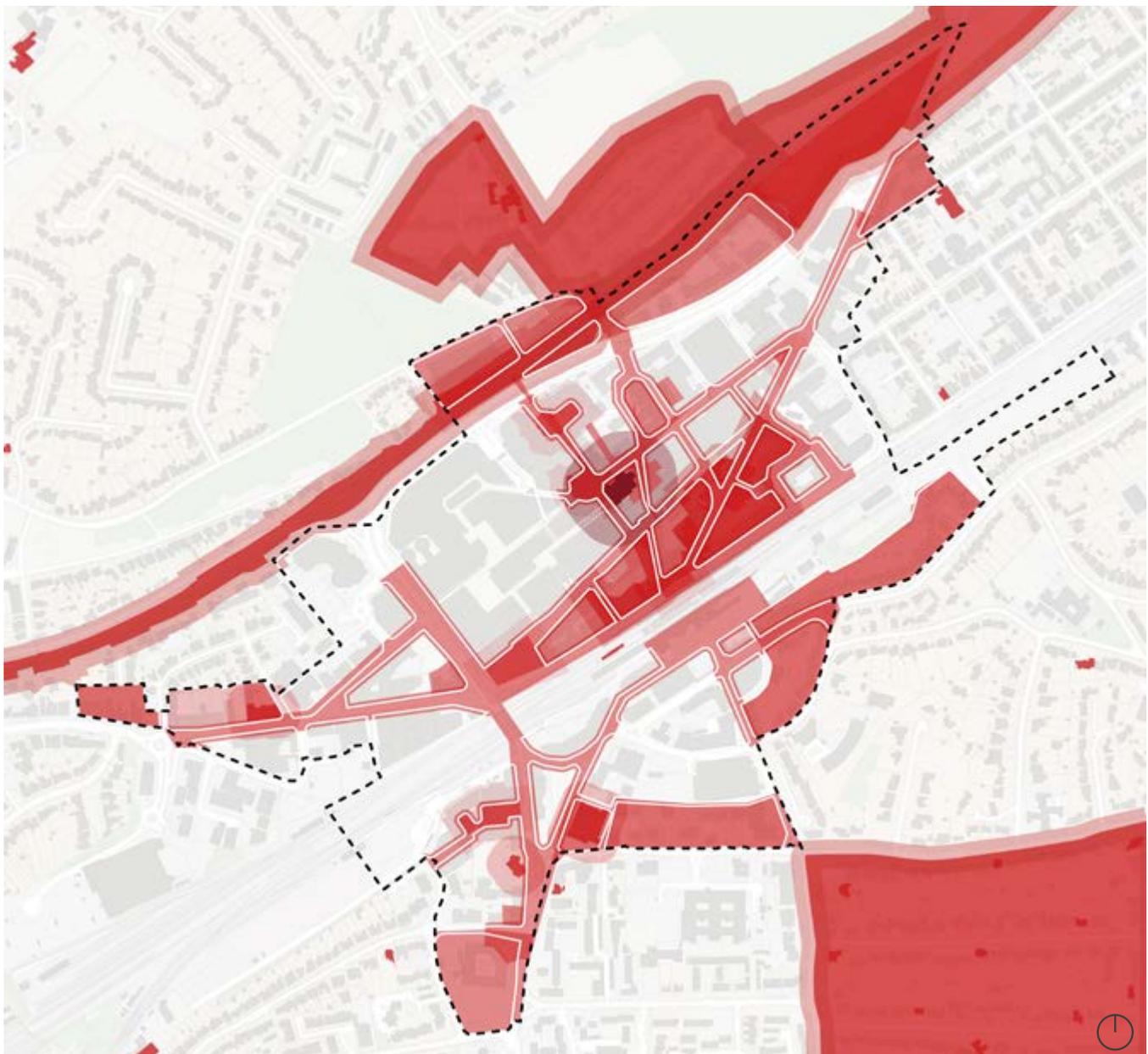


Fig 56 Composite sensitivity

8.4 Suitability

The plan below presents the composite picture of suitability across Woking town centre.

The area west of the centre around the recent Victoria Way development and new market square emerges as the most appropriate location for taller buildings.

It is notable that this more suitable area also generally coincides with areas of less sensitivity.

This helps to bring focus to areas across the town centre which are considered to be more appropriate for taller buildings.

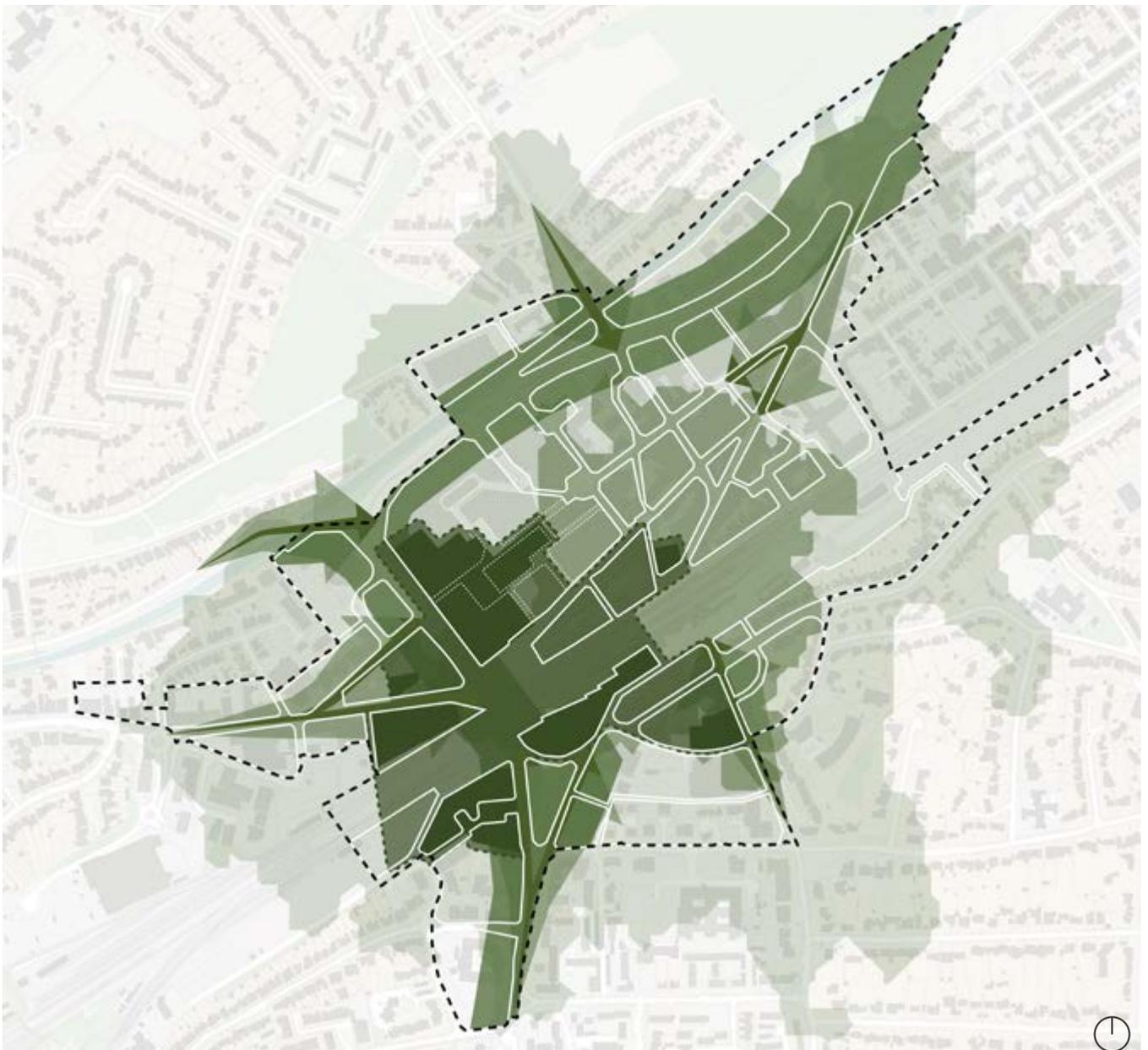


Fig 57 Composite suitability

8.5 Victoria Way South character area



Fig 58 Existing heights by building

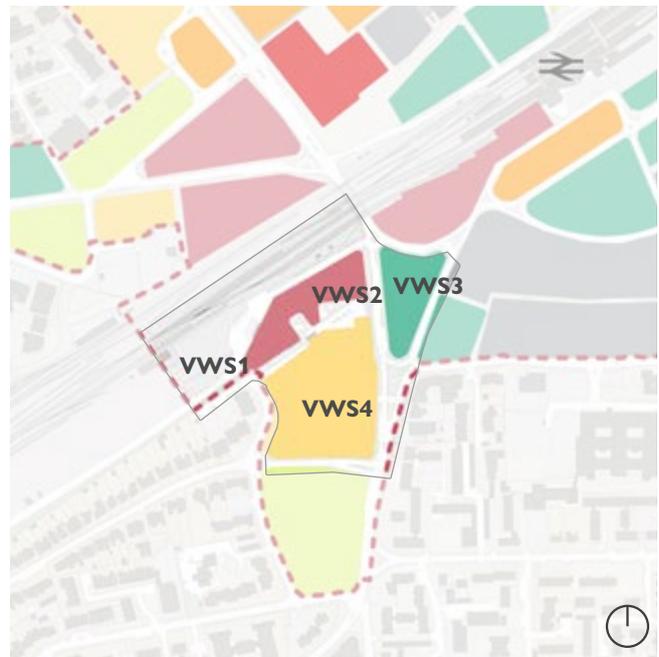


Fig 59 Existing heights by urban block

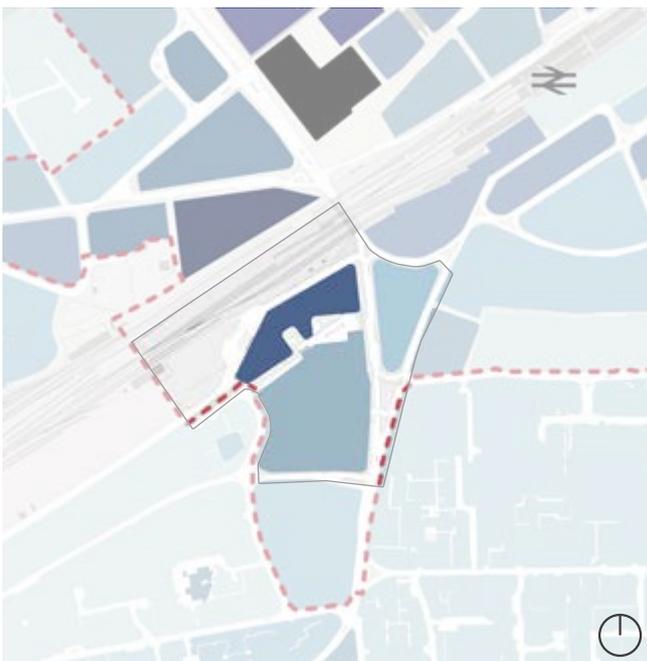
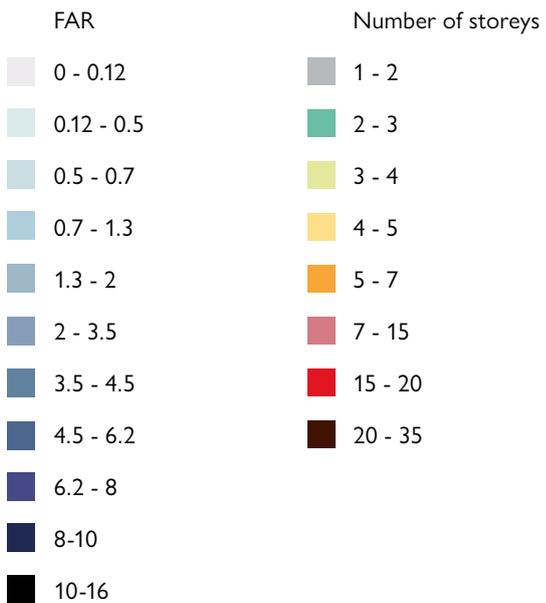


Fig 60 Floor to area ratio by urban block



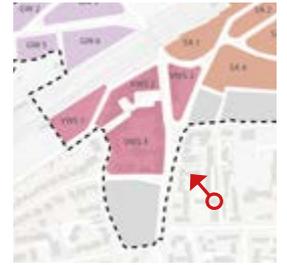


Fig 61 Representation (in green) of the 8 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

- Development pipeline
- Consented scheme
 - Scheme under construction
 - Tall building threshold

URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
VWN 1	5.3	8	4 - 14
VWN 2			4 - 22
VWN 3			4 - 20
VWN 4			4 - 15

Fig 62 Building heights summary

8.6 Victoria Way North character area

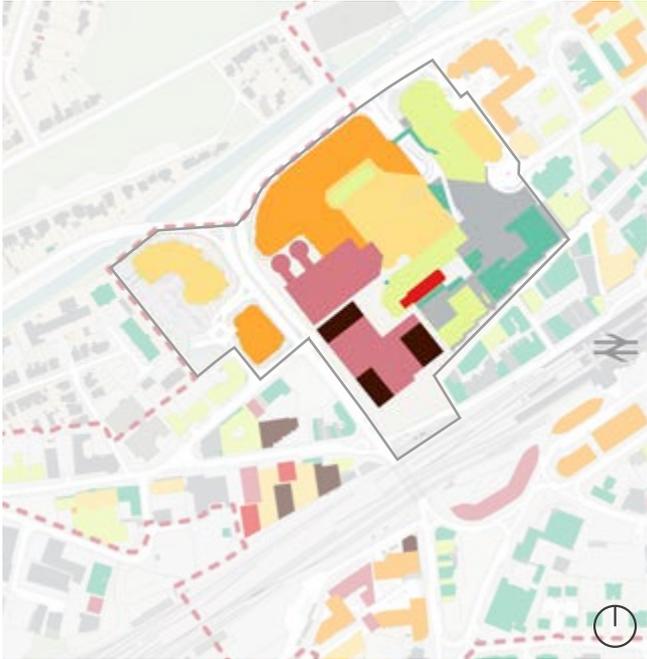


Fig 63 Existing heights by building

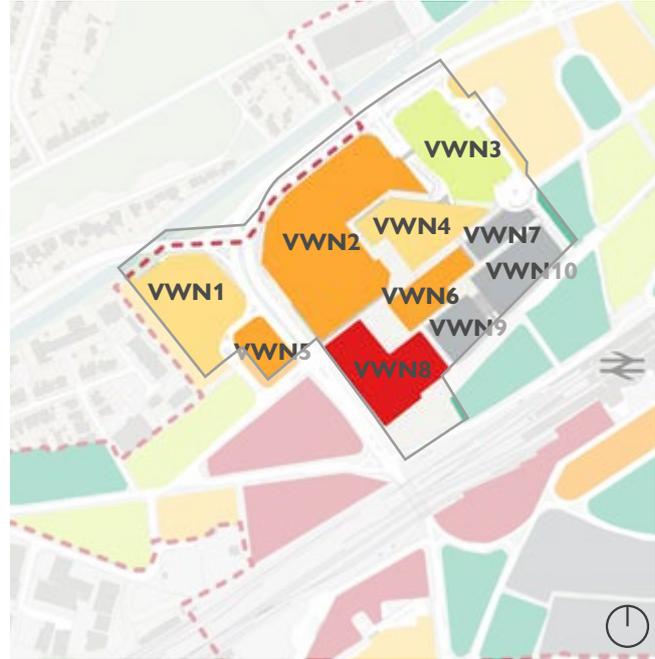


Fig 64 Existing heights by urban block



Fig 65 Floor to area ratio by urban block

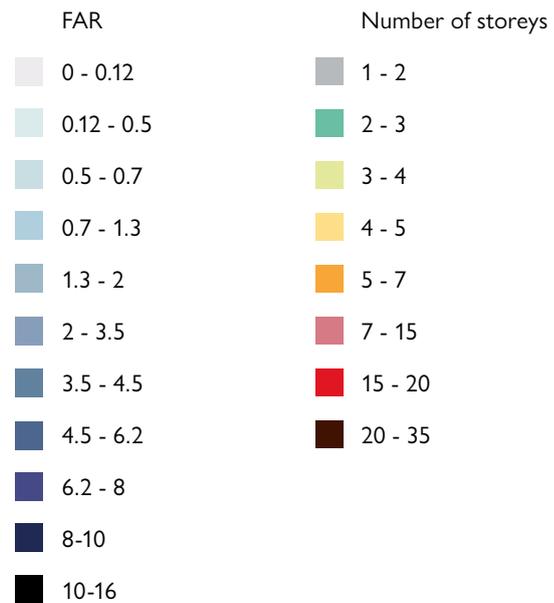




Fig 66 Representation (in green) of the 9 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

Development pipeline		URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
Consented scheme	Scheme under construction	VWN 1	6.2	9	4 - 9
		VWN 2			4 - 9
		VWN 3			4 - 6
		VWN 4			4 - 9
		VWN 5			4 - 6
		VWN 6			4 - 9
		VWN 7			4 - 9
		VWN 8			4 - 34
		VWN 9			4 - 30
		VWN 10			4 - 9
Tall building threshold					

Fig 67 Building heights summary

8.7 Goldsworth Road character area

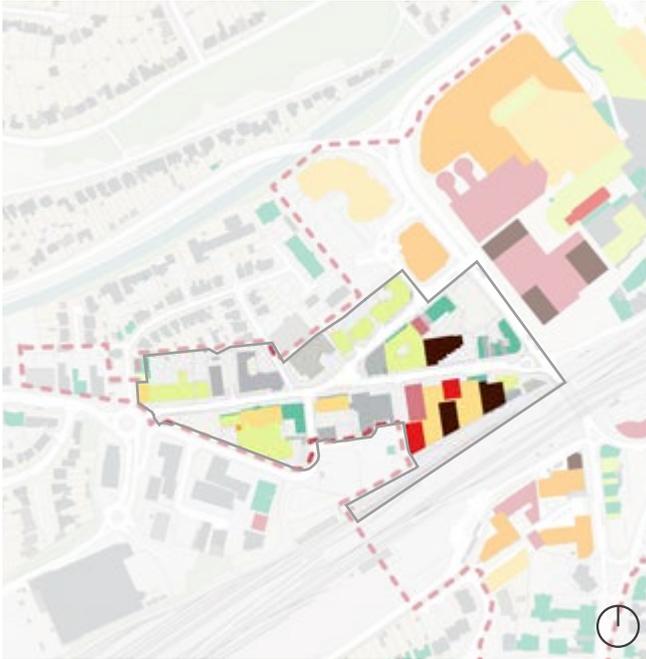


Fig 68 Existing heights by building

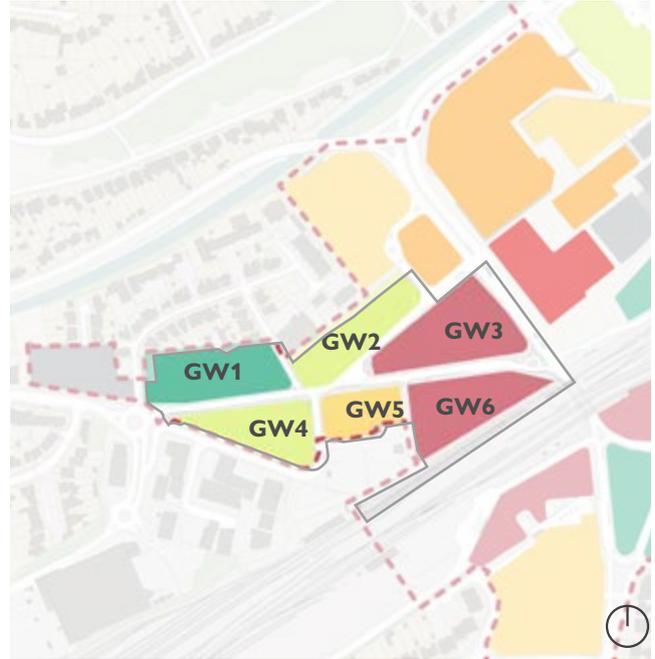


Fig 69 Existing heights by urban block

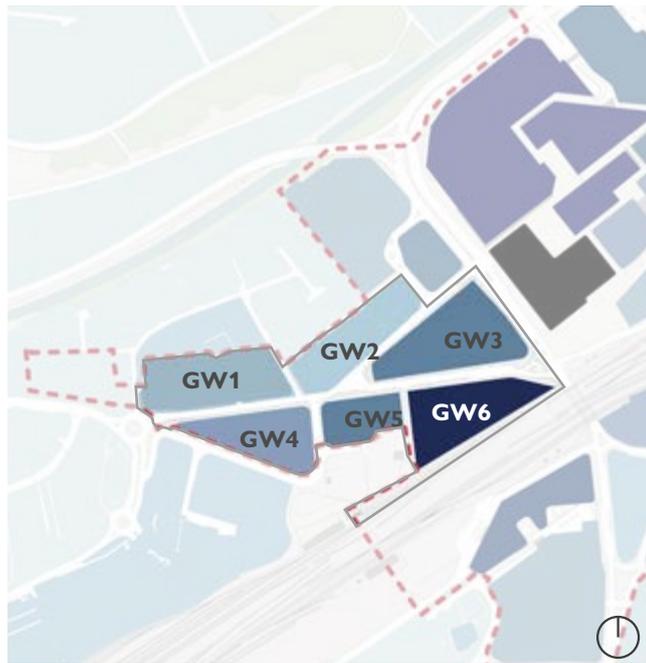
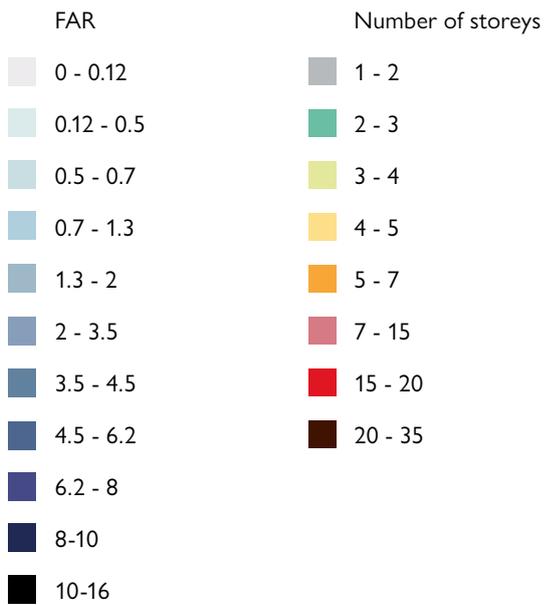


Fig 70 Floor to area ratio by urban block



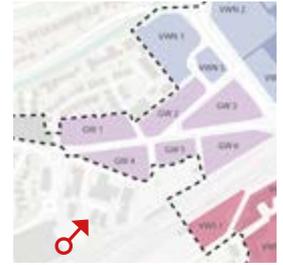


Fig 71 Representation (in green) of the 10 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

- Development pipeline
- Consented scheme
 - Scheme under construction
 - Tall building threshold

URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
GW 1	6.7	10	2 - 6
GW 2			4 - 6
GW 3			4 - 35
GW 4			4 - 6
GW 5			4 - 6
GW 6			4 - 38

Fig 72 Building heights summary

8.8 Station Approach character area



Fig 73 Existing heights by building

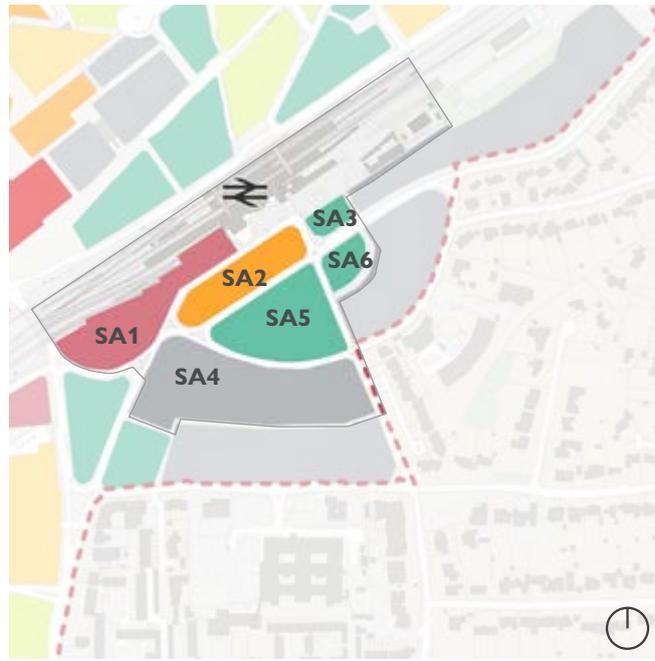


Fig 74 Existing heights by urban block

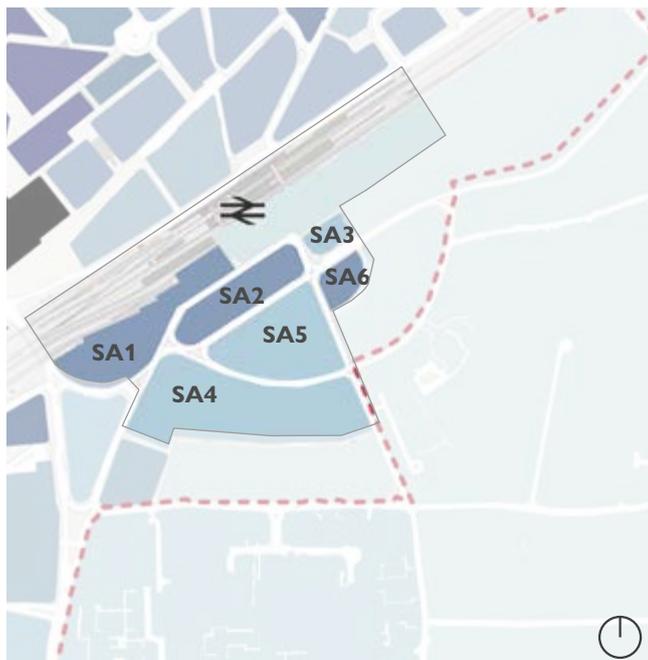
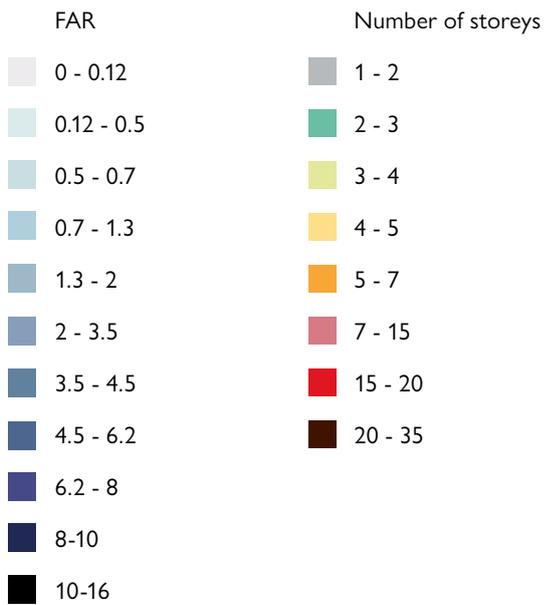


Fig 75 Floor to area ratio by urban block



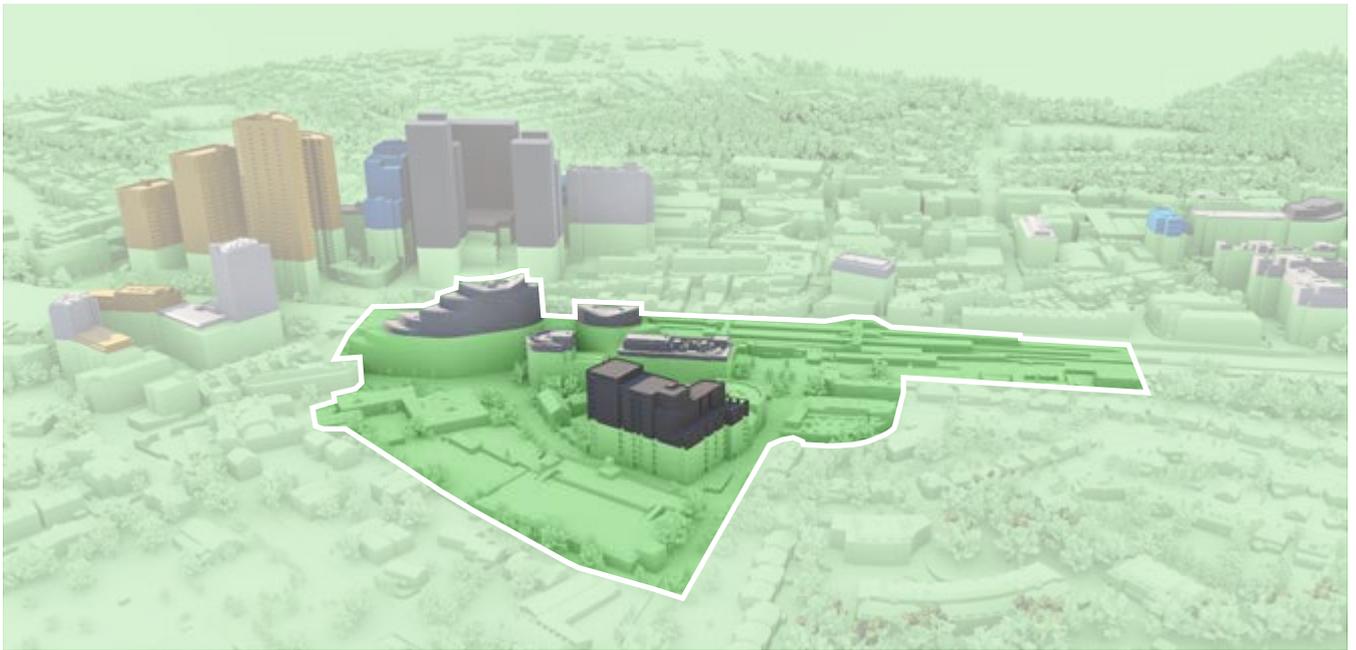


Fig 76 Representation (in green) of the 6 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

- Development pipeline
- Consented scheme
 - Scheme under construction
 - Tall building threshold

URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
SA 1	3.8	6	4 - 16
SA 2			5 - 10
SA 3			3 - 6
SA 4			4 - 8
SA 5			4 - 15
SA 6			4 - 15
SA 7			2 - 12

Fig 77 Building heights summary



8.9 Church Street character area



Fig 78 Existing heights by building

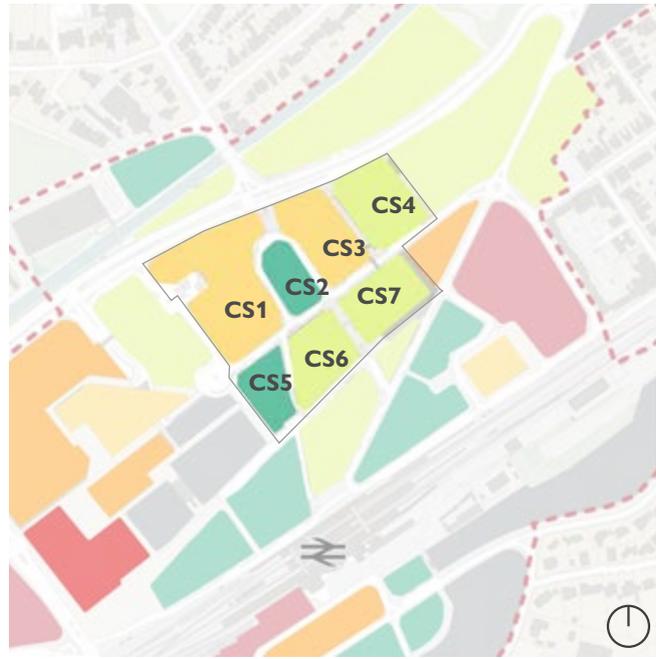
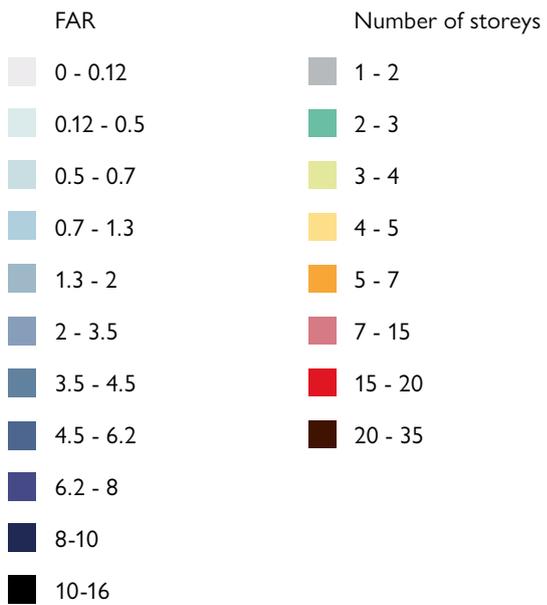


Fig 79 Existing heights by urban block



Fig 80 Floor to area ratio by urban block



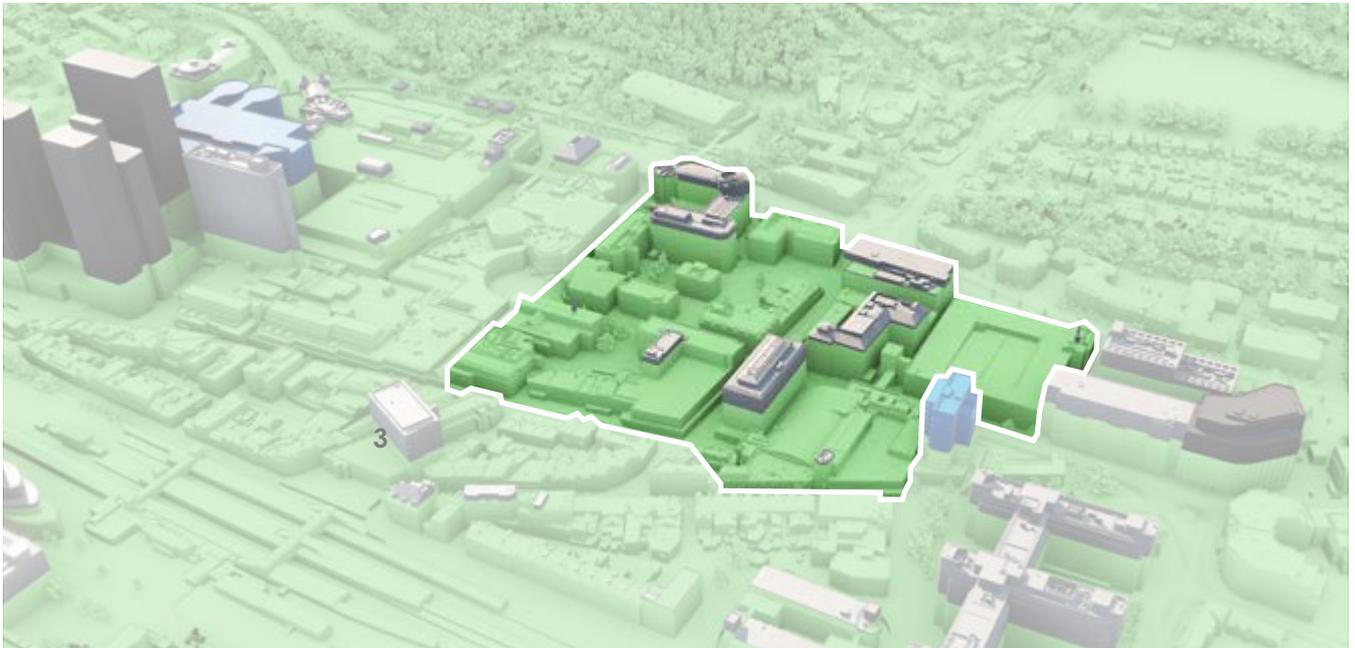


Fig 81 Representation (in green) of the 6 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

Development pipeline			
■	Consented scheme		
■	Scheme under construction		
■	Tall building threshold		
URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
CS 1	3.7	6	2 - 7
CS 2			3 - 10
CS 3			3 - 6
CS 4			4 - 10
CS 5			1 - 4
CS 6			2 - 10
CS 7			2 - 8

Fig 82 Building heights summary

8.10 Chertsey Road character area



Fig 83 Existing heights by building

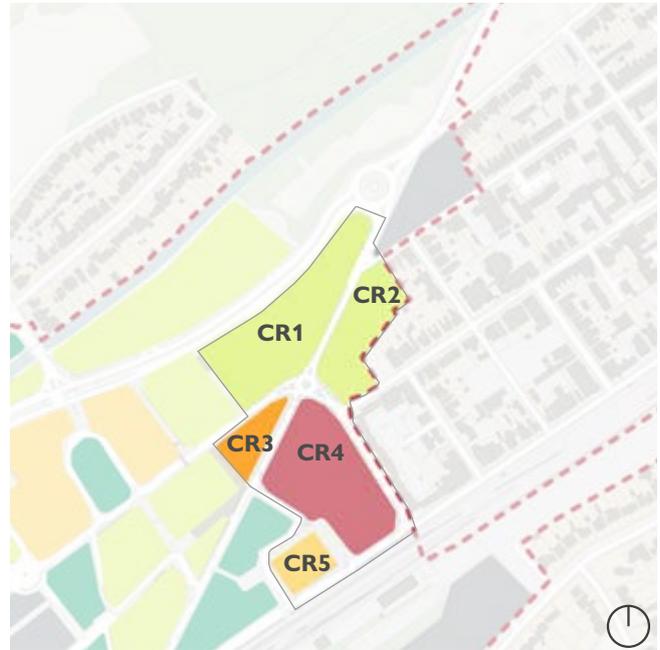
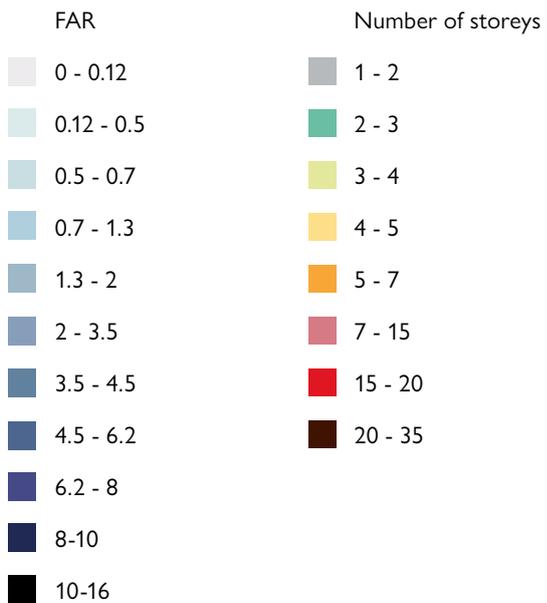


Fig 84 Existing heights by urban block



Fig 85 Floor to area ratio by urban block



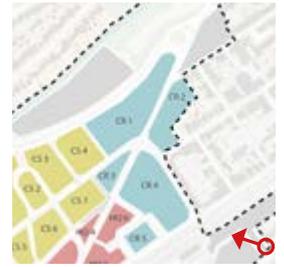


Fig 86 Representation (in green) of the 7 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

Development pipeline

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Tall building threshold

URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
CR 1	4.8	7	4 - 10
CR 2			2 - 6
CR 3			4 - 10
CR 4			4 - 9
CR 5			4 - 6

Fig 87 Building heights summary



8.11 Historic Quarter character area



Fig 88 Existing heights by building



Fig 89 Existing heights by urban block



Fig 90 Floor to area ratio by urban block

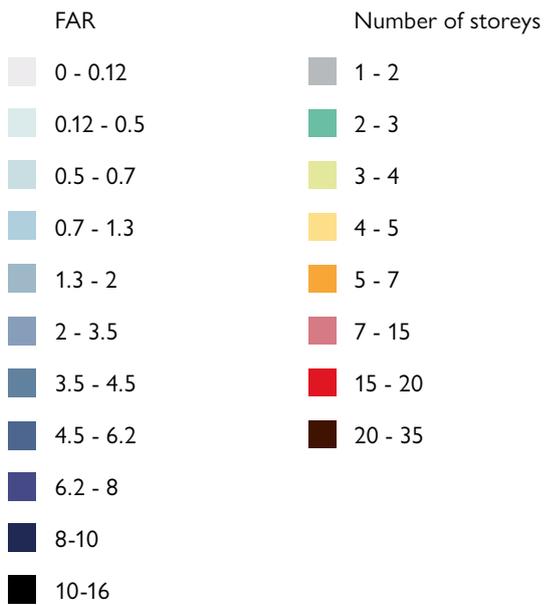




Fig 91 Representation (in green) of the 5 storey tall building threshold for the character area looking north-west

- Development pipeline
- Consented scheme
 - Scheme under construction
 - Tall building threshold

URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
HQ 1	2.7	5	3 - 18
HQ 2			3 - 6
HQ 3			3 - 6
HQ 4			2 - 4
HQ 5			3 - 4
HQ 6			3 - 4

Fig 92 Building heights summary

8.12 Tall Buildings Framework

Building height and tall building strategy

Reflecting on the detailed analysis outlined above, a judgement can be made to assign threshold heights for all parts of the centre above which new development would be considered to be tall.

This information is then combined with the analysis which helps to determine locations considered to be more appropriate for taller buildings. The result is a building heights and tall buildings strategy for Woking town centre where all locations can be attributed to one of three building height categories, as follows:

- **Appropriate for taller buildings** - these are locations considered to be more appropriate for tall buildings relative to others across the town centre. Detailed testing of the townscape, visual, micro-climate and heritage impact will need to be undertaken to demonstrate that the proposals presents an appropriately high level of design quality;
- **Moderately appropriate** - these are locations where some taller buildings might be appropriate subject to detailed testing but these areas are typically already characterised by mid-rise (4-8 storey) buildings which should remain the prevalent scale of development. Care will need to be taken to ensure that the scale of new development conforms to the bell curve profile analysis, as shown by the existing skyline in section 8.13.
- **Inappropriate locations** - these are generally considered to be prohibitively sensitive locations for taller buildings in light of the potential negative townscape impacts.

Using VuCity software, the existing skyline of the town centre is show in the plan below.

The profile of the town, which includes both scheme currently under construction and those already benefiting from planning permission, demonstrates the a cluster of taller buildings has development in the western side of the centre, focused around the Victoria Square development.

A bell curve can be added as a useful tool to help reflect the prevailing scale and pattern of development in the centre. Whilst this is not a technical tool with verified views and informed by a detailed townscape and visual impact assessment, when combined with the detailed building height guidance outlined in this Townscape Strategy, this bell curve is another tool which can be used to help ensure new development will respect prevailing scale.

The table that follows provides an overview of the prevailing heights, tall building threshold and appropriate prospective building height range for each urban block in the centre across all character areas. This strategy guidance should be used as a guide and not a blueprint, but it has been informed by detailed analysis of existing heights and associated urban analysis of the centre and the Council will expect new development proposals to generally conform to this building height and townscape strategy guidance.

- Appropriate location for tall buildings
- Moderately appropriate location for tall buildings
- Inappropriate location for tall buildings

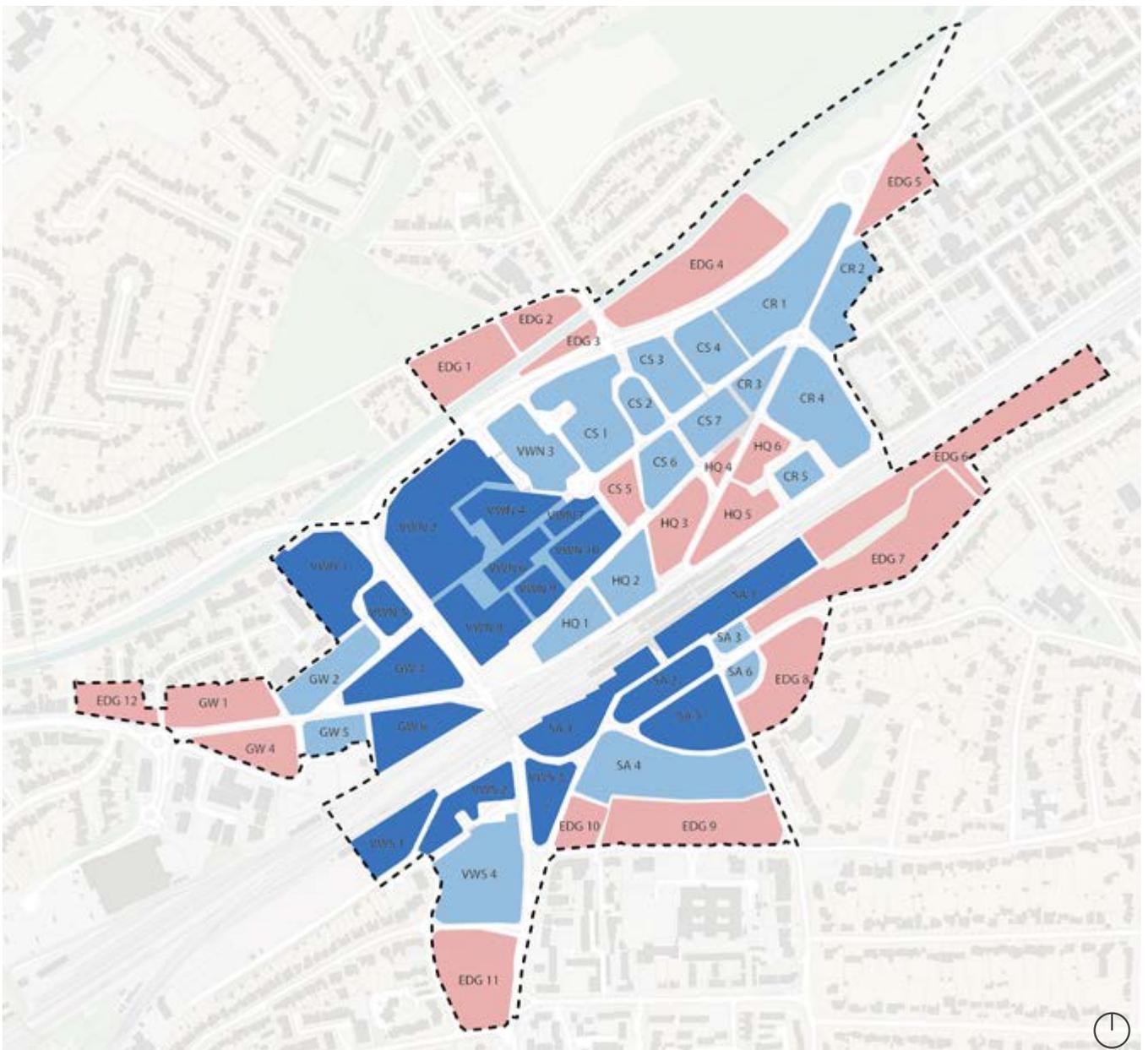


Fig 93 Building height and tall building strategy diagram



8.13 Existing Skyline

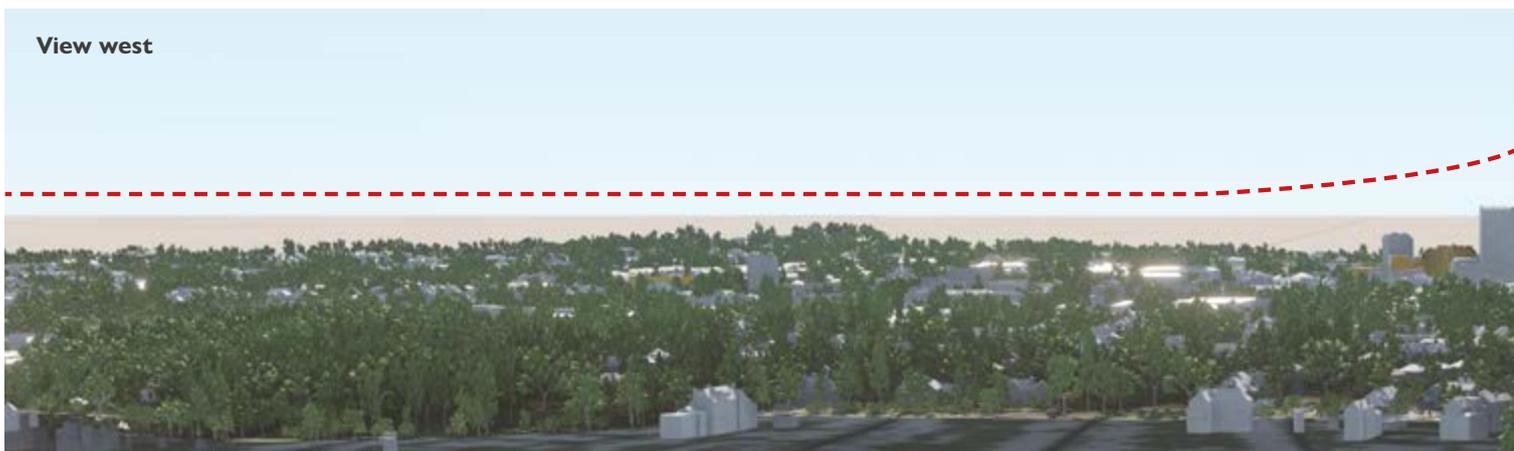
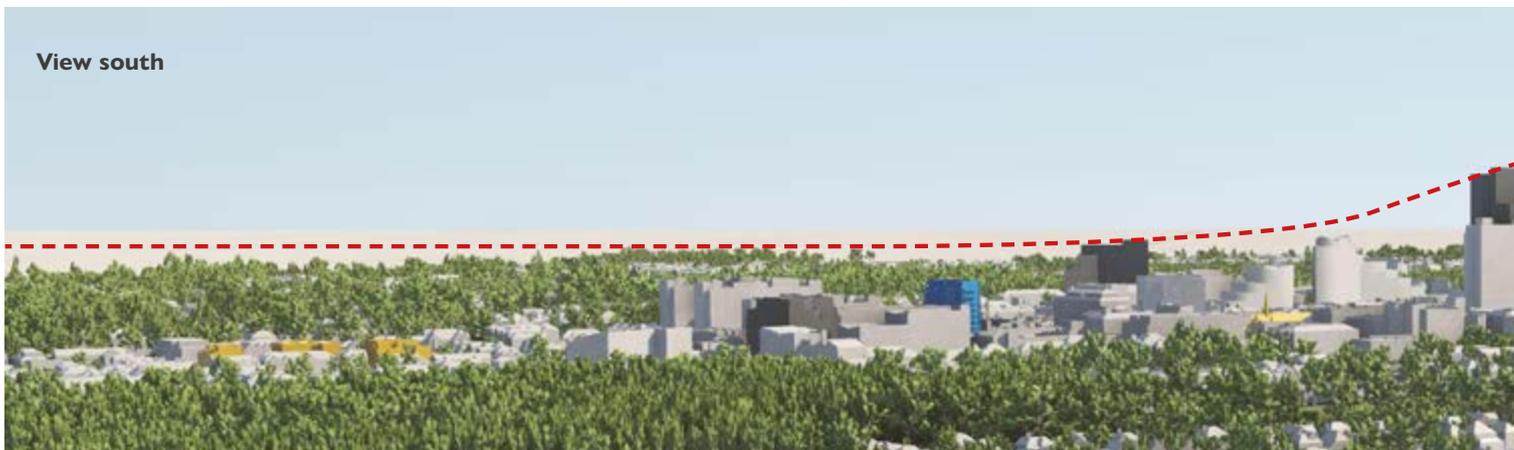
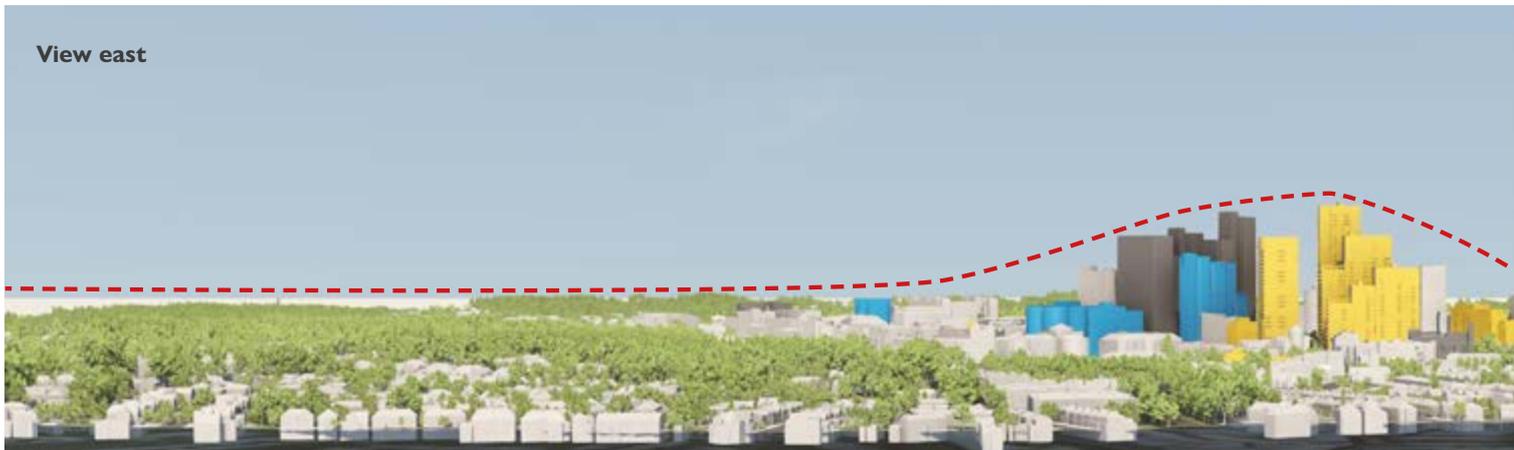
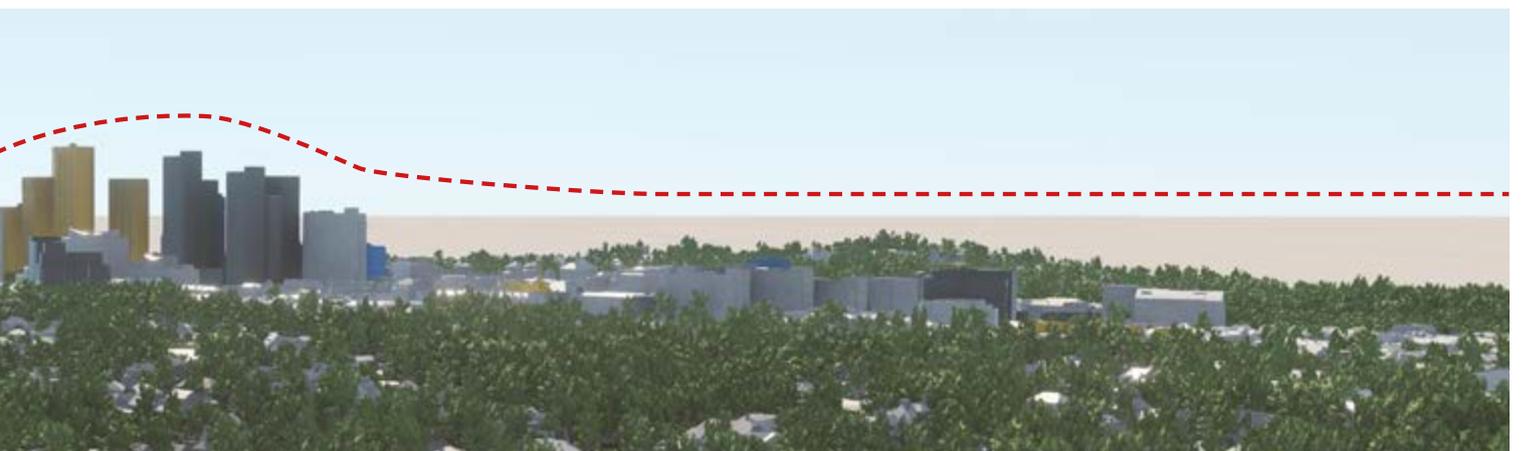
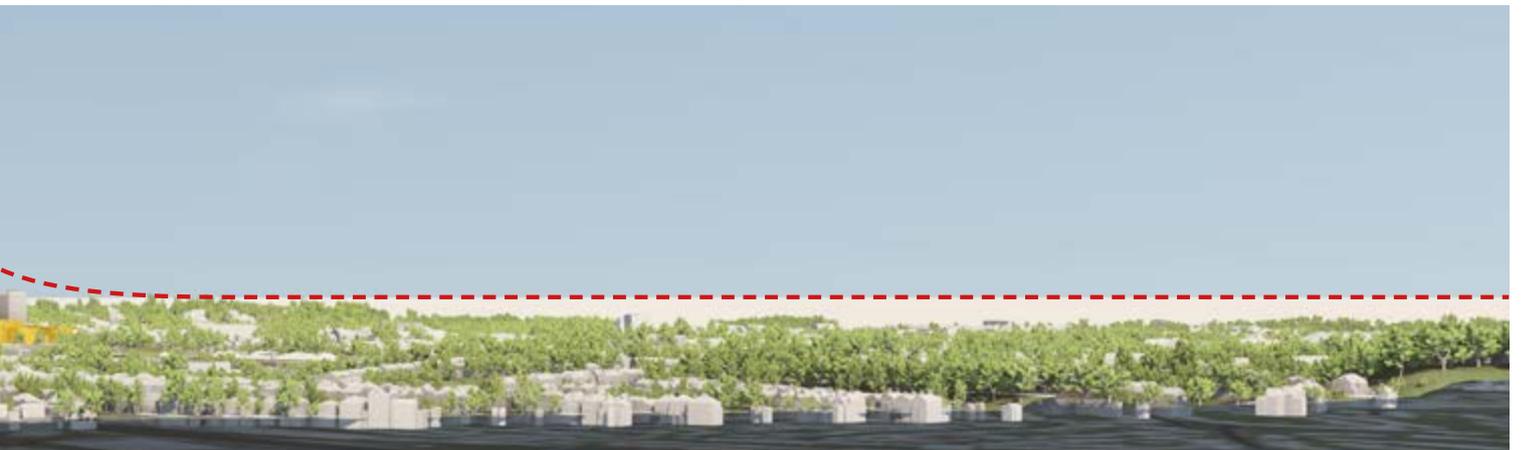


Fig 94 Bell curve height profile analysis





CHARACTER AREA	URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	CONTAINS ALLOCATED SITE	CONTAINS HIF SITE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
Victoria Way South	VWS 1	YES	YES	5.3	8	4 - 14
	VWS 2	YES	YES			4 - 22
	VWS 3	NO	YES			4 - 20
	VWS 4	NO	YES			4 - 15
Victoria Way North	VWN 1	NO	NO	6.2	9	4 - 9
	VWN 2	NO	NO			4 - 9
	VWN 3	NO	NO			4 - 6
	VWN 4	NO	NO			4 - 9
	VWN 5	NO	NO			4 - 6
	VWN 6	NO	NO			4 - 9
	VWN 7	NO	NO			4 - 9
	VWN 8	NO	NO			4 - 34
	VWN 9	NO	NO			4 - 30
	VWN 10	NO	NO			4 - 9
Goldsworth Road	GW 1	NO	NO	6.7	10	2 - 6
	GW 2	NO	YES			4 - 6
	GW 3	YES	YES			4 - 35
	GW 4	YES	NO			4 - 6
	GW 5	NO	NO			4 - 6
	GW 6	YES	YES			4 - 38
Station Approach	SA 1	NO	NO	3.8	6	4 - 16
	SA 2	NO	NO			5 - 10
	SA 3	NO	NO			3 - 6
	SA 4	NO	YES			4 - 8
	SA 5	YES	YES			4 - 15
	SA 6	YES	YES			4 - 15
	SA 7	NO	YES			2 - 12

- Appropriate location for tall buildings
- Moderately appropriate location for tall buildings
- Inappropriate location for tall buildings

Table 1.1 Building height and tall building strategy table **Page 150**

CHARACTER AREA	URBAN BLOCK REFERENCE	CONTAINS ALLOCATED SITE	CONTAINS HIF SITE	PREVAILING HEIGHT (STOREYS)	TALL BUILDING THRESHOLD (STOREYS)	APPROPRIATE PROSPECTIVE HEIGHTS (STOREYS)
Church Street	CS 1	YES	YES	3.7	6	2 - 7
	CS 2	NO	NO			3 - 10
	CS 3	NO	NO			3 - 6
	CS 4	NO	NO			4 - 10
	CS 5	NO	NO			1 - 4
	CS 6	NO	YES			2 - 10
	CS 7	YES	YES			2 - 8
Chertsey Road	CR 1	YES	NO	4.8	7	4 - 10
	CR 2	YES	NO			2 - 6
	CR 3	YES	YES			4 - 10
	CR 4	YES	NO			4 - 9
	CR 5	YES	NO			4 - 6
Historic Quarter	HQ 1	YES	NO	2.7	6	3 - 18
	HQ 2	YES	NO			3 - 6
	HQ 3	NO	NO			3 - 6
	HQ 4	YES	YES			2 - 4
	HQ 5	NO	NO			3 - 4
	HQ 6	NO	NO			3 - 4
Edge of town centre	EDG 1	NO	NO	N/A	N/A	1 - 3
	EDG 2	NO	NO			2 - 4
	EDG 3	NO	NO			1 - 3
	EDG 4	NO	NO			3 - 8
	EDG 5	NO	NO			2 - 4
	EDG 6	NO	YES			2 - 10
	EDG 7	NO	NO			2 - 3
	EDG 8	YES	NO			2 - 3
	EDG 9	NO	NO			2 - 4
	EDG 10	NO	YES			2 - 4
	EDG 11	YES	NO			2 - 8
	EDG 12	YES	NO			3 - 6



SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

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9 Objectives

The Sustainable construction objectives for the Town Centre are as follows:

- **A well-designed town centre and buildings that conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials;**
- **All new and redevelopment in the town centre will be expected to achieve high environmental benchmarks as part of the borough's commitment to addressing the climate and ecological emergency;**
- **Design should respond to the impacts of climate change by maximising energy efficiency and minimising carbon emissions to contribute towards net zero targets by 2050;**
- **Design should incorporate measures to adapt to anticipated effects such as warmer urban temperatures and the increased risk of surface water flooding.**

10 Overview

Woking Borough Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, pledging to accelerate its efforts to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations, and in the longer term to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero across the borough by 2050, in line with national targets. The Council is committed to work in partnership with those developing, operating in and managing the town centre to ensure that these carbon targets are met. The Woking Core Strategy (in particular, Policies CS9, CS17, CS18, CS21, CS22 and CS23), the Site Allocations DPD, the Development Management Policies DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework combine to provide the policy basis to guide day to day decisions. Detailed information on sustainable construction requirements can be found in the [Climate Change SPD](#).

The council has already championed significant investment in low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure in the town centre, including the decentralised energy network, but the ongoing regeneration of the town centre provides a significant opportunity to design-in additional measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and minimise resource use. Incorporating energy saving measures into the design and construction of new or refurbished

homes and buildings in the town centre can significantly reduce the amount of energy consumed, the carbon dioxide emitted and the running costs of the building over its lifetime. There are also opportunities to expand the decentralised energy network further, with the new energy station at Poole Road increasing capacity (Fig 96).

Urban design has a critical role to play in ensuring that buildings benefit from natural daylight, warmth and ventilation. It is also important to provide natural shading and air conditioning, and to control run-off through appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS). Incorporating adaptation measures into new and redeveloped buildings and the public realm will also create a town centre which is more attractive and sustainable in the long term, for example through enhancing green infrastructure. The Council has been putting in place measures to adapt to changing conditions, including rainwater gardens in built-up areas of the town centre to reduce surface water flooding (Fig 95), but there is significant scope to enhance adaptation through ongoing regeneration.



Fig 95 Rainwater Garden, Chertsey Road



Fig 96 Combined Heat and Power Centre, Poole Road

10.1 June 2022 Building Regulations

A new part L of the building regulations will come in to effect on 15 June 2022. Table 1.1 sets out what will be expected from developments coming forward in the Town Centre.

Special considerations and exemptions may apply if a building on which work to be carried out has special historic or architectural value, such as those within the designated Town Centre Conservation Area. A balance will need to be arrived at between historic building conservation and sustainable construction requirements, but it is perfectly feasible to retain the authentic, original, architectural and historic features of buildings during an energy-efficiency project.



Table 1.2 Summary of the minimum sustainable construction requirements that will be expected of development proposals coming forward in the town centre.

DEVELOPMENT TYPE	MINIMUM STANDARD AS AT JUNE 2022
New residential development – energy and water efficiency	Interim Future Homes Standard which requires around a 30% reduction on the Dwelling Emission Rate against the Target Emission Rate (based on the 2013 edition of Part L to the Building Regulations). A fabric first approach should continue to be prioritised. Meet the full Future Homes Standard once it comes into effect. Proposals for zero carbon development are strongly supported.
	Optional requirement set through Part G to the Building Regulations for water efficiency.
New non-residential development of 1,000sqm or more (gross) floorspace	BREEM Very Good standards, with energy component achieving progressive uplift in Part L to the Building Regulations in line with Government objective for non-residential buildings to achieve the Future Buildings Standard. BREEM assessment is also available for mixed-use schemes, combining both residential and non-residential development.
	Achieve mandatory credits under water category of BREEM assessment.
Minor non-residential development	Incorporate energy measures in accordance with interim requirements of Part L to the Building Regulations and full Future Buildings Standard once it comes into effect.
	Incorporate water efficiency measures (as per Climate Change SPD guidance).
Development with exceptional high energy consumption / power/cooling loads	Reduce total carbon emissions from development by 10% through use of on-site renewable energy measures.
All new development	Consider integration of Combined Heat and Power or other forms of low carbon district heating in the development. Connect to an energy station or district heat network, or be designed to be connection-ready, if located within town centre ‘connection zone’, unless a better alternative for reducing carbon emissions can be demonstrated.
	Electric vehicle charging point provision in accordance with Part S to the Building Regulations.
	Take into account layout, landform, orientation and landscaping to maximise efficient use of energy and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Accord with uplift in Part F (ventilation) and new Part O (overheating in new homes) to the Building Regulations, and full Future Homes and Building Standards once they come into effect.
	Designed to facilitate reduction of waste, and then recycling and composting of waste produced.
	Use sustainable construction techniques that promote the reuse and recycling of building materials. Responsible resourcing of materials, and locally sourced where possible.
	Make biodiversity enhancements such as green roofs/walls and bird and bat boxes.

11 Opportunities

- Increasing the density and intensifying the use of land and buildings in the town centre can help to mitigate the impacts of climate change by locating people closer to facilities, shops, jobs, and sustainable modes of transport, thereby reducing the need to travel by car;
- Redevelopment of town centre sites can help improve connections to existing/planned walking and cycling networks and maximise permeability for these modes within and outside of sites;
- Previously developed land in the town centre is used more efficiently so helps adaptation by increasing the ability for CO₂ absorption, and sustaining natural ecosystems and flood resilience on greenfield land elsewhere;
- Well-established low carbon decentralised energy network in the town centre, with high feasibility for new and redeveloped buildings to connect. Also good potential for on-site renewable energy generation via roof-mounted solar PV;
- Great potential to improve energy efficiency and resilience of outdated town centre buildings, including on those sites allocated for redevelopment in the Site Allocations DPD;
- Redevelopment of previously developed land in the town centre with low biodiversity value offers potential to reintroduce natural features and habitats into the built environment, improve permeability of surfaces, and address urban heat island effect through landscaping, including green roofs and walls;
- Town centre development likely to generate sufficient critical mass for shared travel solutions e.g. car club vehicles and cycling hubs, and to expand cycling and electric vehicle network;
- Higher quality existing buildings in the town centre can be retrofitted to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions – much of this falls outside the remit of planning, however, there are opportunities where applications are made for change of use, conversions, reversions and extensions.



12 Constraints

- The desire to increase density in the town centre needs to be balanced with retaining important open spaces and land for drainage, which will become more important in addressing warmer temperatures and increased storm events;
- Whilst higher densities are desirable due to the town centre location, there is a risk that tall buildings can restrict daylighting and solar gain, including overshadowing of existing buildings and public spaces. Higher density development can also compound the urban heat island effect;
- Costs associated with redeveloping town centre sites can impede viability of achieving high sustainable construction standards;
- Important to ensure that existing CHP facilities do not have an adverse effect on air quality;
- Higher instances of permitted development in town centre (allowing changing of use without any application process) reduces capacity of planning process to facilitate incorporation of sustainable construction measures;
- Heritage assets in the town centre, including that of the Conservation Area, can restrict degree to which sustainable construction principles are achieved;
- Existing electricity infrastructure in the town centre may not have capacity to support electric vehicle charging needs;
- Balance to be achieved between retrofitting outmoded buildings to reduce emissions and embodied energy costs and conserve resources vs. demolition and rebuild to boost supplies of affordable housing

13 The Masterplan

- Developments in the town centre will be expected to follow the principles of sustainable construction and design to reduce the demand for energy, use energy more efficiently and generate more energy from low carbon and renewable sources. Developments should not only avoid, mitigate or compensate for harm, but also seek ways to enhance, restore and add to biodiversity.
- Encouraging the re-use of good quality existing buildings before considering demolition or replacement (the 'retro-fit first' principle) (Fig 97).
- Development will be directed to follow the energy hierarchy by:

Reducing the demand for energy through an integrated approach to solar gain, access to daylight, insulation, thermal materials, ventilation, heating and control systems. Design techniques should be applied that maximise the capture and use of passive solar energy while avoiding excessive solar gain in summer e.g. using brise soleil, natural ventilation, shutters, cool or reflective building materials on roofs or facades – these passive measures should be considered prior to the inclusion of any active measures (Figs 98,99).



Fig 97 Renovation vs. Redevelopment at the Cornerstone Offices



Fig 98 Brise soleil to reduce passive cooling and overheating



Fig 99 Passive ventilation and solar PV at the Living Planet Centre

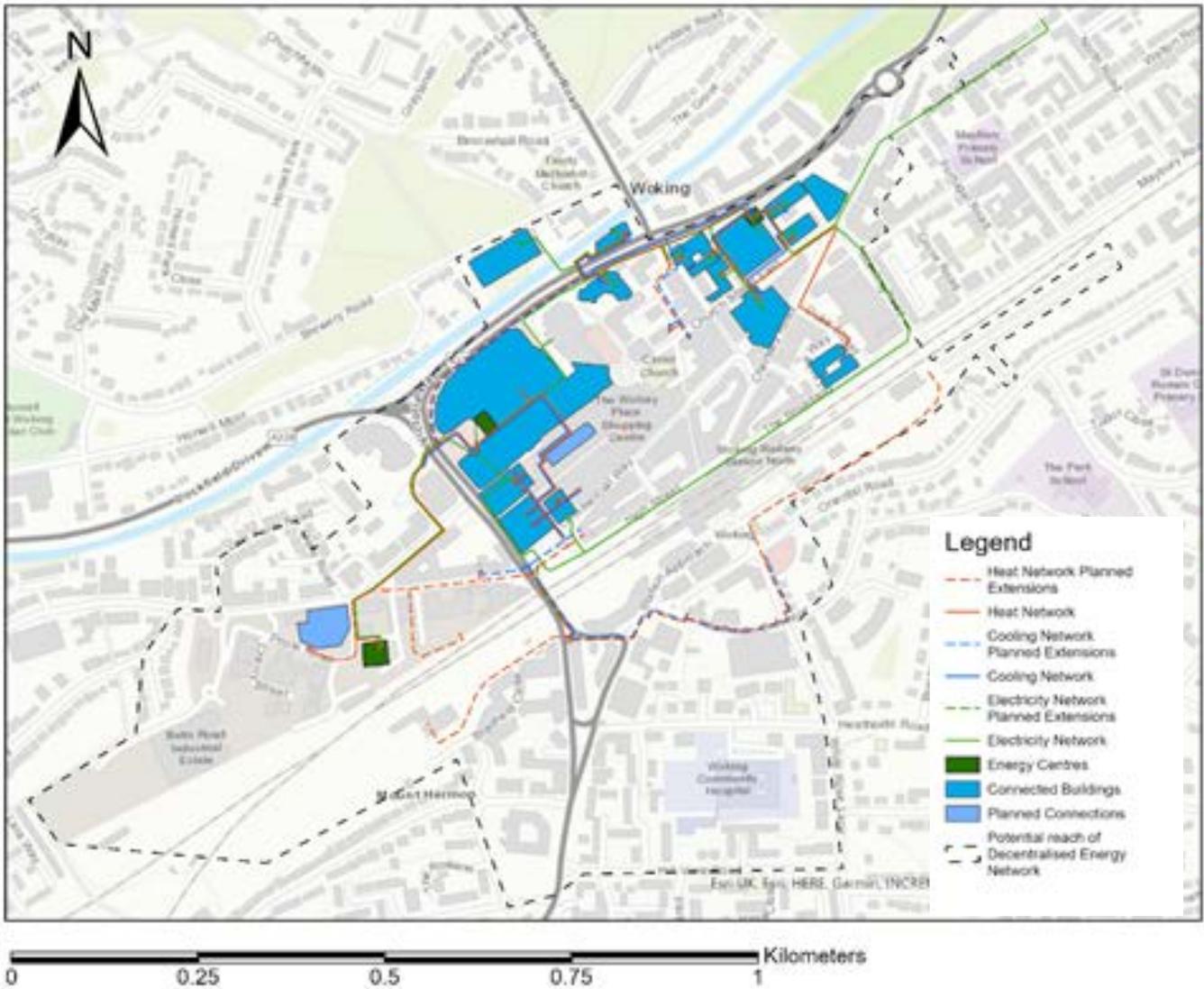


Fig 100 Caption



Fig 101 BREEAM Excellent at Victoria Gate



Fig 102 All timber used

- Securing an efficient supply of heat and power, including through connection to the existing town centre decentralised energy network (DEN) (Fig 100). – all new development (including refurbishments and conversions where planning permission is required) should assess the feasibility of connecting to the existing network, and where this is not possible, being designed to be ‘connection-ready’ or establishing a new network – this will help realise the benefits in establishing and supporting the existing town centre DEN which has potential to transition to lower carbon and renewable energy sources over time;
- Considering the feasibility of on-site renewable energy generation, prioritising the use of technologies with no polluting emissions such as heat pumps or photovoltaics (PVs). Given the benefits of heat pumps, their use will be encouraged. Roofs in the town centre should be designed to maximise the use of solar panels, which can be adopted with other technologies to reduce emissions such as heat pumps, alongside fabric efficiency.
- New and redeveloped buildings should be built to high environmental standards and are encouraged to exceed minimum local planning policy and Building Regulations requirements. Whilst the 2016 Zero Carbon Homes target has been replaced with the Future Homes Standard, new residential development is encouraged to pursue net zero standards where feasible. Larger scale non-residential or mixed-use proposals will be required to conduct a BREEAM assessment and achieve at least a Very Good rating in accordance with policy CS22, but higher standards are achievable: a new-build exemplar is the [Living Planet Centre](#), which achieved BREEAM Outstanding, and the refurbishment of Victoria Gate, which achieved BREEAM Excellent (Fig 101).
- Operational carbon is only part of the story – embodied carbon in materials should also be minimised. Embodied carbon includes the carbon emissions associated with the extraction and processing of materials, energy use in the factories and transport as well as the construction of the building and repair, replacement and maintenance. It also includes the demolition and disassembly of the building at the end of its life. New and redevelopment in the town centre is encouraged to pursue low embodied carbon design, which is not inherently more expensive or more complex, it just requires awareness and good design (Fig 102).
- Prioritise materials that are reused, reclaimed or natural from local areas and sustainable sources and that are durable. If not available use materials with a high recycled content.
- Allow for flexibility and consider how a layout may be adapted in the future.
- Allow for easy access for maintenance – maintained equipment will last longer.
- Consider disassembly for reuse at the end of the life of the building.
- Promoting water sensitive drainage designs like swales, rain gardens, permeable paving, and grass so that water can soak away (Fig 103). Detailed guidance on Sustainable Drainage Systems, including design criteria to achieve multi-functional benefits – such as maximising the ecological value of drainage systems - is provided in [Surrey County Council's guidance](#).
- New and redeveloped buildings should incorporate measures to reduce water demand and recycle greywater and rainwater. For residential development, water use should not exceed 110 litres per person, per day, ideally less, and for non-residential development, credits should be sought in the water category of BREEAM schemes.



- Providing recycling capacity in developments, including building in recycling facilities for organic and other wastes.
- To help reduce the town centre's exposure to air pollution, enable it to adapt to climate change and to deliver biodiversity net gains, new and redevelopment proposals should consider urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design. Incorporate measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls, pocket parks, food-growing areas and nature-based sustainable drainage such as rain gardens. Heat and potentially drought-tolerant plants should be selected, as well as evergreen species as these can provide year-round sustainability and green infrastructure benefits. Biodiversity features can be designed into typical public-realm furniture (e.g. bollards and fences), and a range of bird and bat nest boxes can be integrated into facades and green walls. Residents' or office workers' participation can be encouraged by providing balcony planters and window boxes on residential or office schemes (Figs 104,105,106).
- Encouraging proposals to make more of the ecological and recreational value of the canal, heaths and habitats surrounding the town centre, and to create accessible connections to them, particularly where the public realm is being improved.
- Incorporating electric vehicle (EV) charging points and considering the provision of parking bays for car clubs – these should be easy and safe to use. Where parking is proposed, new housing and commercial development should be planned with capacity to support EV charging to enhance the town centre charging network. Further guidance, including on design and technology, is provided in the Council's Climate Change SPD and Surrey County Council's [Electric Vehicle Strategy \(2018\)](#) (Fig 107).
- Incorporate cycle parking in line with the minimum Parking Standards SPD – this should be secure, often best provided in places that are overlooked, and its location and design should be appropriate to the surrounding environment.
- Proposals that help to increase resilience to climate change and secure carbon reductions for historic buildings and other designated and non-designated heritage assets in the town centre are supported where they strike an acceptable balance with the conservation of the asset, or facilitate their sensitive re-use where they have fallen into a state of disrepair or dereliction.
- Development proposals in the town centre will need to show that guidance in the [Climate Change SPD](#) has been taken into account in Sustainability and Energy Statements submitted with planning applications, and complete a Climate Neutral Development Checklist.



Fig 103 Rain garden



Fig 104 Middle Walk



Fig 105 Green wall at Dukes Court



Fig 106 Green walls at Victoria Way car park



Fig 107 Promoting car sharing



NOTICE TO STOP
THIS IS NOT
AN UNLICENSED
RAILWAY ROUTE

Woking
Station

HERITAGE

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14 Objectives

The Heritage objectives for the Town Centre are as follows:

- **To conserve heritage assets, and retain them as a valuable part of Woking’s evolving built environment;**
- **Prevent inappropriate development and loss or damage to heritage assets. Steps should be taken to enhance assets, by repairing historical features that may have been damaged, and exploring the potential to re-instate features that may have been lost where this is beneficial to the asset and its setting.**
- **Celebrate and capitalise upon heritage assets, to make them:**
- **A core part of future place-making in the town centre. They should be integrated and enhanced as part of a sensitive yet creative design approach, and help new development better fit its local and historic context.**
- **Widely appreciated by the public, through awareness and education, thus contributing to a enhanced sense of local identity and place.**

15 Overview

Woking has grown from a small country market town surrounded by farmland in the 1800s. Many of Woking's main roads, including Guildford Road, Chertsey Road and Oriental Road, began as ancient links across the heathland, linking Woking Common and Horsell Common, and are shown on the adjacent map (Fig 108).

The precursor to change and growth came with two major forms of new transport infrastructure, first with the Canal's construction at the end of the 1700s (completed in 1794) which in turn provided an important transport system for construction of the railway. The railway was built in the 1830s and started operating railway services to London in 1838, with fast trains taking just over 50 minutes. From 1840, the rail service to Southampton opened. One of Woking's oldest surviving buildings, now the Sovereigns pub, was built in 1840 as the 'Railway Hotel' to cater to the sudden influx of visitors to the town and Woking Heath.

The railway and station in Woking gave quick and easy access to London and was the beginning of Woking's rapid development. In 1856-7 the Albion Hotel (where Albion House is now located) was built and around the same time the High Street began to develop as the town's first shopping street, containing a collection of shops including a Post Office, grocers, chemists, butchers and draper and milliner. Some of these were converted from cottages, and others were new buildings. Buildings now situated on the High Street date

from 1870 and are the original commercial heart of the town.

The site of Christ Church was first used as a place of worship in 1877, and the current Church opened in 1889, to support a rapidly growing town. However, the area immediately surrounding Christ Church was largely residential until the 1960s.

The building occupied by the Slug and Lettuce on the corner of Chobham Road and Commercial Way (then Commercial Road) dates to 1874 and was linked to a second set of shops on Chobham Road built around this time. From the 1890s, Chertsey Road started to become the town's main shopping street, with Broadway beginning to develop at the same time, which contained the town's first telephone exchange. Many of the historic buildings on Chertsey Road and Broadway remain, displaying decorative and classical features, and providing an insight into the town's past.

Development began to expand onto the eastern extent of Commercial Way in the early 1900s, with some intricate and attractive Victorian architecture evident at 46 Commercial Way. Commercial Buildings (1920s) at 63-73 Commercial Way show a distinct Art Deco influence and the adjoining 75 Commercial Way (occupied by Turkish Kitchen) is an attractive historic building with detailed brickwork, arched windows and parapets.

At the junction of Commercial Way and High Street, where Victoria Place public space is now, was a collection of public buildings including a

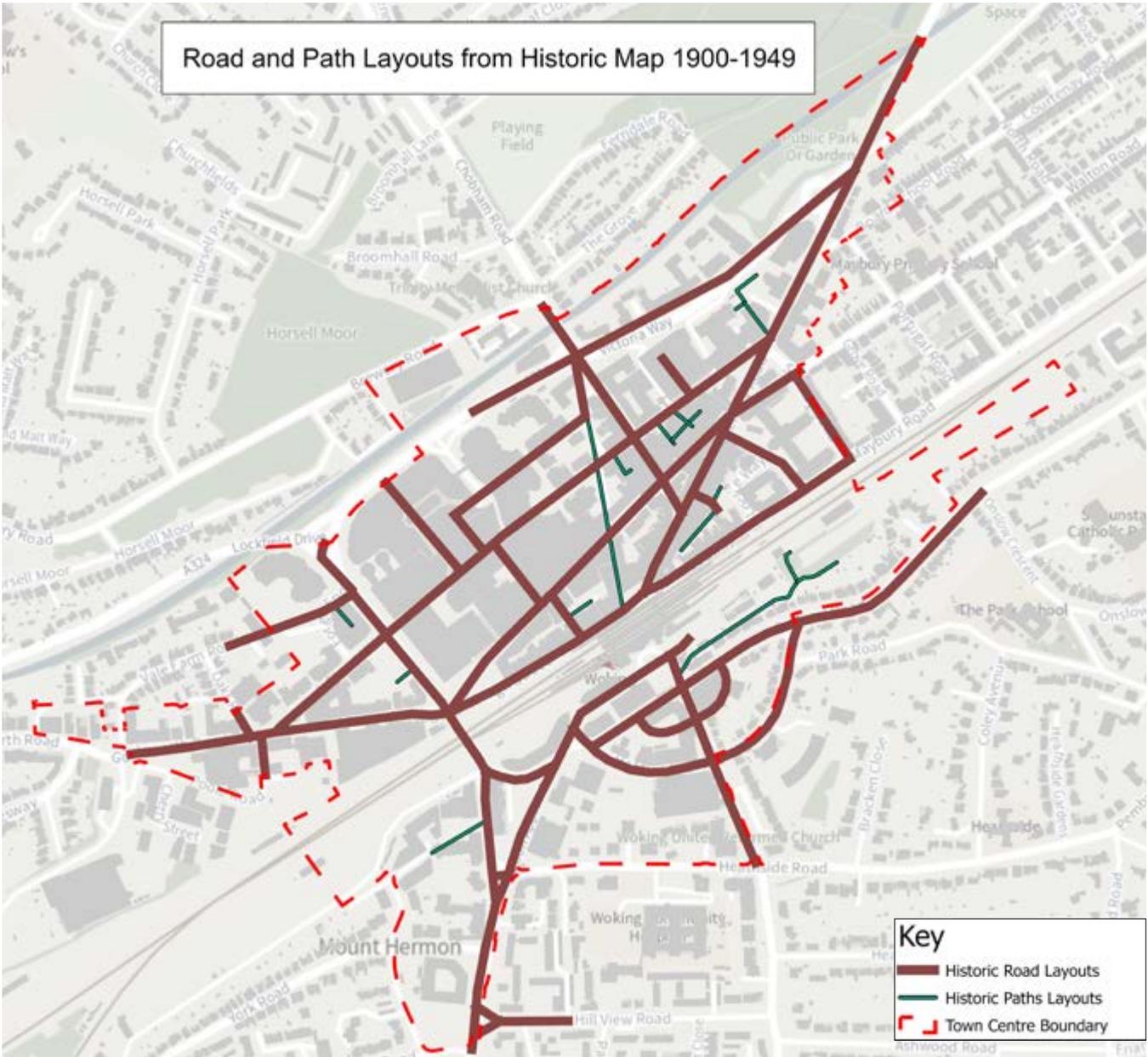


Fig 108 Woking Town Centre's Historic Road Layouts (1900-1949)

new Wesleyan Church, built in 1904 (replacing an older Chapel at Chapel Street, built in 1872) Council Offices, public halls, the Grand Theatre and the Constitutional Club. Woking Electric Empire operated from 1910 and showed early 'moving pictures'.

These public buildings lined Victoria Gardens, colloquially known as 'Sparrow Park', which from 1922 contained the War Memorial which was later moved to Town Square (now Jubilee Square).

Development continued gradually, with an increasing commercial and retail focus along Commercial Way. Buildings like that occupied by Carson & Co on the corner of Church Path date to 1934, with many buildings being constructed through the 1960s.

Woking Town Centre saw substantial change from the 1970s with the development of large footprint shopping centres, first with Wolsey Place, on land that had been a mix of residential and smaller scale shops and businesses lining the streets. This entailed major changes and redesign to the local road network. This large scale retail development continued through the 1980s, and the Peacocks Centre opened in 1992. The Mayor at the time, Councillor Dick Williams, stated it had transformed Woking from a 'one horse town' to an 'important regional centre'.

Transformation continues in Woking, with the recent opening of Victoria Place and further development planned for the town centre.

Woking's heritage remains as part of the town's built fabric, clustered most obviously in the existing Conservation Area but with heritage buildings distributed throughout the centre, as identified in the following section. Historic buildings help tell the story of Woking's past and development over the past 170 years, and should be protected and enhanced as a distinct part of our thriving and dynamic town.

16 Heritage assets in the town centre

Heritage assets are buildings, monuments or sites that are historically important at a local or wider level. They are often valued for their style, architecture, historical or cultural associations, and for the contribution they make to a place. Their value and people’s perception of a heritage asset can differ, and these perceptions are both personal and transitory. Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, and they may be designated or undesignated. The section below focuses on designated heritage assets located within the town centre, identifies and describes them, and then highlights opportunities for their improvement and protection.

Heritage assets are distributed throughout the Town Centre. They include two designated Conservation Areas (Town Centre and part of the Basingstoke Canal) and a number of heritage assets, which are either locally listed or statutory Grade II listed buildings and structures under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended. Most are standalone and there are some terraced buildings. Fig 106 illustrates this.

Alongside the preparation of the Town Centre Masterplan, a review of the Council’s Local List is taking place, which may identify additional heritage assets appropriate for designation in the Town Centre. Whilst the Masterplan focuses on designated Heritage Assets, the Council has robust local plan policies to conserve locally listed heritage assets.

The Town Centre Conservation Area, designated in 1991 and shown to the right,

forms a small yet distinct historical core that was the town’s original commercial heart, and is a unique quarter in the context of a predominantly modern town. An Appraisal of this Conservation Area has been prepared and assesses a number of features which in combination creates a distinct historical and architectural character. The Appraisal provides recommendations for how the area and its setting should be conserved to protect and enhance its historical features. For the purposes of this report in informing the Town Centre Masterplan, the key findings of the Appraisal are pulled out to identify opportunities for improvement and protection. Historic assets outside the Conservation Area but within the town centre boundary are also identified.



Woking High Street. Historic photo credit: Iain Wakeford, Woking Print and Publicity, 2003



Old buildings on Victoria Square

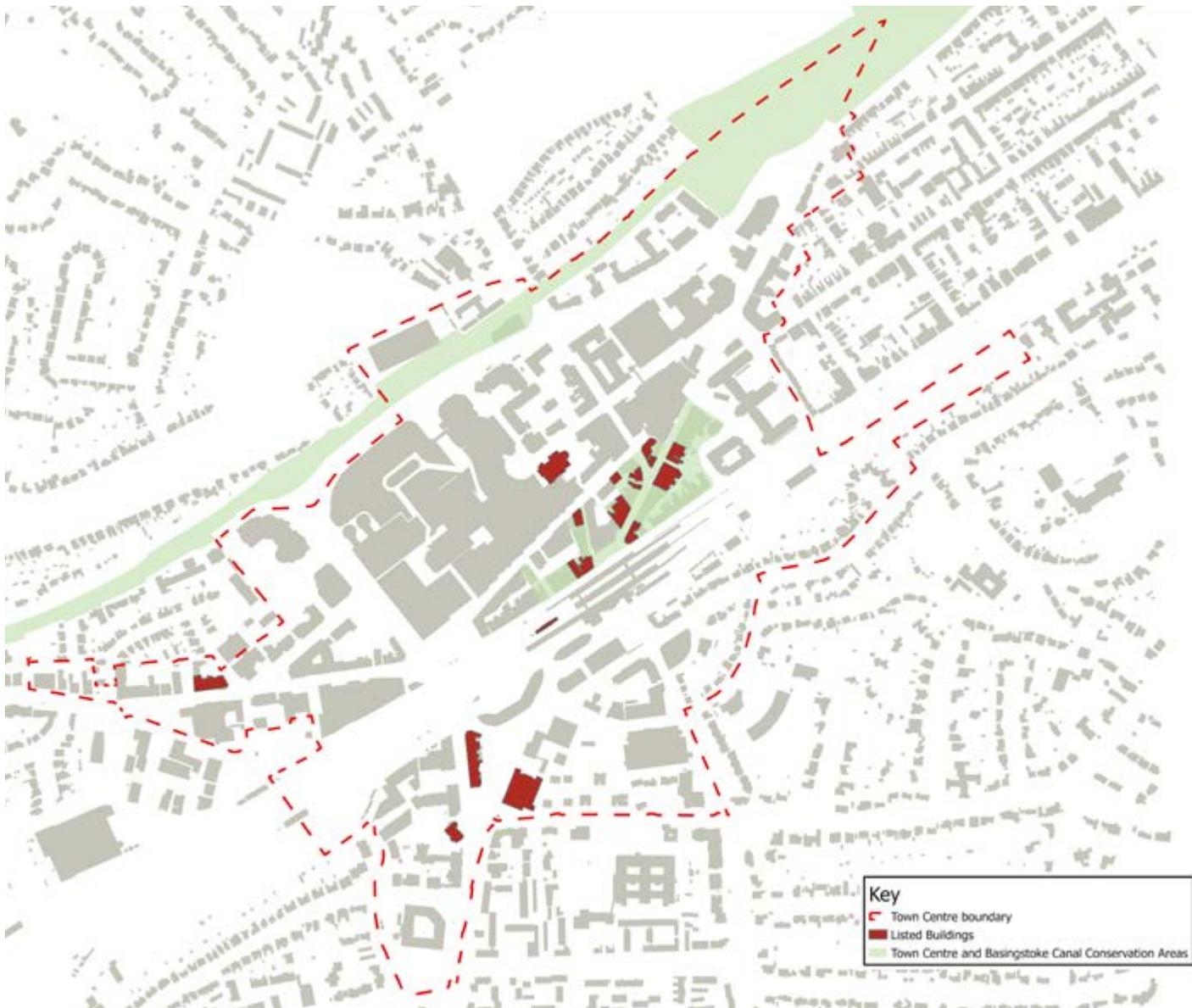


Fig 109 Woking Town Centre's Heritage Assets



16.1 Woking War Memorial

Woking War Memorial, situated at the centre of Jubilee Square is a Grade II statutory listed monument, unveiled in May 1922. It is listed for its special architectural or historical interest. It is an impressive and noteworthy memorial, comprising a sandstone column, above which is a bronze statue by sculptor Sir Francis William Doyle Jones, of a winged Victory holding a wreath of laurel leaves in her right hand and a palm branch in her left. The memorial originally commemorated the 552 members of Woking's community who lost their lives in the First World War, whose names are inscribed on the column. It was later inscribed with a carved wreath at the base of the column, dedicated to those who died in the Second World War.

The memorial was originally located at Victoria Gardens, locally known as Sparrow Park, at the junction of Commercial Way and High Street, where the public space in front of the Victoria Place is now. It was moved to its current location in Town Square (now Jubilee Square) in 1975. It holds 'group value' for its relationship with Christ Church, also Grade II listed, and has a strong visual connection with it.



16.2 Christ Church

Christ Church is a Grade II statutory listed building. It is located on the edge of Jubilee Square and opposite Wolsey Place shopping centre. It is a distinctive landmark building in this central location and is listed due to its special architectural or historical interest. It was designed by WF Unsworth in an austere Cistercian style and was first used for services on New Year's Day, 1889. It is built of typical red, Surrey brick, has a north and south chapel, circular and repeating curve-topped windows and green copper covered turrets and spires. The tallest spire rises over the south chapel and can be seen from Church Path.

Major enlargement and refurbishment took place in 1989-91 to create a café, offices and meeting space and while this changed the architecture of the Church as originally designed, it is considered to add positively to the building and does not detract from key elements of the church's architecture or design.

While the Church is an important place of worship, it also provides space for a variety of community events. It is therefore a heritage and wider community asset for the town.



16.3 Police Station

Formerly the Woking Grammar School, the Police Station is a standalone building constructed in 1914 and is locally listed. It exhibits Classical-inspired architecture and is situated in an elevated position, making it a distinctive landmark. It has always been in use as a public building, and therefore has civic value. In addition to the main building, there is an ornate entrance gate with an integrated lamp which forms part of the perimeter fencing.



16.4 Signal box

Built in the 1930s, the Signal box is situated in between platforms at Woking Railway Station. It is a good example of a Southern Region electro-mechanical Signal box in International modern style and is Grade II listed. It is representative of an era where interesting aesthetic design was integrated into infrastructure, and therefore serves as a pleasant reminder. It provides visual interest within the Station, as well as in the foreground of the emerging Town Centre skyline.



16.5 The Sovereigns Public House

The Sovereigns pub was originally built as the 'Railway Hotel' in 1840 to cater for the sudden influx in visitors to Woking Heath following the opening of the railway in 1838. It is one of the oldest remaining buildings in the town centre and is locally listed due to its architectural and historic significance. It sits at a prominent location at the top of Guildford Road, at the south-eastern edge of the centre



16.6 65-75 Goldsworth Road

This terrace of locally listed buildings is a rare survival of Victorian development within the Town Centre, outside of the historical core. It has some attractive architectural features and mostly retains its brick fascia and original windows; however, the ground floor shop fronts have undergone alterations, with some more sympathetic than others. The low-rise and fine-grained nature of this terrace is juxtaposed against larger modern development, which creates an incohesive townscape in this area of the Town Centre.



16.7 Basingstoke Canal

Basingstoke Canal runs from east to west across the Borough and town centre, and is a designated Conservation Area. The Canal was constructed in the late 1700s and was completed in 1794, connecting Basingstoke with the Wey Navigation at Woodham, with its links to the Thames. It was intended to boost agricultural trade in Hampshire, and barges provided an economical way of transporting coal and fertilisers from London, and corn, timber and other produce towards the capital.

The Canal was a precursor to the town's development and success, as important transport system in the construction of the railway, built in the 1830s and spurring the rapid development of Woking as a commercial centre in the latter half of the 1800s.

The Canal plays many roles. As well as its historical significance to Woking town centre and the Borough, the Canal is a multifunctional and designated urban open space. It acts as green corridor and is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, with a vital role for biodiversity. It is well used for recreation, including Canal boats, for quiet enjoyment of nature and is a key sustainable access route. This highlights a diversity of uses, that can conflict and need careful management.

17 Opportunities

16.8 Opportunities for improvement and protection

The Town Centre Conservation Area

- a) The location of the Conservation Area, as an arrival or gateway location into the town, provides opportunity to maximise, improvements to the Conservation area to ensure the station and surrounding area is welcoming, conveys a sense of place and helps people find their way in the town. There is currently a lack of signposting, maps and public information, which should be addressed. Signs or information boards should tell people about the history of Woking Town Centre, and be designed in a way that is sensitive to the context of the Conservation Area.
- b) There is sufficient information to enable development in the town centre to have regard to historic road layouts, and consider layouts, design and access that aids permeability and wayfinding through the town.
- c) The current unsympathetic shopfronts and signage are identified as elements that detract from the historic fabric and coherence of the area. This provides opportunities for new shopfronts that are designed to be sensitive to the historic character of the Conservation Area, adopting traditional design principles and restoring historical features.
- d) New or recent developments has often used materials such as cladding or different brick colours, or fenestrations that do not fit or respond positively to that prevailing in the Conservation Area. There is opportunity for new development to be sensitively designed, and seek to preserve and enhance historic features, overall character and the streetscene. The Council will work in partnership with developers to develop a materials palette, to help guide the design of new development in a way that is sympathetic to the historic character of the Conservation Area.
- e) There is scope to encourage and where necessary require restoration and improved maintenance to ensure buildings of historic and/or architectural significance are retained to a high quality that preserves and enhances the area. This particularly relates to windows and use of unsympathetic materials such as UPVC, and cleaning and restoration of brick and stonework.
- f) There is significant scope to manage additions such as satellite dishes and security cameras that makes buildings appear cluttered and degrade their appearance. Care will be taken to minimise the impact of these. Also, replacement guttering and chimneys should use materials that are sensitive to a building's historic character.
- g) Public realm and street scene were key opportunities for improvement and protection in the Conservation Area and more widely in the town centre. This would enhance the setting and appreciation of heritage assets. Key points highlighted included:



- A need for sensitive location and design of spaces used for car parking and refuse storage to ensure these integrate better in the street scene. This may include siting car parking and refuse storage where it is less obtrusive, and/or planting and greenery to soften or partially screen them. The Council will work with its partners to ensure effective and rational car parking provision across the town centre.
- More trees and planting on streets and in public spaces would help soften and green streets and spaces in a number of locations. This would improve the setting of heritage assets as well as the wider town centre environment.
- Greater provision of seating in particular locations e.g. Albion Square and to the north of Christ Church, to increase use of public spaces, allow them to function better as meeting places and enable greater public appreciation of heritage assets.
- Street furniture including bollards and lighting have been replaced in some parts of the Conservation Area e.g. Chertsey Road but do not reflect the historic character of the area. These improvements should pay regard to their historic setting to ensure better integration.
- The bus shelter on Broadway is dated, dark and unwelcoming, and negatively impacts this part of the Conservation Area. Upgrading is encouraged, and a new shelter should allow light to reach street level and incorporate planting to green the area by the railway.

There is also a need for better cycle paths and infrastructure, including a cycle hire scheme, with hubs in the town centre and in locations in surrounding areas. Potential for such a scheme should be explored.

Woking War Memorial

The War Memorial is maintained to a high standard as are its immediate surroundings on Jubilee Square. It should continue to be maintained and protected in a way that enables appreciation of it, including Remembrance events. Its wider setting, particularly the view towards the Memorial from the east is currently blocked by the town gates and could be opened up by a possible expansion of public space connecting to the east of Jubilee square and moving of the gates, as outlined under Christ Church's opportunities for improvement. New development in the town centre should pay regard to potential impact on setting and views towards this asset.

Christ Church

The Church is well maintained from the exterior, as are its immediate surroundings at the front the building. It is a prominent landmark in the vibrant Jubilee Square, which surrounding by predominantly modern buildings. Public awareness of the Church and War Memorial could be improved with an information board outlining their history, helping make a connection to the town's past which is currently missing.

A proposal has been permitted in 2020 that maximises the Church's ability to support the local community, through updating, refurbishing and making the space more flexible. The development primarily replaces additions made in 1989-91, and retains the most significant historic elements of the church. While contemporary in design, the proposed additions respond to the context and significance of the historic church through material and design. The proposal was considered not harm the Grade II heritage asset and to preserve and enhance its special historic interest.



Fig 110 Example or indicative plan showing a potential layout and improvements to public realm around Christchurch

Looking further at the setting of the Church, Jubilee Square and the area between the Church and Wolsey Place are very well used public spaces. This adds vitality and allows the public to appreciate the Church. It is noted that Jubilee Square can become very busy in good weather, with people sitting on steps and crowding the space. Seating is provided around Jubilee Square but it does not meet demand at peak times. There is an identified lack of public open space in the town centre, and the square very much takes on the role in providing for this need despite its limitations.

It is noted that the proposed extension of the Church increases its built footprint into public space currently used by pedestrians. While sufficient space is maintained to enable access past the Church, the loss in terms of amenity space and setting could in part be compensated for, as suggested above.

Views to the south and east of the Church are largely compromised by buildings, however the north side of the Church sits alongside a newly pedestrianised space on Church Street east. This currently acts as an access point for pedestrians into Jubilee Square and the heart of the town centre, but the space is very bare and does little to maximise appreciation or views of the Church or War Memorial. Better integration is suggested, both to enhance the immediate setting of the assets and expand the area of high quality, useable public space, extending it out eastward from Jubilee Square. An extended public space including planting, trees and seating could be added to form a pocket park or gardens connected to the Church and War Memorial. The re-location of the gates on the east side of Jubilee Square should be explored as part of this, to remove a barrier and enable an extended and well-contained public space for

the town. This is illustrated by (Fig 110).

It is noted that street lighting on Jubilee Square is tall and unattractive (as can be seen to the left of the photo on page 6), and opportunities should be taken to ensure these do not continue to detract from the asset. Any replacement lighting should be more sensitively designed with regard to the Church and War Memorial.

Police Station

The Police Station building itself is in good condition and still has historical architectural features. However, there has been little regard for the setting of this Locally Listed building. The main road acts a barrier to the front of the building, and some adjacent developments do not exhibit good material choices or architectural design in general.

With the demolition of buildings on the adjacent Triangle site, there is an opportunity to maximise the enjoyment of the asset through pedestrianisation and expansion of the public realm, which could increase the threshold and high quality public space to the front of the Police Station. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for new development on adjacent sites to be sympathetically designed to maximise views of this asset, which could increase appreciation of the building's beauty.

Signal Box

Despite no longer being in use, the Signal Box is in reasonable condition, with no evidence of unsympathetic alteration. However, it would benefit from renovation and cleaning to showcase its striking geometric features. Given its current position between the railway lines, there is limited scope to utilise this asset for anything more than visual interest. However,

an innovative proposal to repurpose could be supported, so long as it does not compromise safety or the operation of the railway itself.

Woking Railway Station is part of a Site Allocation and is identified as a site unlocked via HIF (Housing Infrastructure Fund). Any redevelopment of the Station must take the Signal Box into account, and therefore opportunities may arise to make a feature of this asset.

Sovereigns Public House

The Sovereigns building is in good condition and retains its historic architecture. It sits at an entry point to the town centre, and its setting shows the contrast between this locally listed building and newer development in the town centre, which dwarf the pub. Sympathetic design of buildings at the Triangle Site and on other nearby sites should enhance the value, view and setting of this asset.

The road acts as a barrier, and traffic, congestion and the location of the pedestrian crossing directly in front of the pub means noise and air pollution impacts the pub's outdoor seating areas. Improved public realm and traffic calming could help mitigate these environmental issues and should be considered as part of planned highways improvements.

65-75 Goldsworth Road

This asset retains much of its historical interest and contributes to the interest of the townscape as it is, despite some incoherent ground floor frontages. Opportunities for improvement lie within the Development Management process, where applications for new shopfronts could arise. Any proposed development should consider opportunities for new shopfronts that are designed in a way

that is sensitive to the historic character of the buildings, adopting traditional design principles and restoring historical features.

Public realm improvements would also benefit the setting of this terrace, especially where it would increase the threshold for ground floor spill-out activities.

Further benefits will also arise from adjacent developments, which should be encouraged to take design cues from this asset and be designed in a way that complements its low-rise nature, integrating it into a more coherent townscape.

Basingstoke Canal

The town centre stretch of the Canal, and the stretches either side of the town centre, are busy sections for both pedestrians and cyclists. The Canal provides a linear public open space and a green corridor with clear health and well-being benefits for residents. Major improvements were made to Canal in 2018-19, with Woking Wharf being created as a joint initiative between Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council, with a contribution from the Basingstoke Canal Society.



Fig 111 Sovereigns Public House from the south

The Wharf creates an attractive open area for people to enjoy the canal side, a focal base for Woking trip boat 'Kitty' and includes an information board describing the Canal's history. Since its opening a mooring was permitted for a Canal Boat Café with customer seating on the wharf, which was considered to preserve the character of the Conservation Area while adding an element of vitality to the Canalside.

Woking Wharf provides outdoor space for activity by and on the Canal, and opportunities should be taken to support and enhance recreational enjoyment of the Canal. This may include further small scale café and retail uses, and water related activities, in a way that is controlled, managed and sensitive to nature and historic conservation, and the variety of users of the Canal.

In addition to the Wharf, new pedestrian and cycle friendly bridge at the Chobham Road crossing was opened in October 2020, to create an uninterrupted link between the towpaths on either side of the road and Canal, including ramps and bat-friendly lighting. The works took place as part of wider town centre improvements and was part funded by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Enterprise M3. While it provides greatly improved access, the bridge's design and street furniture is contemporary, fitting the context of the Lightbox that is situated by but making little reference to the historic context of the Canal. Further to these improvements, greater wayfinding links should be made to the Canal from within the town centre, with signage to help people find their way to it and from it.

Despite these major improvements to the Canal and its towpath, including an information board at Woking Wharf, little built fabric is left to point public awareness to the Canal's history or significance to the town. While it may be accepted that this not be physically retrieved, it should be considered in terms of historical referencing and further information provision in future enhancements or development.

As mentioned, the Canal is vital in providing green, linear public open space and access to residents. The Council is working with its partners at Surrey County Council and the Basingstoke Canal Society to ensure that increased use of the Canal, as a result of development and a growing town centre population, is mitigated and does not negatively impact the Canal's environment, amenity or value.



Fig 112 Kiwi and Scot towpath seating

18 Constraints

When referring to constraints surrounding heritage assets, these consist of threats that could potentially degrade the historic integrity of heritage assets. Generally, the threats associated with heritage assets in the Town Centre relate to development pressures and ongoing changes to the assets themselves.

- Post war, the Town Centre has generally developed in a way that has not given great consideration to heritage assets, and much development is unsympathetic to it. With the Town Centre undergoing significant change, the settings of heritage assets continue to be affected. This can result in a townscape where historical buildings are competing with new development, particularly in the case where tall buildings are built in close proximity, resulting in overbearing and overshadowing.
- The Town Centre's heritage assets have rich architectural merit and landmark value; however, this can be undermined by poor quality design of modern development nearby, and more widely, through the prevailing style of modern buildings across the Town Centre. In addition to this, development and infrastructure pressures have led to the loss of heritage assets, which continues to be an issue
- Direct changes to heritage assets, whether natural or man-made, can result in the degradation of historical fabric. Poor maintenance leads to direct damage, and this is evident at a number of historic buildings in the Town Centre Conservation Area. This lack of maintenance is attributed to a number of causes, including owner neglect, lack of knowledge and consideration for historic building, as well as lack of funding to carry out sympathetic repairs. Changes of use can also have negative impacts, particularly where these vastly differ from what a building was originally designed to accommodate, as this could result in changes to internal layouts, poor quality extensions and addition of utilities infrastructure.
- The Climate Crisis also has the potential to affect heritage assets. Many historical buildings are not energy efficient and need retrofitting. The mitigation measures may be unsuitable for historical buildings, as these may need to replace historic fabric, for example, windows. Furthermore, other mitigation measure such as solar panels are often functional and conspicuous in appearance, which could detract from the historical character of a building. To help address this issue, Historic England has published a suite of guidance relating to climate change and historic buildings, including guidance on how to improve energy efficiency.

19 The Masterplan

- The Masterplan will seek to ensure that heritage assets in the Town Centre are protected from harmful development, and retained and enhanced where possible. Furthermore, it will seek to ensure that these assets are celebrated and recognised as useful tools for place-making, and are used to increase public awareness and education. Opportunities for improvement and protection for each heritage asset are outlined in detail in section 2.b.
- The Development Management process will be used as the basis to assess impacts of development on heritage assets, including pre-application discussions, consultation and Design Review to make sure that development proposals are in accordance with the requirements of the Masterplan and the Development Plan policies for the area. Though, there are additional ways in which the Council could address constraints and pursue opportunities for heritage assets in the Town Centre, as highlighted below.
- The Council will carefully monitor development impacts on heritage assets and if necessary, will explore the likelihood of producing further guidance, such as Design Codes, to provide more detailed guidance for development proposals. It may also wish to explore the introduction of Article 4 directions to obtain more control over permitted development, which can be harmful to heritage assets, particularly in the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- The emerging Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal is an evidence base study that has informed the preparation of the Masterplan. It outlines the special features of the historical core of the Town Centre, and in conjunction with the Masterplan should be used as a tool to inform the design of proposed development adjacent and in the wider Town Centre area. This can be used by developers to inform design elements of proposals such as materials, scale and architectural detailing. In addition, the review of the Council's Local List of non-designated heritage assets will provide detailed information on each entry on the List, including their significance and features, which is useful for informing development proposals and decisions.
- Opportunities for enhancements to heritage assets will be sought through development proposals, both on adjacent sites and proposals for assets themselves. This may include improvements to public realm and views, as well as repair works to restore historical features. Detail of opportunities for each heritage asset are identified in this section and alongside adopted planning policy, outlines what the Council expects from development affecting these assets.
- Outside of the Planning Process, the Council will seek to fulfil opportunities when funding becomes available and would seek funding through organisations such as Historic England. In particular, funding through Historic England's Heritage Action Zones initiative could be a valuable source of funding to improve the Town Centre Conservation Area if this becomes available.

- The Council will utilise heritage assets as educational resources through various means. This could include the installation of information boards outside of key assets to explain their history and could form part of a wider signage strategy for the Town Centre. Heritage Open Days are also a meaningful way in which the public can engage with the history of a place and is an event that has come to Woking in the past. In the future, the Council would explore opportunities to expand the offer of sites to visit when the event runs.
- The Council may directly issue guidance to owners and occupiers of heritage assets in order to protect them from harmful development, which could be in the form of information leaflets or advice on a Council webpage.



ECONOMY

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20 Objectives

The Economy objectives for the Town Centre are as follows:

- **To ensure a balanced town centre in terms of residential, commercial, culture, green spaces, and leisure plus the addition of health and other public sector services;**
- **To have a Town Centre that is attractive to the eye, well maintained, spacious and easily navigated;**
- **To have a vibrant Town Centre that continue to enhance the commercial and natural environment;**
- **To have a dynamic Town Centre where people want to live, work and visit;**
- **To create a Town centre environment that is conducive for inward investment;**
- **To have a Town Centre that is agile to respond and adapt to changing economic circumstances.**

21 Overview

The Core Strategy identifies the Town Centre as the primary focus for sustainable economic growth and as an economic hub with a flourishing, diverse and innovative economy. Like many Town Centres, its vitality was affected by the Pandemic.

As the UK emerges from the economic shock of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the underlying economic strength of Woking Town Centre remains fundamentally positive. Building on the Woking Borough economic indicators highlighted within the Economic Development Action Plan published in September 2021, this section adds supplementary qualitative narrative focused on the multiple facets of Woking Town Centre's economy. It helps to paint a picture of the opportunities and challenges that developers should consider when developing their proposals for planning consent.

Economic and social challenges will continue across multiple areas of Woking's economy, including adapting to hybrid working practices for the town's office occupiers, maintaining the town's retail core, keeping Woking as a primary shopping and leisure destination, strengthening the town's evening economy and reacting to the emerging short-medium term consumer cost of living pressures and still fragile consumer confidence. These challenges clearly articulate the strengths of Woking Town Centre.



Fig 113 Goldsworth Place refurbished office



21.1 Economic context

The economic context should be seen against a background of growing economic challenges. Prior to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the UK economy was forecast by the Office for Budget responsibility (OBR) to reach pre-pandemic levels in the early part of 2022 with a healthy rebound of 6.5% growth in 2021 followed by a similar level of growth forecast in 2022. However, the latest OBR report has revised this optimistic forecast as it predicts that higher inflation will erode real incomes and consumption, cutting GDP growth this year from 6.0 per cent in the October forecast to 3.8 per cent in 2022. With inflation outpacing growth in earnings and net taxes due to rise, real living standards are set to fall. Relatively high inflation together with supply chain disruption, rising wages, tax increases and rising global energy costs will be the main contributory factors. The resultant squeeze on household incomes is likely to affect the retail and leisure sectors, a key part of Woking's economy. The Masterplan responds to these challenges.

21.2 Post pandemic resilience

Woking has several attributes which help to make it relatively resilient in the face of adverse economic circumstances. Woking was recently dubbed "Wondrous Woking" when it came top of the UK Vitality Index in 2021, not only scoring highly on the dynamism of its economy, wage growth and commercial investment, but also scoring particularly strongly on health and environment. Woking also scored well on the internationally recognised Legatum Institute, 2021 UK Prosperity Index and was placed 4th out of 379 local authority areas vs. 5th in 2020 and 13th in 2011.

Woking has a strong and vibrant economy with a strength in new business creation as well as in innovative, technology-intensive and knowledge-based industries which tend to do better in an economic downturn. Leading companies in high value sectors choose to locate in Woking due to its excellent connections, highly skilled workforce, range of affordable premises and quality of life.

Woking has a distinct advantage in the size of its technology sector, which is a key strength of Woking's economy, comprising about 850 businesses or 16% of all businesses in the Borough in 2020.

The IT sector is heavily concentrated in the town centre where it makes up 17.34% of the businesses compared to 13.64% in outer Woking. The technology sector is crucial for the future development of high-value jobs in the Woking knowledge economy as it underpins and anchors technology-intensive businesses in other sectors which are clustering in Woking.

Woking's investment in the digital infrastructure and its Digital Strategy will therefore be a critical factor in sustaining future growth. Woking's highly skilled workforce is also an important factor which should increase resilience to the economic challenges ahead.

Woking's continually evolving and improving town centre stands to benefit from ongoing changes in shopping behaviour. Following a boom during lockdown, online shopping has fallen back from more than a third to just over a quarter of all purchases and there is evidence that people who are planning to spend more in physical locations intend to do that in their local town centres rather than city centres and retail parks. The forward-looking development of Woking town centre including not only modern retail but a range of state-of-the-art office and commercial premises, housing, leisure, a new restaurant quarter, and first-class digital infrastructure will all help to secure Woking town centre's future prosperity. The opening of Victoria Place on 23rd March 2022 with many new key brands and trading formats, together with significant housing units will send a clear message of the intentions for the Town Centre as an expanding retail destination and a place to live, socialise and work.

Woking is multicultural and significantly more diverse than nearby towns. This diversity is longstanding and brings vitality to the area.



Fig 114 Victoria Place Hilton Hotel and Car Park



Fig 115 Victoria Place Atrium

21.3 Grassroots community ventures

Woking also has one of the oldest Muslim communities in the UK. The Shah Jahan Mosque dates to 1895, the first purpose-built Mosque to be built in the UK and Northern Europe and played an instrumental role in bringing Islam to Great Britain through the associated Woking Mission.

This long history of multiculturalism means that Woking has a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, able to absorb different cultures successfully. Community led organisations such as the Woking Asian Business Forum and faith-based associations, including Woking People of Faith, aim to further the links between cultures through events, fundraising and membership.

Woking has a thriving community and voluntary sector, and the town centre is the location of several charities including household names such as Plan International which supports children and particularly girls worldwide and the World Wildlife Fund. Other examples include organisations such as the Community Foundation for Surrey, the Phoenix Cultural and Community Centre, the Lighthouse and the York Road Project for the homeless.

Small and independent businesses

Woking has an entrepreneurial economy with high rates of business creation. In 2020, 775 new businesses were registered in Woking, a rate of 127 per 10,000 working age population, compared to a rate of 98 new businesses per working age population in Surrey as a whole. Woking's ethnically diverse and relatively young population is likely to be a contributory factor.



Fig 116 The Lighthouse

21.4 Role of the Economic Development Action Plan

The Economic Development Action Plan for Woking's recovery is a post-pandemic, interim plan from the period covered by the current Economic Development Strategy (2017 – 2022) to the time when the new Economic Development Strategy is developed and published. The requirements of the new strategy should be taken into account when it is published.

The Economic Development Action Plan for Woking's recovery sets out five main priorities to navigate this period of uncertainty and change:

- Priority 1: Focus on business: enabling greater growth and productivity
- Priority 2: Build on our people and skills advantages: supporting our people's skills and employability, so they can make the most of economic opportunities
- Priority 3: Future proofing our Borough's town and village centres: making sure our town and village commercial centres and high streets are resilient and flexible to maintain our competitive advantages
- Priority 4: Woking the place to be: continuing to attract investment and deliver transformation, including digitally connected Woking, green and healthy Woking
- Priority 5: Destination Woking: developing Woking's identity, cultural and leisure offer and its desirability as a location for businesses and people
- The EDAP brings together and reflects the following:
 - The aims and relevant actions in the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022, the Core Strategy,
 - The Framework for Recovery, and the new 2021-2022 Corporate Plan.
 - The emerging direction of the Woking for all Strategy 2022-2027,
 - Woking Town Centre Masterplan and Digital Strategy currently in development.
 - The results of analysis of the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The EDAP contains an action plan which has been recently updated and which is reported on regularly to ensure that progress remains on course.



21.5 Office for National Statistics

The ONS contains a lot of data about the economy, and the following are drawn out to provide an overview of the current economic profile for the Town Centre. According to the ONS, the Borough of Woking had 5,465 businesses in 2021, of which 865 (just under 16%) were in the town centre using the best fit Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) for the town centre area. Professional, Scientific & Technical businesses along with Information & Communication, Business Administration, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Property tend to be more concentrated in the town centre, measured as a percentage of the business population, while Construction, Retail and Manufacturing make up a greater percentage of enterprises in Outer Woking.

The smaller concentration of retail as a percentage of all businesses in the town centre is accounted for by the fact that these businesses tend to be larger and there are therefore fewer businesses and that the ONS enterprise data do not include branches of chains whose head offices are located elsewhere.

Using units' analysis, the Woking Borough business population comprised 6,195 total units (i.e., including branches) in 2021 which 1,180 or 23.5% were in the town centre. Using this measure of units or outlets, Woking town centre still has proportionately fewer retail businesses than outer Woking although the difference is significantly smaller than on the enterprise's metric.

Woking attracts larger businesses including headquarters and major corporates due to its locational and skills advantages, availability of good quality accommodation and excellent connections.

The town centre is the chosen location for FE Fund Info, providing data to the investment and financial services industry with a turnover of over £64m together with its Woking-based subsidiary, FE Investment.

The town centre is the location of a thriving Arts, Leisure and Entertainment sector, as shown in the graph below, including a cluster of theatre companies, notably the Ambassadors Theatre Group as well as well as companies in the performing arts supply chain, such as Bloch UK, suppliers of dancewear.

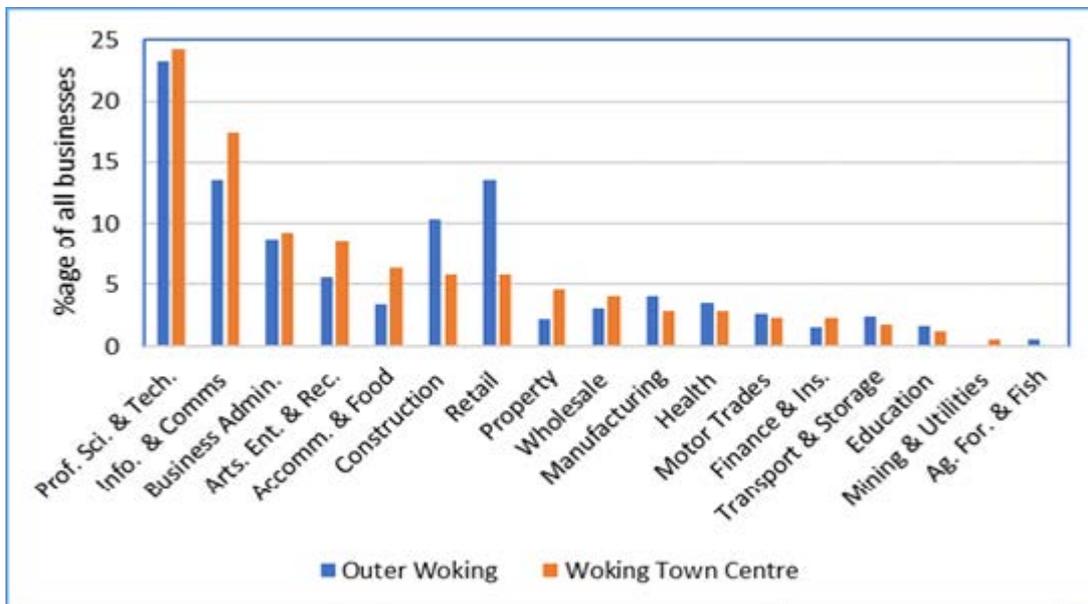


Fig 117 Percentage of total business population by sector .Source: ONS UK Business Counts MSOA analysis (enterprises).

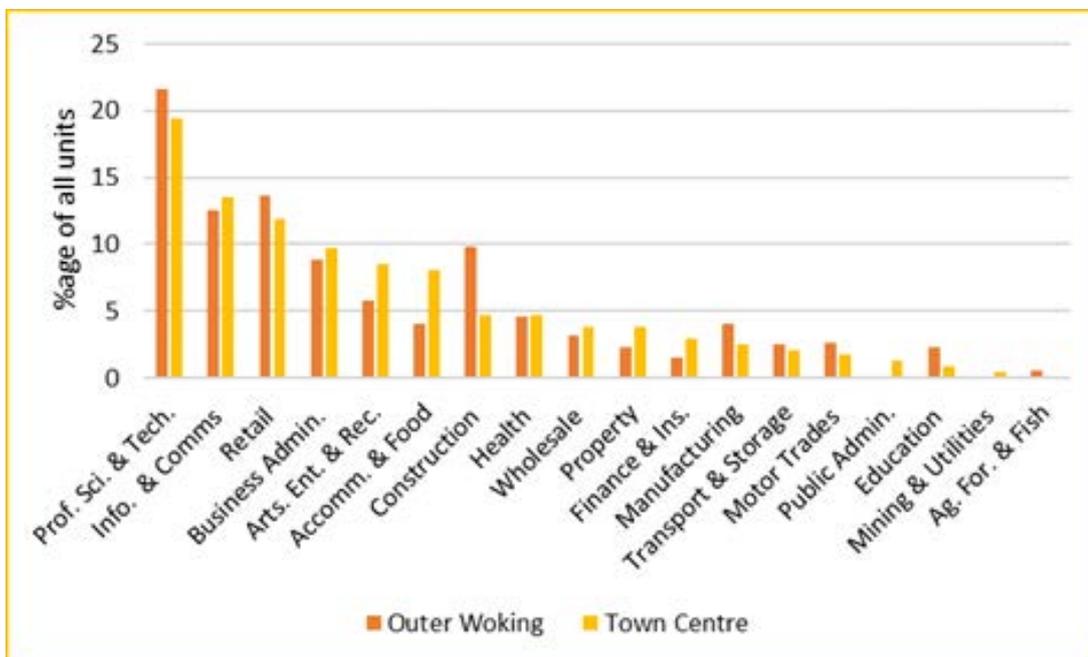


Fig 118 Percentage of total business population by sector in Outer Woking and Woking Town Centre 2021. Source: ONS UK Business Counts MSOA analysis (enterprises)

21.6 Employment

There was a total of 45,935 jobs in Woking in 2020 (latest data available) of which 14,755 or 32.1% were in the town centre. IT jobs (Information and Communication) and the Professional, Scientific & Technical sector make up the largest percentage of town centre employment with approximately 2,500 jobs each and nearly 17% of employment in each sector.

Together they account for 34% or over a third of all jobs, illustrating Woking's highly knowledge-based and technology-intensive economy which is concentrated in the town centre.

As well as Information & Communication and Professional, Scientific & Technical jobs, the town centre has a greater percentage of Accommodation and Food as well as slightly more Business Administration jobs than outer Woking.

Impact of the pandemic on town centre employment

There were large sectoral differences and some sectors gained employment while others lost. Notably, the town centre gained 200 construction jobs, 100 wholesale jobs and 50 transport jobs while outer Woking gained 650 retail jobs as people shopped locally. The hardest hit sectors in terms of numbers of jobs lost in the town centre were Professional, Scientific & Technical, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Business Administration.



Fig 119 Recently refurbished McLaren office

21.7 Business in Woking Town Centre

There are two sources of data in this section comprising the official ONS statistics from UK Business Counts and our recent census of businesses in the town centre. These arrive at different numerical values as the geographies covered are not comparable. Our business census used the area contained by the Red Line on the map in the Core Strategy while the ONS statistics refer to the best fit Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) for the town centre. Although the areas covered and numbers are different, the conclusions are similar; Woking is a highly knowledge and technology intensive town centre.

Predominantly, the businesses are knowledge economy and professional services (including legal and financial). These offices provide many jobs and often function as UK or regional headquarters.

The spaces the businesses occupy vary, depending on the size of their businesses with smaller businesses using the flexible co-working spaces or smaller office units within the mixed tenant buildings. The larger business (i.e., larger small, medium, and larger enterprises) either occupy their own dedicated space such as Asahi or take significant space within the larger mixed tenant buildings such as Fidessa at Dukes Court.

The last few years have seen landlords refurbish and upgrade the office stock which has seen several new town centre office occupiers.



Fig 120 Dukes Court Offices in background with Deli in front



Fig 121 Office based business brands in Woking

Retail

According to ONS, retail sales rose by 1.9% in January 2022, the latest statistics available) following a fall of 4.0% in December 2021 and sales volumes were 3.6% above their pre-coronavirus February 2020 levels. Non-food sales volumes rose by 3.4% in January 2022, particularly home improvement sales. However, clothing stores reported a fall of 5.0% over the month and were 12.6% below levels in February 2020.

As restrictions continued to be lifted, the proportion of retail sales online fell to 25.3% in January 2022, continuing a broad downward trend since its peak of 36.5% in February 2021 although the percentage of online sales remained higher than before the coronavirus pandemic (19.8% in February 2020). The greatest adoption of online has been for clothing, homewares, food, and electricals. Customer journeys that typically involve higher

value items and more consideration (such as furniture and high-end jewellery) have seen a greater proportion of shoppers revert to pre-pandemic behaviour.

Nevertheless, it appears that increased working from home is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and the evidence suggests that those intending to spend more in physical locations now that restrictions have been lifted, expect to do that locally with local high streets and town centres being the main beneficiaries, rather than city centres and retail parks. As fuel prices continue to rise and the squeeze on household incomes continues, Woking is well placed to capitalise on providing an accessible local shopping experience in one place with a good mix of goods on offer.

Woking's retail offer

Woking has over 80,000 sqm of retail floorspace, the second largest shopping centre in Surrey after Guildford. The landmark Victoria Place development provides over 429 new flats, a new hotel, mixed use space and car parking, a range of restaurants, financial and other services as well as extensive shopping.

A recent report for Woking Council by CACI concluded that the current retail offer in Woking is relatively well balanced with the level of supply matching the level of demand. Within this, the report indicated some room for growth in the grocery where space could be increased by 46% in the town and catering sectors, particularly fast dining where space could increase by 27% potentially, but not in non-food retail and leisure provision where current supply is judged to equal demand.

The report also highlighted that consumers are reconnecting with their local areas but that the demographic profile of consumers needs to be reflected in the offer and the brands available locally. It suggests Woking can capitalise on the increased desire to shop locally while allowing other destinations to fill full day out shopping experiences.

According to the CACI research, the catchment area for Woking town centre is relatively affluent and has annual household expenditure on comparison goods which is 24% above the UK household average and 18% above the UK average for all retail. Wealthy Woking residents are likely to show the highest propensity to spend on non-essential or personal goods. Residential spend in Woking is forecast to increase by 33% over the next 5 years.

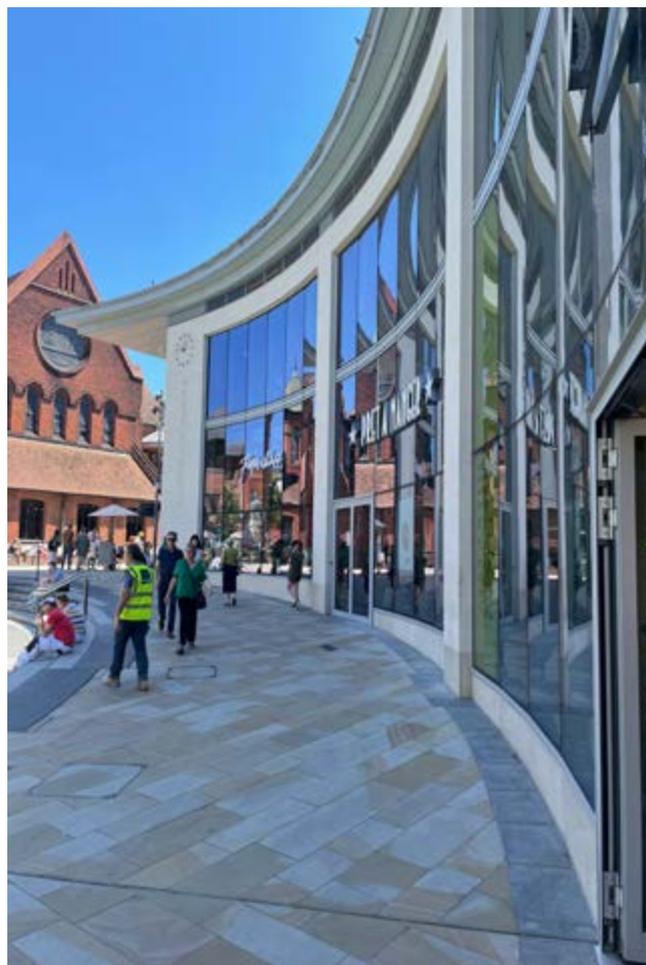


Fig 122 Wolsley Place extension with Paperchase, Pret a Manger and JD Sports

According to our recent census of town centre businesses, there are 183 'pavement facing' businesses in the town centre, excluding hospitality and take-away outlets. These businesses range from retail through to beauty and other services. These are predominantly located within the main shopping centres (Victoria Place) with a spread of convenience stores and other services around the office and residential blocks. There are also about 104 retail units that sell goods to the public.

Woking town centre has a comprehensive café and restaurant offer with a strong food and beverage presence of around 80 establishments including 25 casual and fine dining establishments, 30 fast food and take-aways, 16 café and coffee shops and 8 pubs and bars.

These range from higher end to popular outlets belonging to major chains. A few examples include: Gordan Ramsay's Street Burger, Côte Brasserie, Bellini Luciano's by Marco Pierre White.

There are pubs and bars in the town centre which also offer food. The restaurants, pubs, and bars, together with a range of fast-food outlets, coffee shops and cafés, tend to be clustered in and around the shopping centre and along Commercial Way and Chertsey Road. Together, they offer a remarkably wide choice within a relatively small central area.

The main dining and higher end offers are found close to the shopping centre, galleries, theatre, and town centre workers. Chertsey Road is the other significant food and drink area with a mix of take-aways, dining and pubs which caters for both the weekday lunchtime market and the weekend and late-night market. Goldsworthy Road also has several food and beverage outlets which is close again to both office buildings and residential.

Given the extensive and accessible town centre food and drink offer, there is the need to work in partnership to expand the evening economy, particularly during the working week. The provision of housing as an essential mix of town centre use will help increase footfall across the Town Centre. Ways of encouraging the evening economy will be a priority to retain and grow this diverse food and drink cluster, a key part of the town centre's offer.



Fig 123 Chertsey Road: Nando's with seating area

Café and restaurant culture:

Woking town centre has a comprehensive café and restaurant offer with a strong food and drink presence of around 80 establishments, including 25 casual and fine dining establishments, 30 fast food and take-aways, 16 cafés and coffee shops, and 8 pubs and bars.

The main dining and higher end offers are found close to the shopping centre, theatres and cinema. These range from higher end names to popular outlets belonging to major chains. A few examples include Gordon Ramsay's Street Burger, Côte Brasserie and Luciano's by Luciano Marco Pierre White. There are also a number of successful independent restaurants such as Jeitta, Araceli's, Beit Beirut and Latino.

There are pubs and bars in the town centre which also offer food, including Marciano Lounge and Slug & Lettuce. The restaurants, pubs, and bars, together with a range of fast-food outlets, coffee shops and cafés, tend to be clustered in and around the shopping centre, along Commercial Way and Chertsey Road. The latter has a mix of restaurants, take-aways, and pubs, which caters for both the weekday lunchtime market and the weekend and late-night market. Together, they offer a remarkably wide choice within a relatively small central area.

Goldsworth Road, in the western part of the town centre also has several food and beverage outlets which is close to both office buildings and residential.

Given the extensive and accessible town centre food and drink offer, there is the need to work in partnership to expand the evening economy, particularly during the working week. The provision of housing as an essential mix of the

use in the town centre will help increase footfall. Ways of encouraging the evening economy will be a priority to retain and grow this diverse food and drink cluster, a key part of the town centre's offer.



Fig 124 Luciano's



Fig 125 Commercial Way: Bacaro



Night-time economy

Night-time economy in towns and cities has suffered more proportionally, than the daytime economy throughout the pandemic. COVID-19 caused a 6% shift in footfall away from the night-time economy and towards the daytime economy. Nationally, the night-time economy has been slow to recover and that remains true in Woking town centre where footfall in the night-time is low, despite the varied eating out offer. Initiatives aimed at providing public reassurance around the night-time economy such as the Home Office supported 'Best Bar None' accreditation scheme, or the international 'Purple Flag' scheme should again be considered as measures to specifically support Woking's night-time economy.

Night-time activities have the potential to increase economic activity within town centres and provide additional employment opportunities. They can allow town centres to diversify and help develop their unique brand and offer services beyond retail. In fostering such activities, local authorities will also need to consider and address any wider impacts in relation to crime, noise, and security.

Unique place offer

As well as a rich and varied food and drink offer, Woking town centre contains extensive modern retail facilities including the Peacock Centre as well as hotels, leisure facilities, including the Light Box, the New Victoria and Ambassadors theatres, gyms and a bowling alley and the landmark World Wildlife Centre. The town centre is also an important source of employment and centrally located for sustainable housing provision. Parking is available at the Victoria Way, the shopping centre, the station, and several other locations providing a

total of 5,526 town centre parking spaces. All is within easy reach, on one level, accessible and contained within a relatively small area. These opportunities have to be promoted and marketed to maximise the benefits as highlighted in the Masterplan.

Excellent transport connections to London in just under half an hour by rail means that Woking has the potential to provide a base for visitors offering reasonably priced accommodation from which visitors can explore not only London but also nearby attractions such as RHS Wisley, the top visitor attraction in the South East in 2020 and the 3rd most visited paid attraction nationally, as well as the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Legoland and Thorpe Park which are all a short distance from the town. Woking's status as a cycle town provides a connection with the growing popularity of the Surrey Hills as a top destination for mountain and road cycling.

Woking currently has a low profile on the Visit Southeast England and other tourist destination sites but can offer reasonably priced accommodation, particularly as accommodation prices including AirBnB in central London are becoming out of reach for many families.

In addition to Woking Town Centre's very good and varied food and drink experience and its quick access to London there are other visitor attractions nearby.

Examples include:

The Lightbox

The Lightbox gallery and museum in Woking is one of the foremost cultural spaces in the Southeast. Its three large galleries host a huge range of exhibitions which change regularly. The Lightbox has received several awards, including a

commendation for the Beautiful South Tourism Award, being Shortlisted for the Fantastic for Families Awards in 2019 and gaining Silver in the 2016 Visit England Green Tourism Award. The Lightbox was designed in 2007 by Marks Barfield architects who also built the London Eye.

New Victoria Theatre/ Buzz/ Rhoda McGraw:

There are three theatres in Woking. Outside London, New Victoria Theatre in Woking is one of the largest theatres in the country attracting many West End shows. It includes the Rhoda McGraw Theatre.

Woking Borough Council also transformed some unused space in Victoria Place to a 50-seat theatre to be used by Italia Conti and other production houses.

Nova Cinema

The is a 7-screen cinema venue with top of the range technology. Nova Cinema provides an opportunity for local people to influence which films are to be screened.



Fig 126 Theatre and cinema

Public Art

Born in Woking in 1965 Sean Henry has created several sculptures in the town centre adding to the cultural heritage of Woking, including four painted bronze sculptures in the town centre: “Woman, Being Looked At” 2006, in the Peacocks Centre, “Standing Man” 2010 in Jubilee Place, “Seated Man” 2011 at Woking Station, Platform 1, and “The Wanderer” 2012 in Woking High Street.

H.G. Wells is also commemorated in Wells Plaza, just off Victoria Way and Chobham Road hosts “The Thinking Man” sculpture, produced by Wesley Harland as well as The Martian, standing 23 feet (seven meters) tall. Sculptures of Dame Ethel Smythe and Ade Adepitan are also featured.

Italia Conti Dance Academy

Italia Conti will move to Woking in September 2022. The new site will be 48,000 sqft over 2 floors. Over 280 students and 100 staff will be moving in September 2022.

Christchurch and Welcome Church:

The Town Centre is represented by two places of Worship, the Anglican Christchurch which dates to the 1870s and the Evangelical Welcome Church.

Leisure facilities

Woking Superbowl is relocating to Victoria Place where the complex will include will have a bowling alley, Laser Quest, pool tables, party rooms, bar, and diner.

The Gordon Ramsey Academy offers guests of all ages and all levels of cooking ability the chance to take cookery classes. The Academy has multiple kitchens and a large demonstration room.

Gyms - The town centre has 3 gym providers which are based close to other commercial and residential buildings. New provider, The Gym Group, will be opening in Summer 2022 in Victoria Place.



Fig 127 Dame Ethel Smythe statue



Fig 128 Welcome Church

Hotels, B&Bs and Guesthouses

Woking currently has a low profile on the Visit Southeast England and other tourist destination websites but can offer reasonably priced accommodation, particularly as accommodation prices in central London are becoming out of reach for many.

The town centre currently has three hotels. The new Hilton is set to open in early 2023 and will bring the number of hotel rooms to 574. Aside from the centrally located Hilton, these are found around the edges of the main commercial areas, close to car parks and travel connections as well as the town centre amenities.

Of these, the DoubleTree by Hilton and the new Hilton have conference and event facilities alongside their restaurant and bar offers. In addition, there are smaller independent bed and breakfasts and short term lets to meet the need of business and leisure travellers.



Fig 129 Hilton DoubleTree Hotel

Offices and Mixed-use development

Mixed-use development can help to make office space which would otherwise be unviable a commercially attractive proposition through cross subsidisation by, for example, including residential space in the mix. The overall project can therefore become viable through providing a complementary range of uses. Working currently has reasonably high occupancy levels of retail and office accommodation, particularly compared to current national occupancy levels. The Site Allocations DPD allocates a range of sites to meet future business needs.

To attract and retain tenants, new developments need to be aesthetically pleasing but they also need to provide mixed use schemes with a broad variety of uses to encourage tenants and increase visitor footfall. Technology means that consumers have more power to choose where they shop and work, and it is increasingly easy to order food at home. The commercial property market is becoming harder for landlords as a result and mixed use that offers a range of experiences and opportunities is the answer. If they are designed well, mixed use schemes can provide living, working, shopping, leisure, cultural and other experiences in a visually pleasing and attractive environment.

The key to the survival of today's shopping centres will be to transform and enable imaginative mixed use development offering lifestyle destinations. These will help attract footfall and visitor expenditure but also create living and working communities that keep the area alive in the evenings and at weekends. Landlords need to understand the local community's needs and take a strategic approach to meeting them. The right blend of mixed use, combining retail, residential, leisure and workplace can increase property values

and stimulate increase investment as well as developing the economy of the local area.

Size requirements for commercial space and office occupancy models

With the shift to more home and hybrid working, demand for large HQs and offices is likely to stabilise. Savills' reports point to an occupancy rate of just 25% for offices nationally and, while they expect that demand for offices will rise in 2022, they do not expect that it will return to pre-Covid-19 levels.

To a degree, this fall in need might be compensated for by rising headcount and space per capita, but nevertheless, less desirable offices in less accessible locations will become even harder to let. Added to this is the significant challenge related to decarbonising the built environment. Savills estimates that nearly 2.5 billion square feet of retail and office space needs upgrading over the next decade, and the market alone cannot be relied upon to drive the necessary change.



Fig 130 The Forge: Recently refurbished office

Carter Jonas reports that the flexible space market or serviced office sector is experiencing a growth in demand from companies seeking to accommodate hybrid working while they assess their long-term real estate requirements. This has encouraged co-working firms to take more space.

The report also concludes that office occupiers want to provide outstanding environments for their employees that underpin the return to the office and support staff retention, recruitment, wellness, and collaboration. They also require high energy efficiency and a low carbon footprint to meet increasingly ambitious targets and to demonstrate their environmental credentials. As a result, footloose office tenants are focusing their property searches on energy-efficient, low carbon footprint, grade A space, a trend that will only intensify in 2022.

Woking has continued to attract inward investment and support business growth by providing a range of commercial premises at competitive prices including, in addition to retail, town centre offices, business parks such as Genesis, Orchard and Woking Business Park and warehousing stock. While premises such as Space provide a state-of-the-art office working environment with showers, roof terrace, electric charging points etc. and command premium rents of circa £38 per sq. ft., much of Woking's stock needs upgrading to meet modern business needs, particularly in the light of new environmental regulations and the drive to net zero carbon.

There is a need to establish how Woking can provide different types of office space to accommodate new occupiers that do not align with the traditional occupancy model, such as those seeking flexible office space and incubators for emerging businesses.

Provision of flexible office space in Woking

Flexible office space is a growth area, but the indications are that it is in short supply in the town centre. There is currently a very small number of flexible or co-working spaces available for rent in Woking town. The largest flexible space available is at Spaces Woking One in Albion House opposite the station, which has 42,000 square feet available in this extensively refurbished 1970s building. Regus offer managed offices in the same building and Easy offices also provides managed offices on Commercial Way, although these are somewhat different in concept than flexible space on long lease. There are two other flexible offices to let which are smaller and are for around 7 or 8 people. They are in older style properties in York Road and at 14-18 Commercial Way.

Housing

A recent report commissioned by Woking Council identified that the 4,964 new housing units being developed across the Woking would bring in an additional residential spend of £63.8m per annum. Increased levels of housing in the town centre mean that Woking will be more able to capitalise on the change in shopping habits following the pandemic towards more local shopping and use of local facilities as well as helping to revitalise the evening economy. The Masterplan addresses this by directing housing provision to the Town Centre.

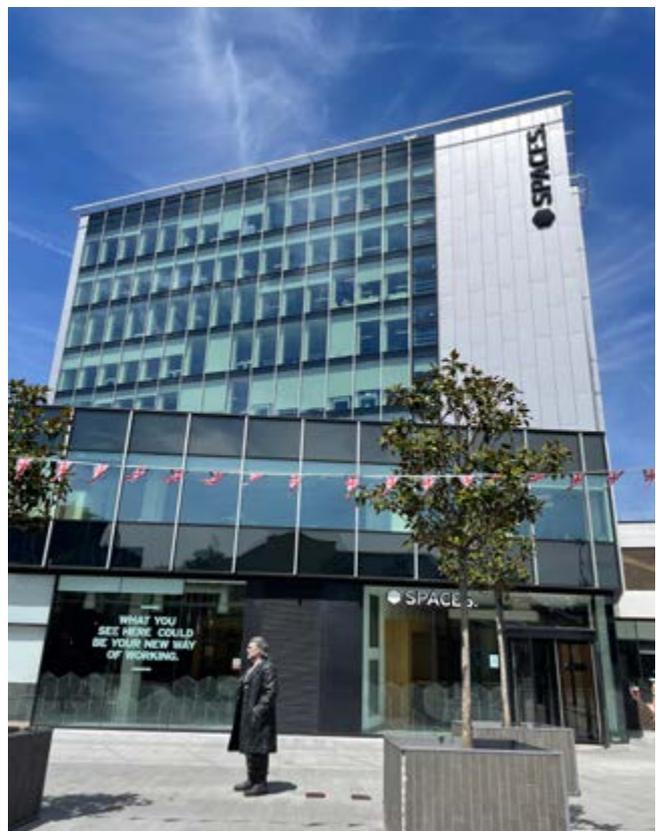


Fig 131 Spaces: Flexible office space

22 The Masterplan

- The Council has adopted a Site Allocations DPD which allocates sufficient and range of sites to meet future employment needs over the entire plan period up to 2027, including land for offices, retail and community facilities.
- The Town Centre will continue to be the primary focus for town centre uses because of its proximity to key services and facilities that are accessible by sustainable modes of travel.
- The Council will take a leading and a sustained role in promoting a positive vision for the Town Centre, bringing together stakeholders and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth.
- The Council will work with its stakeholders to respond to structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on the Town Centre, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change.
- The Council will facilitate a wide range of complementary uses at suitably located spaces to help support the vitality of the Town Centre, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure and entertainment, healthcare, and educational development. The same is true of temporary activities such as 'pop ups', which will often benefit from permitted development rights.



- The Council will encourage residential development as key part of the mix of town centre uses because of the important role it can play in ensuring the vitality of the centre, giving communities easier access to a range of services.
- The Council recognises that effective and creative leadership by local authorities and other stakeholders is key in bringing forward a vision for town centres that meets wider economic and community needs. It will therefore work effectively and positively with stakeholders with an interest in the success of the town centre and encourage them to engage in the delivery of the evolving vision set out in the Masterplan. The stakeholders that would need to be involved for each project will depend on the local context and their relevant interests.
- State of town centre environmental quality
- Balance between independent and multiple stores
- Extent to which there is evidence of barriers to new businesses opening and existing businesses expanding
- Opening hours/availability/extent to which there is an evening and night-time economy offer

Given the changes in the economy, the Council will monitor carefully the following economic indicators in assessing the health of the Town Centre to help plan for their future:

- Diversity of uses
- Proportion of vacant street level property
- Commercial yields on non-domestic property
- Customers' experience and behaviour
- Retailer representation and intentions to change representation
- Commercial rents
- Pedestrian flows
- Accessibility – this includes transport accessibility and accessibility for people with different impairments or health conditions, as well as older people with mobility requirements.
- Perception of safety and occurrence of crime



HOUSING

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23 Objectives

The Housing objectives for the Town Centre are as follows:

- **Ensure the delivery of the full quantity of housing in the Town Centre, as required by the Core Strategy (to be delivered through the SADPD allocations);**
- **To use all endeavours to deliver the housing ask of the Housing Infrastructure Fund project.**
- **Improve the delivery of affordable housing.**
- **Ensure that the design and location of new housing contributes to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre as a whole.**
- **Provide a mixture of housing tenures and sizes in every part of the Town Centre.**
- **Respond to the changed living patterns produced by the Coronavirus pandemic by ensuring a healthy, congenial, secure and accessible living environment for all residents.**

24 Overview

Over the last twenty years, Woking Town Centre has been successfully transformed from a largely commercial zone with relatively few dwellings, into a thriving and vibrant mixed use area, with residential land use being a major element of the mixture. As well as benefiting the Town Centre, the development of housing in this area has, and will continue to, significantly contribute to meeting the Borough's housing need. Due in part to its good public transport connections and proximity to key services and facilities, the Town Centre remains the best location in Woking for new housing development from the point of view of environmental sustainability, resource use and community building.

The Woking Core Strategy, the Development Management Policies DPD and the Site Allocations DPD provides a robust policy context for housing provision in the Town Centre. This includes overall quantum of development to be provided, Affordable Housing provision, dwelling mix, housing for the elderly and vulnerable groups and density of development.

The Core Strategy directs most new development to the Town Centre and sets an indicative figure of 2,180 dwellings to be delivered in the Town Centre from 2010 to 2027. Progress to date against meeting this figure is as follows:

- 869 dwellings have been delivered in the Town Centre up to 1 April 2021.
- 823 dwellings had outstanding planning permission as of that date (including 429 at Victoria Square), and are expected to be complete by 2027.
- The Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) allocates Town Centre sites with an indicative capacity of 998 dwellings. Of these, 567 dwellings are expected to be complete by 2027. The latter figure excludes allocated sites with planning permission at 1 April 2021, which are included in the figures above, and also some sites where development is expected to start, but not complete, by 2027.
- If the above sources were the only ones we could draw on, there would therefore be 2,259 dwellings delivered in the Town Centre up to 2027, representing 104% of the indicative figure of 2,180 in policy CS2.

In addition, the Council has successfully received a grant from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), to use all its endeavours to enable the delivery of 3,304 additional dwellings on top of those identified in the Local Plan. The scale of the development was the subject of an initial consultation with the community and it is agreed that the Townscape Strategy will determine the appropriate capacity for the development of each site.

Policy CS10: Housing Provision and Distribution gives an indicative density range for residential development in the Town Centre of 'in excess of 200' dwellings per hectare (dph). Average density to date (for dwellings completed between 2012-21) is 218 dph. As shown in figure XX, this average density figure covers significant variation over the years since the Core Strategy was adopted.

Policy CS12 Affordable Housing sets out an overall target for affordable housing of 35%. This target has been far from having been met in the Town Centre for many years. Average provision since 2012 is about 6%. The main underlying reasons have been development viability, and the fact that it is not possible to require affordable housing from projects involving change of use to residential under permitted development rights.

Before the introduction of the first NPPF and permitted development rights for office conversions, affordable housing rates were somewhat higher (12% of permissions between 2002-2012), although there was also a tendency for developments in the Town Centre to make a financial contribution to the delivery of affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. On the other hand, in 2020/21, 23 flats in a newly completed development in the Town Centre were bought for use as Affordable Housing. The latter are not counted in the figure for delivery against Policy CS12, since they are not secured as Affordable Housing in perpetuity by a legal agreement.

The Council's Housing Strategy (2021) commits to delivering at least 510 new affordable homes from 2021 to 2026, including on council owned land or in partnership with Thamesway,

Registered Providers and developers. This is a separate target from that in the Core Strategy and would incorporate affordable dwellings delivered through the planning process. The Strategy identifies a challenge to delivering affordable housing in the Town Centre in terms of high land values.

The Strategy commits to reviewing the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD.

The part of the Town Centre which lies in Canalside ward is subject to a Pilot Selective Licensing Scheme, requiring landlords of private rented dwellings (or their management agents) to hold a licence for each property they own in the area. As of April 2022, 900 homes in Canalside ward had been issued with a licence. This pilot scheme comes to an end in 2023 and is currently under review. The Council also licences Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), of which there are several in the Town Centre.

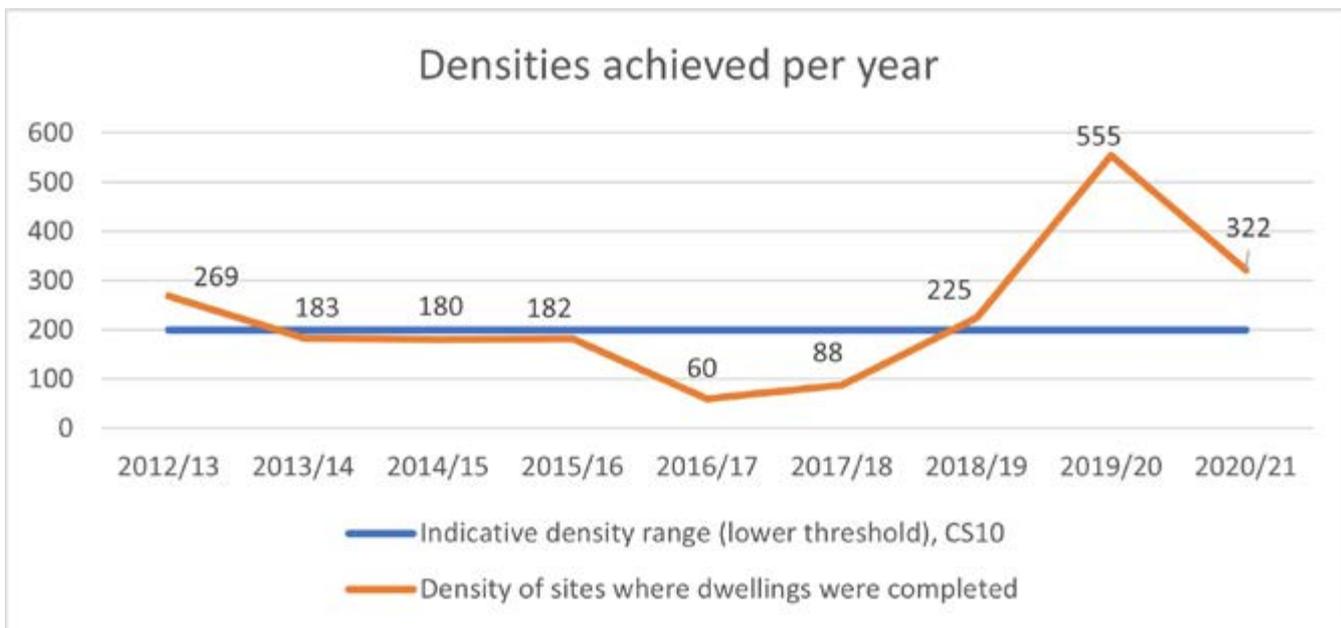


Fig 132 Densities achieved per year

24.1 **Woking Town Centre housing market analysis update** (GL Hearn, 2022)

This piece of work assesses whether the Town Centre has the capacity to absorb the nature and type of homes proposed for the town centre (1 and 2 bed units), and reviews the deliverability of proposed town centre housing sites by an examination of market conditions. The overall conclusion of the study is that there is sufficient demand to accommodate the proposed growth up to 2030. A copy of the Study is on the website and can be accessed by [XXX](#)

small area. For example a postcode covering a single apartment building may be represented by a small square at the entrance to that building. Postcodes at the following sites, containing significant numbers of residential addresses, are represented by squares rather than polygons:

- Metro Apartments, Goldsworth Road: 33 units
- New Central: 327 units
- Centrium: 240 units
- Harrington Place: 147 units
- Middle Walk, Commercial Way: 23 units
- Enterprise House, Church Street East: 126 units.

24.2 **Spatial analysis and recommendations**

The following analysis provides, first, a set of graphics illustrating the demographic situation and trends in housing development across the Town Centre since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012, and, second, analysis of the existing housing situation in each of the Town Centre Masterplan Character Areas, including the nature and development of existing housing, identification of any constraints and future opportunities of housing development in each area, and 'The Masterplan': location specific guidance for each area.

Current distribution of housing in the town centre

Figure 133 shows the current density of residential addresses per hectare in each postcode area in the town centre. It should be highlighted that some postcodes cover a very

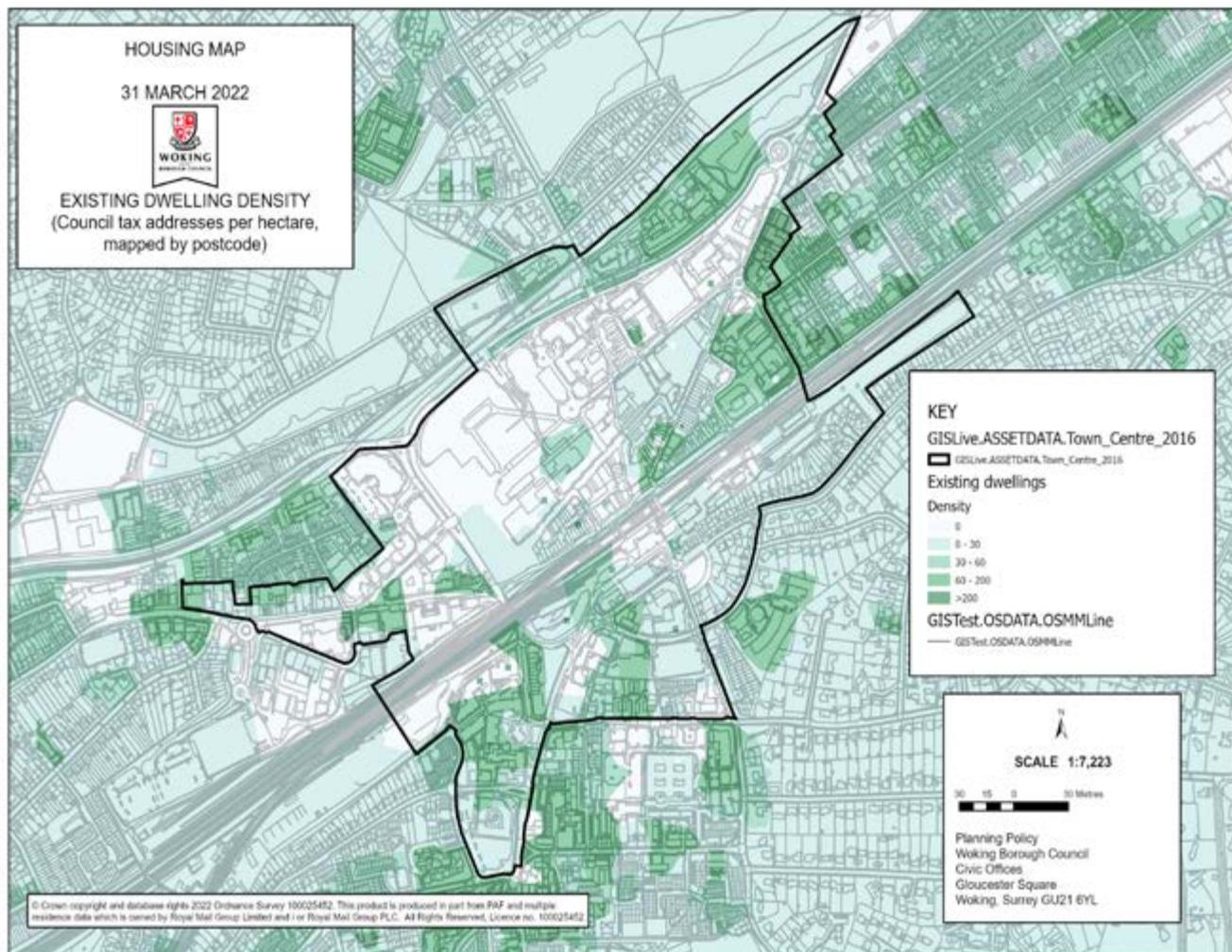


Fig 133 Existing dwelling density

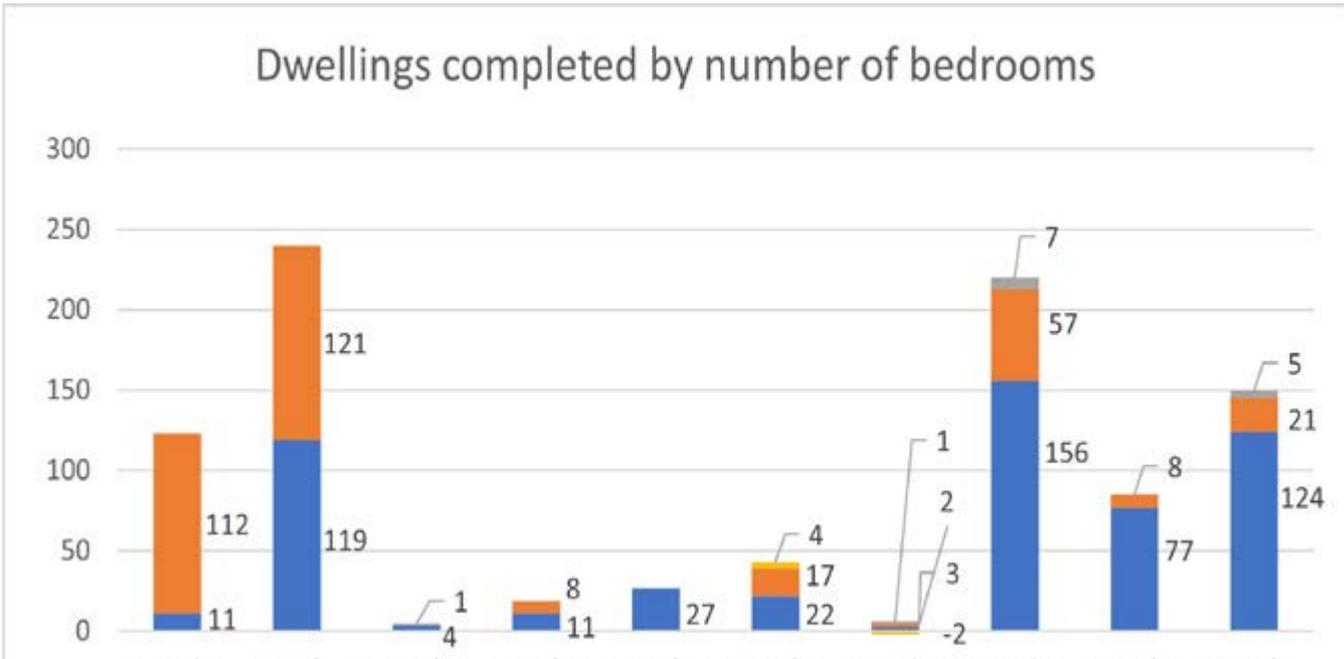


Fig 134 Densities achieved per year

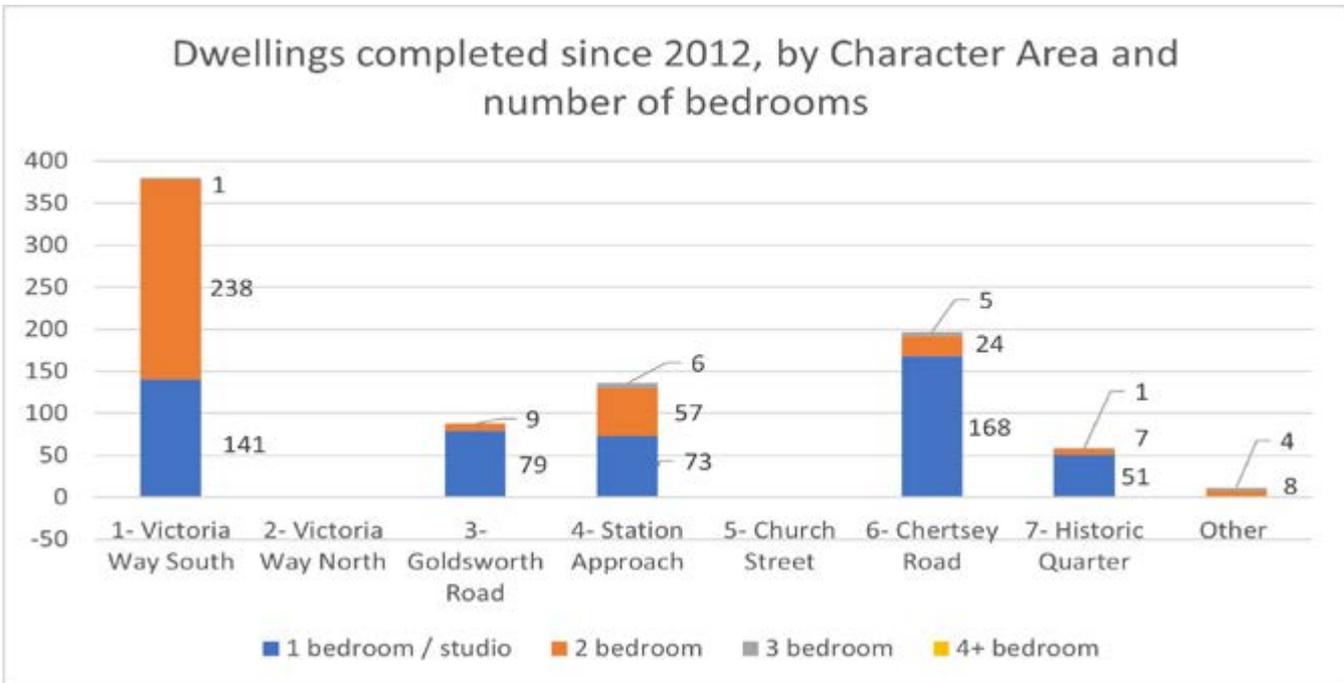


Fig 135 Dwellings completed since 2012

Overall development trends

Figure 134 shows the rate of dwelling completions in the Town Centre since the adoption of the Core Strategy, broken down by number of bedrooms per unit. The first two years were dominated by the building out of the New Central site west of Guildford Road, which received Reserved Matters permission in 2007. There followed a lull in completions, reflecting the recession that began in 2008, together with the long lead-times for significant development, especially in the Town Centre context, which meant that those effects were felt for many years afterwards. In recent years, the rate of development has recovered, mainly supported by the delivery of the large Harrington Place redevelopment and six major Prior Approval schemes for office-to-residential conversion. Further significant new build completions are expected in the next two years.

The breakdown by unit type illustrates a general trend towards one-bedroom and studio flats becoming increasingly dominant in the dwelling mix. Likely causes for this include worsening affordability ratios, and the large number of completions on prior approval sites in recent years. 2020/21 saw the approval of a very large scheme with a higher proportion of two bedroom flats at 'Land North and South of Goldsworth Road'.

Figure 135 shows a breakdown of dwelling size (number of bedrooms) by the different character areas in the town centre. The variation in size visible in the chart is not caused purely by variation in the timing of development in different areas; for example, the Station Approach area, with a high proportion of two bedroom flats, includes the large Harrington Place site, completed in 2019/20 (when Figure

134 shows that most completions were of one bedroom flats or studios). Rather, there seems to be a variation across the Town Centre in terms of the size of dwellings being built. To generate balanced communities, it would be preferable to encourage a mixture of dwelling sizes in each area, in particular where that does not currently occur.

24.3 Analysis of housing development in each of the Town Centre Character Areas

The Townscape Strategy breaks down the Town Centre into seven character areas. The following section sets out how each area has developed since housing began to be reintroduced into the Town Centre around twenty years ago, and how development in those character areas needs to be treated. Recommendations regarding the dwelling mix for each area should be read in the context of Core Strategy policy CS11.

24.4 Victoria Way South

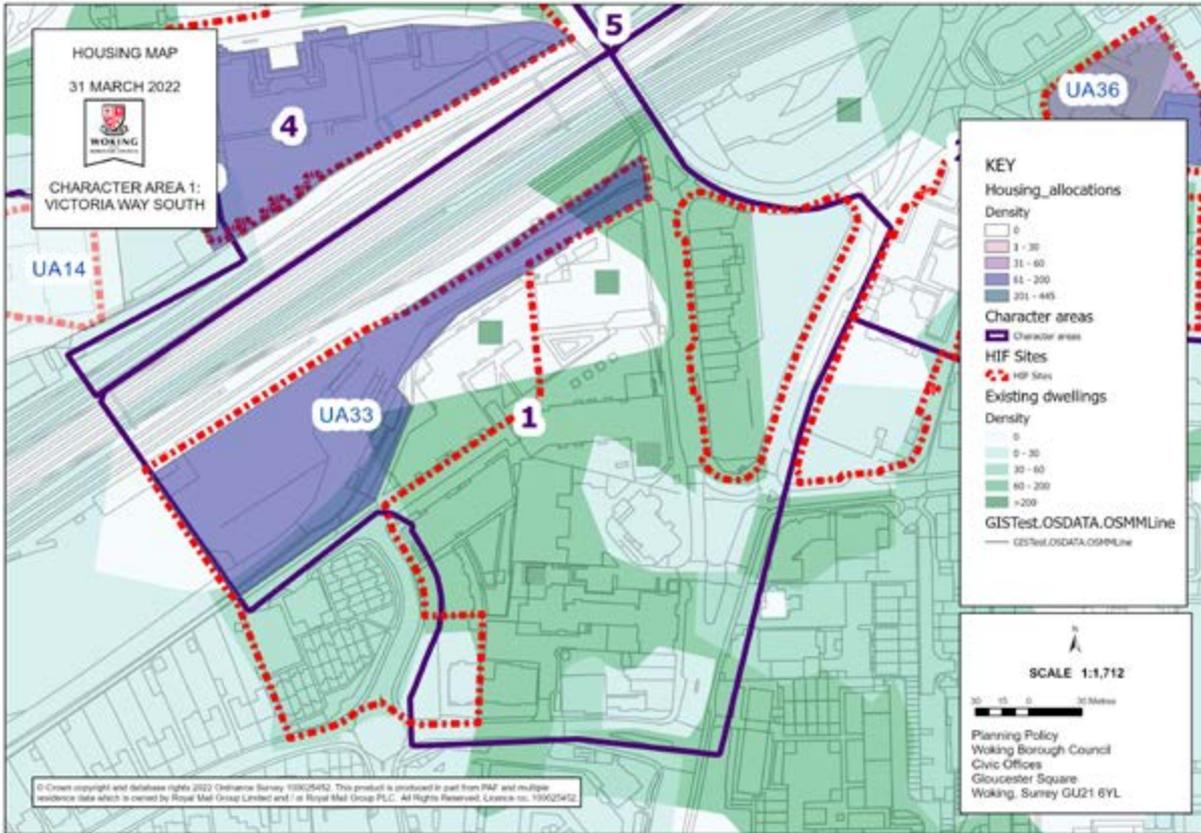


Fig 136 Character area 1 - Victoria Way South

Situation

- Since 2000, this most southerly of the Town Centre's character areas has seen residential redevelopment progressively extend from its outer edge inwards towards the railway and the heart of the town centre.
- First, in 2000 and 2004, permission was granted south of the Sovereigns Public House, for seventy apartments.
- Existing housing in this area is dominated by the New Central development (with 83% of the area's 561 council tax addresses). This site, which formerly contained office blocks, first received outline planning permission for a housing-led mixed use development in 2006/07,

going on to receive full planning permission the next year, for 479 dwellings.

- Amendments to the buildings have given permission for another 71 dwellings within the site. The site was largely complete by 2014.
- In the north of the character area is the locally listed terrace at 1-11 Guildford Road, the upper floors of which have seen seven permissions for residential conversion or subdivision granted over the last twenty years, and which now contains nineteen residential addresses. The whole of this block has prior approval for demolition as part of the Victoria Arch Scheme highway works.

Constraints

- The loss of ground floor active frontages (to housing) within the New Central development has been disappointing. In fact a further change of use scheme has been refused permission on the site. Current barriers to this are the development's separation from the rest of the town centre by a busy road, and the lack of anything to attract people through to the other side of the development. This situation is likely to improve when Site Allocation UA33 is developed. However, it contains a lesson on the importance of development proposals being informed by a realistic public realm strategy and transport/access assessment.
- The western part of the site is constrained by the operation of the aggregates yard, with all the associated restrictions set out in the relevant site allocation policy UA33.
- The north-eastern part of the site is heavily constrained by the highway system and this may become still more the case when the roads in the area are widened.

Opportunities

- The northern part of this character area also contains two major proposed housing sites.
- Site Allocation UA33 (Coal Yard/Aggregates Yard) is situated west of New Central, and is ascribed an indicative capacity of 100 dwellings in the SADPD. Development on this scale would increase the number of residential addresses in the character area by 18%. A larger version of the same site- also taking in properties on Bradfield Close- is identified for development in the Housing Infrastructure Fund project.
- The 'Triangle' site, including 1-11 Guildford Road and the land to its rear facing Station Approach and Victoria Road, is also identified for development in the Housing Infrastructure Fund project.

Table 1.3 Dwellings in Character Area 1

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	88	100	370	188-458

24.5 Victoria Way North

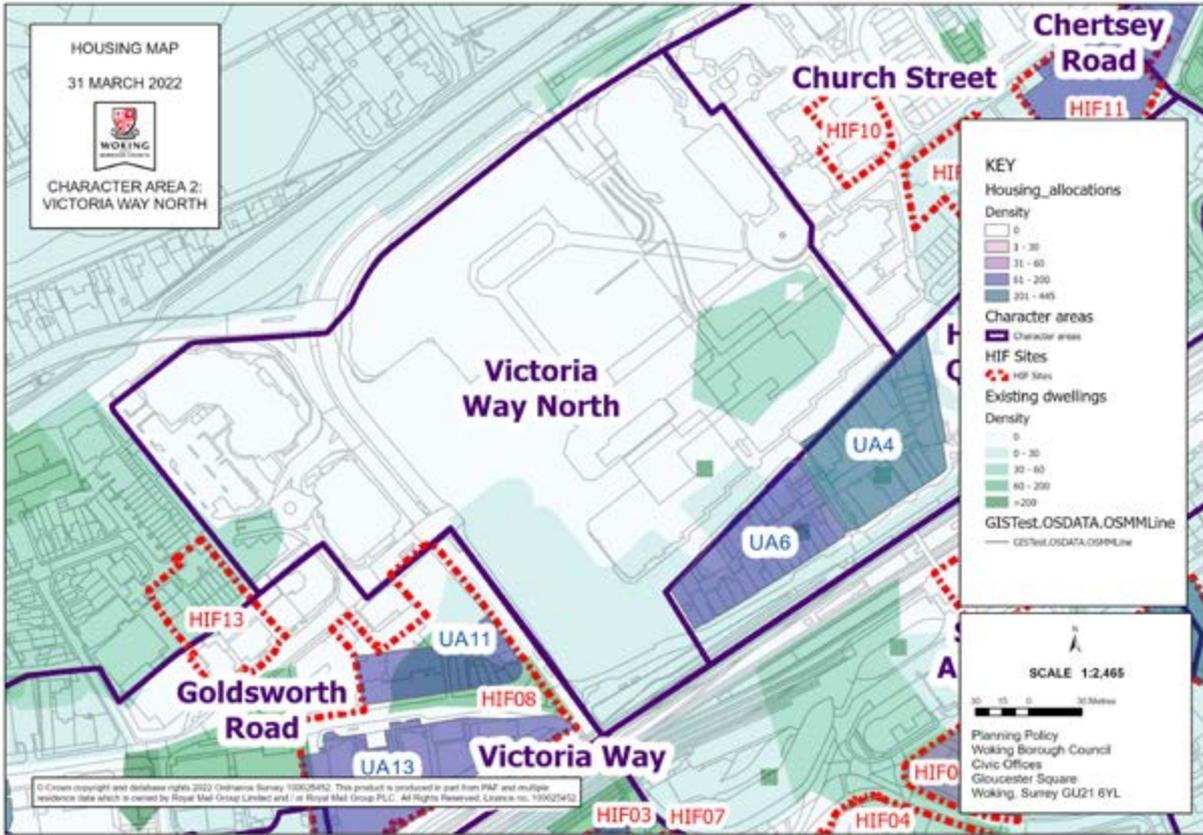


Fig 137 Character area 2 - Victoria Way North

Situation

- This area is the commercial core of the Town Centre, including Woking’s covered shopping centres. Until very recently therefore, housing in the area was limited to the 46 flats at Middle Walk, above the Wolsey Place shopping centre, recently extended upwards
- The principle of flats above retail has now been radically extended by the construction next door to Middle Walk of the high-rise Victoria Place (The Marches), with 429 dwellings.

Constraints

- No additional major housing sites are proposed in this character area, which is already heavily built up with buildings in active commercial use.

Table 1.4 Dwellings in Character Area 2

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	436	0	0	436

24.6 Goldsworth Road

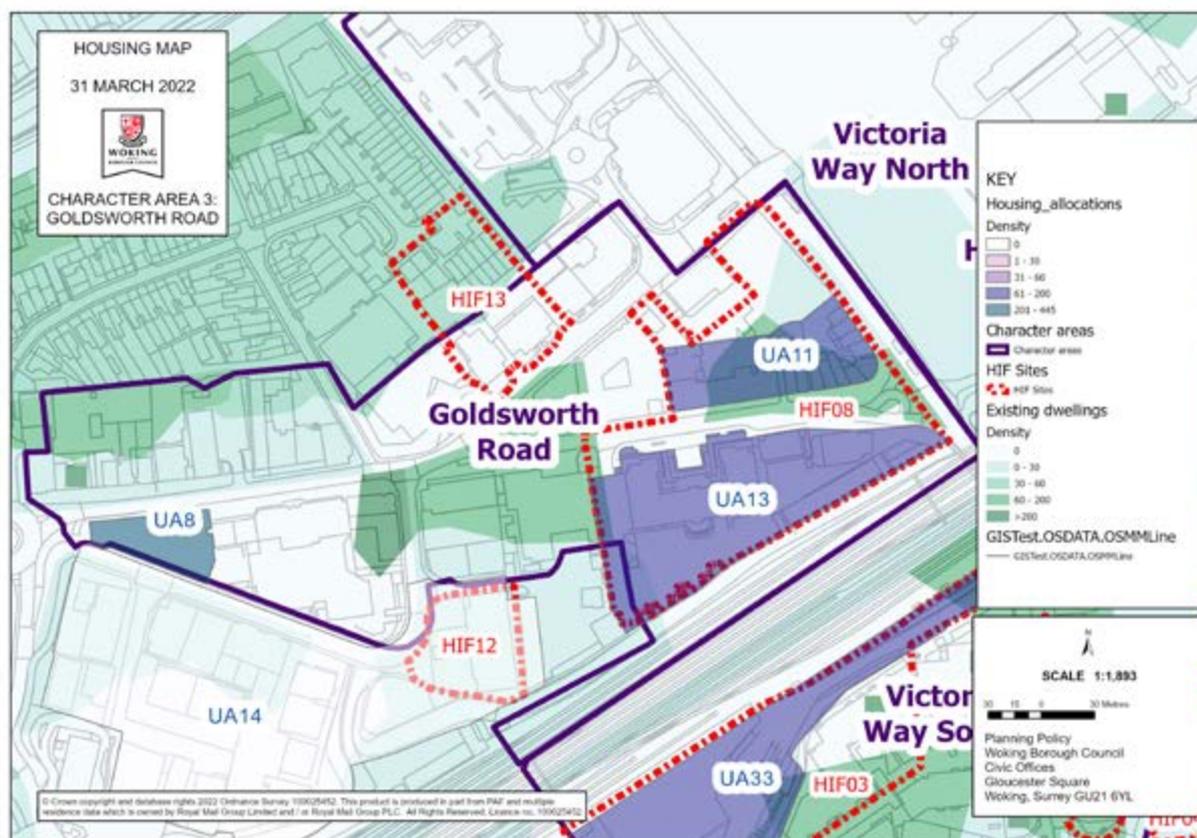


Fig 138 Character area 3 - Goldsworth Road

This western gateway to the Town Centre, much developed with office buildings over the late twentieth century, has seen a great deal of residential development over the last twenty years, through the redevelopment of lower density buildings, and also the change of use of offices, and now includes 208 residential addresses. Among the larger developments, the 2000s saw the redevelopment of retail units with flats at key junctions: Metro Apartments (95 - 111 Goldsworth Road) and Birchwood Court (45-49 Goldsworth Road). More recently, a new fire station has been constructed with cluster flats above, in connection with the Victoria Place development; a former petrol station has been redeveloped and an office building converted through permitted development.

Opportunities

- There are outstanding prior approvals in this area for a further three conversion schemes of purpose-built offices to residential- two of which also have associated planning permission for upward extensions. In total, these projects include 120 new flats. In addition to purpose-built offices, the area also includes a number of older buildings in mixed use, which have been subject to small conversions and extensions.
- In January 2022, permission was granted for what would be the town centre's largest residential development, a mixed use scheme on land north and south of Goldsworth Road (planning application reference PLAN/2020/0568) with 929 flats.



- If all permitted developments are constructed, the number of dwellings in the character area will increase by 504%.
- The Goldsworth Road character area includes four sites allocated for housing/mixed use development:
 - UA8 (the former Goldsworth Arms PH), with an indicative number of 43 dwellings;
 - UA11 (1 -7 Victoria Way and 1 -29 Goldsworth Road), with 55 dwellings; and
 - UA13 (30-32 Goldsworth Road, Woking Railway and Athletic Club, Systems House and Bridge House), with 125 dwellings.
- 50% of site allocation UA12, and the whole of site allocation UA13, are within the boundary of the recently permitted application PLAN/2020/0568. If the allocated area covered by this planning permission is discounted from the indicative allocations figure (discounted pro rata for site UA11), the remaining allocations would add another 10% to the sum of existing and committed housing in Character Area 3.

The character area includes two sites in the HIF project:

- Site 08 ‘Goldsworth Road’, covers the whole area of planning permission PLAN/2020/0568, plus the remainder of site allocation UA12, and further land to the north amounting to an additional 0.18ha (this is vacant land allocated for office use in the SADPD).
- Site 13 ‘Church Gate’ covers two of the sites on Church Road East which currently have prior approval for housing, together with land to their north which lies outside the town centre boundary.
- Lastly, Character Area 3 adjoins the Poole Road Industrial Estate, which lies just outside the Town Centre boundary. This industrial estate is allocated in the SADPD (Site UA14) for offices, warehousing and an energy centre, with the potential for an element of residential use. Part of the estate, adjoining the Town Centre boundary, is also included in the HIF as site 12, ‘Thameswey Church Road’.

Table 1.5 Dwellings in Character Area 3

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	1049	71	94	1065-1120*

* The delivery of site HIF13, as per the site analysis, would not be compatible with the existing permission on that site.

24.7 Station Approach

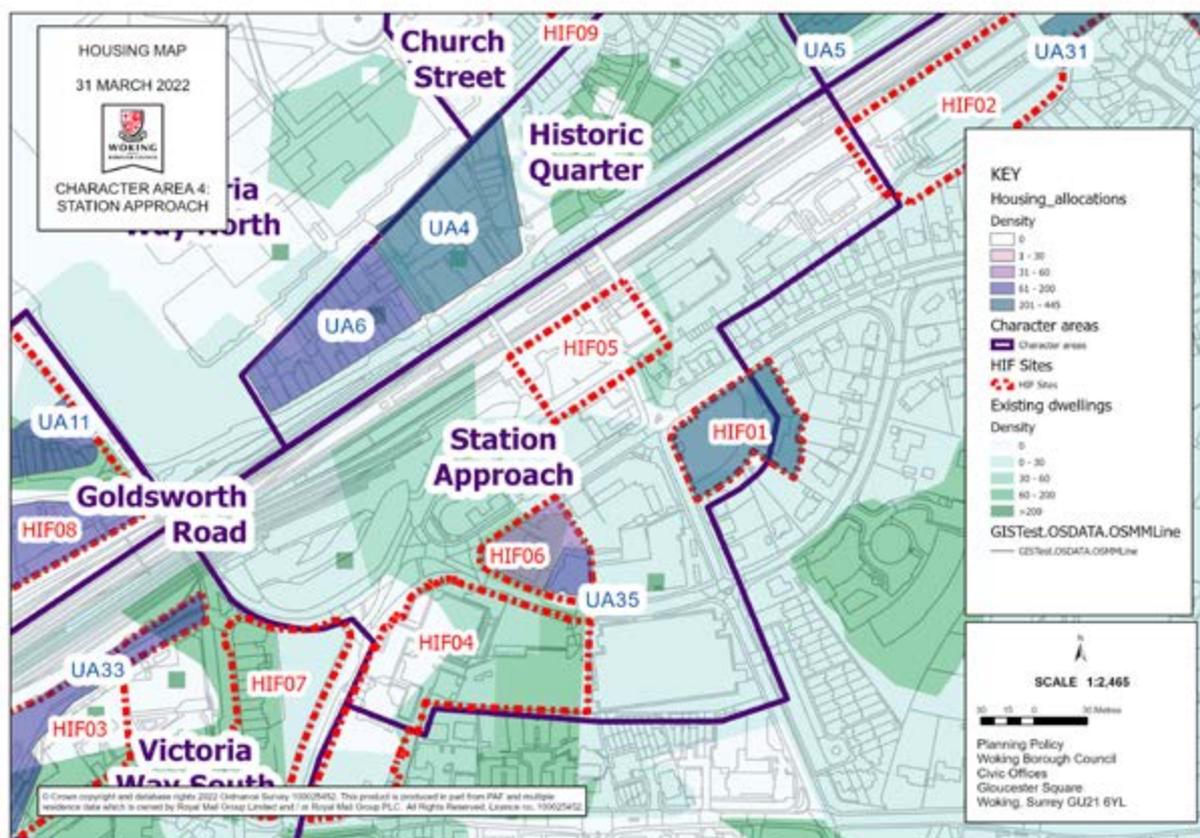


Fig 139 Character area 4 - Station Approach

Twenty years ago this central character area was very largely dominated by institutional buildings; housing was restricted to the ten flats at 1-6 Oriental Road, the eighteen flats at Somerset House and the adjacent residential accommodation at The Crescent.

However, in 2003 permission was granted for the first largescale major and tall residential development in the heart of the Town Centre. This was the Centrium development, with 240 flats and ground-floor retail units on the site of an old railway goods yard. The following year, permission was granted for 48 flats replacing the adjacent telephone exchange building.

The focus of Town Centre development then moved elsewhere, until 2017/18, when permission was given for 147 flats replacing a church and social club on Heathside Crescent (Harrington Place). Some of the ground floor commercial units at Centrium have also been replaced with flats. With 472 residential addresses, this character area is now one of the most populous in the town centre.

Opportunities

The area includes three SADPD residential allocations:



- Site UA32 (Royal Mail Sorting/Delivery Office), with an indicative dwelling number of 88. This site is also included in the HIF project as site 01, 'Royal Mail Depot'
- Site UA35 (The Crescent) and UA36 (Somerset House), with ten net additional dwellings each. These two sites are together covered by HIF site 06, called 'St Dunstan's Phase 3'.

In total, the delivery of the SADPD indicative numbers on these sites would increase the number of dwellings in the area by 23%.

In addition to the HIF sites listed above, there are two more HIF sites in the area:

- HIF Site 04 Police Station/Magistrates Court- one of the largest potential development sites in the Town Centre
- HIF Site 05 Station Plaza

Table 1.6 Dwellings in Character Area 4

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	0	108	585	108-585

24.8 Church Street

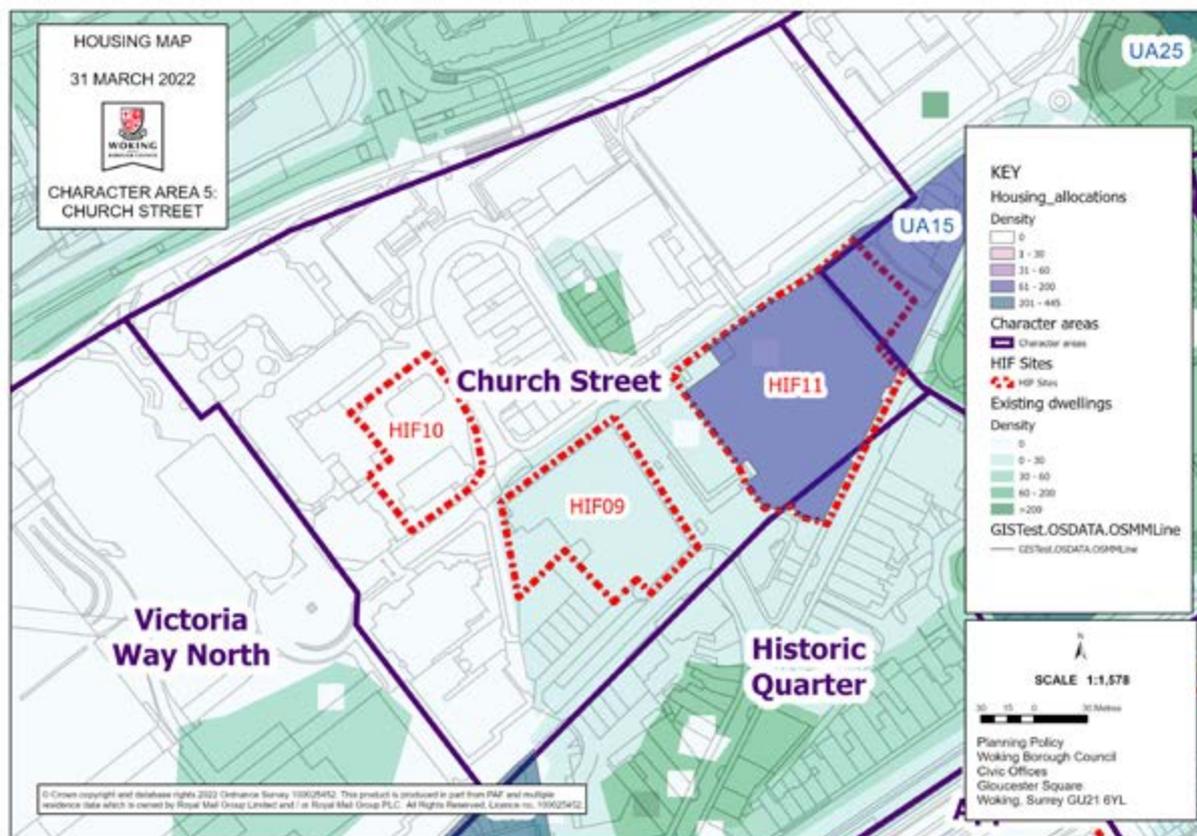


Fig 140 Character area 5 - Church Street

The Church Street character area, in the commercial heart of the town centre, has been left almost untouched by the growth of town centre housing, and remains dominated by offices and ground floor retail. The only residential addresses are the small number of flats at Central Buildings on Chobham Road.

Opportunities

- The Site Allocations DPD does not identify most of this area as a place for residential development. The only part-residential allocation here is located in the area's south-western corner:

- Site UA15, The Big Apple American Amusements Ltd, H.G. Wells Conference Centre, the former Rat and Parrot PH and 48-58 Chertsey Road – 67 dwellings
- Only half of this large site is located in Character Area 5, with the remainder being in Areas 6 and 7. The site is allocated for a broad mix of uses. The indicative dwelling number is therefore relatively small, considering the site size, and could be met entirely outside Character Area 5 by a development currently under construction. However, it should be borne in mind that the number given in the SADPD is only indicative and there is nothing to stop additional residential development on the



rest of the site, providing the other allocation requirements are met and the development is in conformity with the Townscape Strategy.

The sites listed in the HIF would cause a radical increase in the level of residential development in this part of the town centre, with three sites:

- HIF Site 09 'BHS Residential/Commercial'
- HIF Site 10 'Concorde/Griffin House'
- HIF Site 11 'Planets/Rat & Parrot': A smaller version of allocation UA15 (though the part of the site in Character Area 5 would remain the same size)

Table 1.7 Dwellings in Character Area 5

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	4	0	166	4-170

24.9 Chertsey Road

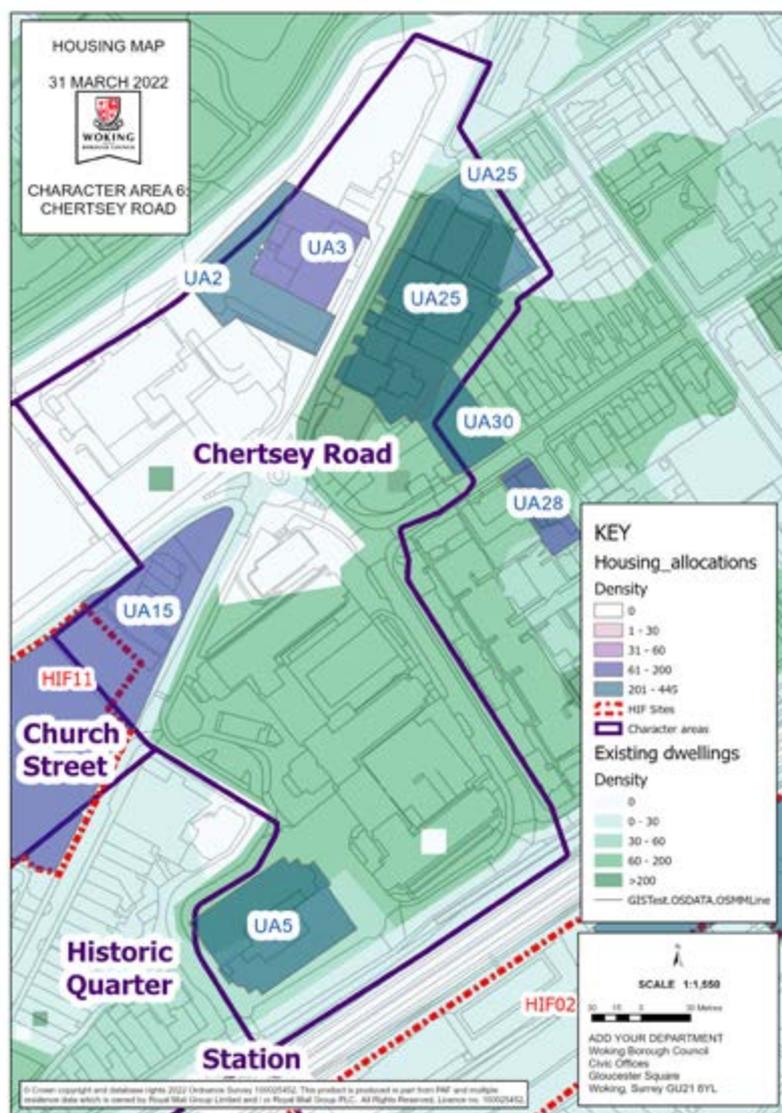


Fig 141 Character area 6- Chertsey Road

This area on the north-eastern side of the Town Centre was dominated by purpose-built office, car park and hotel buildings, and prior to 2003 contained just a handful of residential properties, mostly in the one remaining cluster of old buildings. In contrast to the neighbouring Area 5, however, the area has since seen a large amount of residential development. This began with two modestly sized redevelopments, of a social club and a place of worship, on the very edge of the town centre (permitted in 2003 and 2005), followed by the construction of a large residential

block, Enterprise Place, on a hotel car park (permitted in 2007). A second wave of residential development came with prior approvals between 2018 and 2020 for the change of use to residential of the large office building, Elizabeth House/ Cornerstone, and of a row of office buildings on the east side of Chertsey Road (two of the latter buildings also had upward extensions permitted) and one planning permission for a new build block on the site of the Rat and Parrot PH. The area is now home to 402 residential addresses.



Constraints

- Some of the development to date has been weak in terms of providing active frontages. This has a negative impact on the street scene and should not be taken as a precedent, but rather compensated for by the provision of active frontages on sites that come forward in future. Opportunities should be sought wherever possible to improve the street level appearance of existing development. The landscaped area to the west of Dukes Court sets a positive precedent for public realm design in the area.

Opportunities

- There is one outstanding planning permission in this area- the twelve-storey tower on the site of the Rat & Parrot, with 68 flats currently under construction.
- The SADPD allocates four sites in Area 6. Two of these sites have already been completed: Site UA5: The Cornerstone, The Broadway and Elizabeth House- with an indicative number of 94 dwellings and Site UA25: 101-121 Chertsey Road- 104 dwellings

- The three remaining sites include two adjacent ones on the west side of Chertsey Road: Site UA2 Trizancia House and Woodstead House, with an indicative number of 50 dwellings, Site UA3 Chester House, 76-78 Chertsey Road, with 14 dwellings and lastly site UA15, The Big Apple American Amusements Ltd, H.G. Wells Conference Centre, the former Rat and Parrot PH and 48-58 Chertsey Road, with 67 dwellings
- See above under Area 5 for more details of this site. 34% of the site is in Character Area 6. The 'Rat & Parrot' site development mentioned above could meet the whole of the indicative dwelling number for this site.
- The only HIF site in this character area is that part of HIF Site 11: 'Planets/Rat & Parrot' which is already undergoing development.
- Completion of the Rat & Parrot site development, plus the delivery of the indicative numbers on UA2 and UA3, would produce a 33% increase in dwelling numbers in this part of the Town Centre.

Table 1.8 Dwellings in Character Area 6

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	68	64	38	106-132

24.10 Historic Quarter

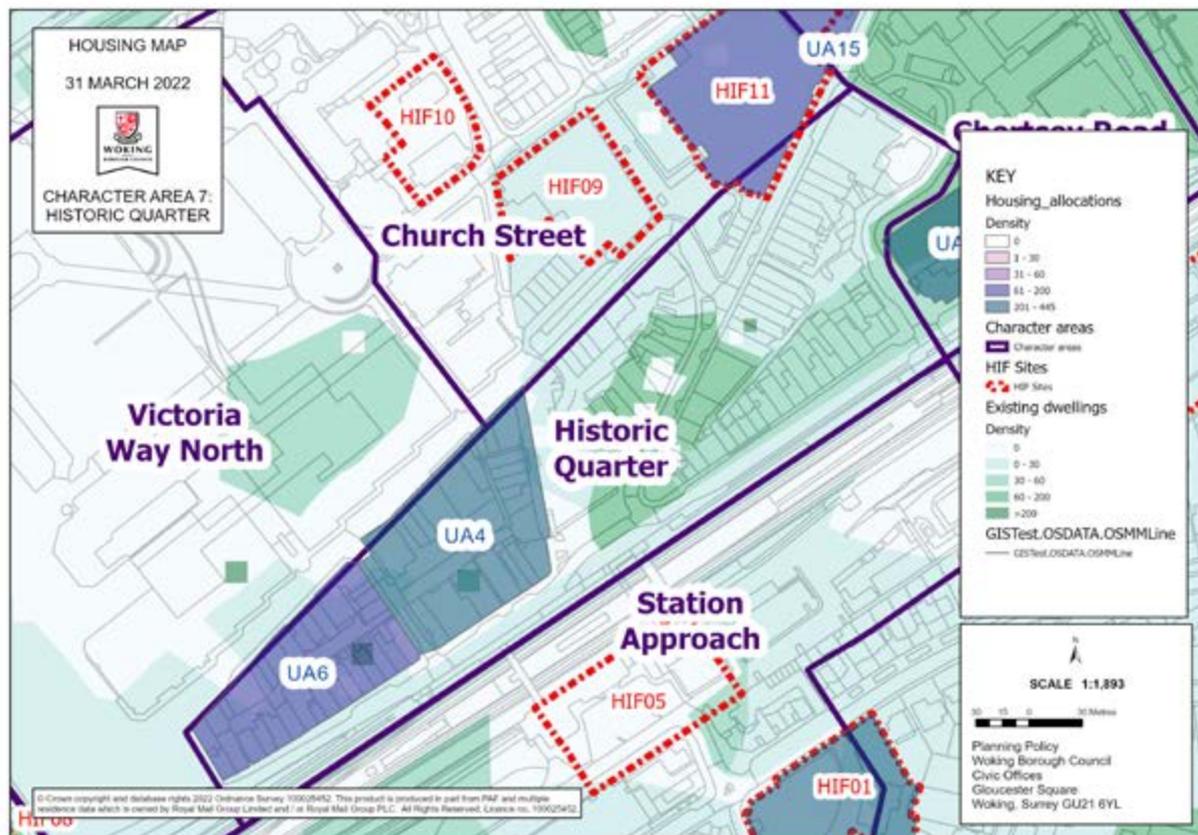


Fig 142 Character area 7 - Historic Quarter

This area contains a large proportion of the Town Centre's stock of older housing, comprising flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) above and to the rear of commercial units. Many of these units are the result of conversion from office or ancillary retail use, and some are the result of upward or rear extensions (the most recent example being the addition of three floors above McDonalds on Chertsey Road). Some of the accommodation is accessed from the main shopping streets, while a large proportion is accessed by rear courtyards from minor town centre streets such as Chapel Street and Addison Road.

Two-thirds of the HMOs in the Town Centre are located in the Historic Quarter.

Over the last twenty years, the Historic Quarter has seen the third lowest number of dwellings permitted of any Town Centre character area. However, the area has seen by far the highest number of individual planning applications and prior approvals: 39% of the Town Centre total. Only four of these applications were for more than 10 dwellings, and none for more than 19 dwellings. This reflects the nature of an area with strong heritage constraints where opportunities for large scale redevelopment are limited. There are currently 155 residential properties in the character area.



Constraints

- Heritage issues, and the needs of the many businesses in the area, present constraints to housing development and to the living environment.
- The quality of accommodation is very varied. Some flats which face onto the courtyards have outdoor balcony or roof terrace space, generally a small amount but in some cases quite substantial. However, many flats have no outdoor space and negative outlook.
- There are a few blocks outside the Historic Quarter which share similar characteristics: for example, the corner of Victoria Way and Goldsworth Road, and 1-11 Guildford Road.

Opportunities

- There are currently nine sites in the Historic Quarter with outstanding planning permission or prior approval for housing, for a total of 31 dwellings.
- The Site Allocations DPD allocates two sites entirely within this area, and one partially within it, as follows:
- Site UA4: 1-12 High Street and 26-34 Commercial Way, with an indicative number of 149 dwellings

- Site UA6: 2-24 Commercial Way and 13-28 High Street, with 50 dwellings
- Approximately 16% of Site UA15: The Big Apple American Amusements Ltd, H.G. Wells Conference Centre, the former Rat and Parrot PH and 48-58 Chertsey Road, with 67 dwellings in total (or 11 dwellings, if pro-rata'd according to the proportion of the site located in this Character Area). This portion of site UA15 is also the only HIF site located in the character area.
- Delivery of the outstanding planning permissions / prior approvals, together with the indicative numbers on site allocations, would increase the number of dwellings in the Character Area by 135%.
- The area contains a few buildings which have a negative impact on the historic character of the area, and whose redevelopment offers the potential for improvement. These are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Table 1.9 Dwellings in Character Area 7

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	31	199	278	230-309

24.11 Fringes of town centre (outside character areas)

The character areas do not precisely match the boundaries of the town centre, and there are various areas around the edge of (but within) the centre which are not covered by any Character Area. In several cases these areas include relatively dense low-rise housing constructed in the years before housing began to be built in more central parts of the Town Centre. The town centre fringe areas are listed below in clockwise order, together with any relevant planning permissions or allocations.

- North of Victoria Way: 257 dwellings north of Victoria Way were constructed in the late 1990s and late 2000s.
- 11 dwellings are found in sizeable pre-1918 villas near the Chertsey Road/Victoria Way roundabout.
- 54 suburban-style dwellings on Oriental Road, Heathside Crescent and White Rose Lane. This area includes Site Allocation UA31: Car Park East, Oriental Road, with an indicative capacity for 250 dwellings. UA31 also forms part of HIF Site 02: Ex Station Car Park.
- 83 dwellings north of Heathside Road, including houses built in the 1980s and 1990s and older flats.
- 16 dwellings on Goldsworth Road, at the westernmost end of the Town Centre. 14 of these are flats granted permission in 2012. This area also includes Site Allocation UA9, (113-149 Goldsworth Road), with 55 dwellings;

Table 1.10 Dwellings in town centre, but outside Character Areas

	OUTSTANDING PLANNING PERMISSION AT 31.03.2022	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER IN SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD	INDICATIVE (ADDITIONAL) NUMBER BY TOWNSCAPE STRATEGY SITE ANALYSIS	TOTAL
NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	0	305	384	305-384

* The Townscape Strategy also indicates 306 dwellings on sites close to the Town Centre. On the same sites the SADPD only indicates 26 dwellings.

25 New Town Centre wide residential development guidance

The Housing Market Analysis Update identified that the Coronavirus pandemic had increased demand for housing with outdoor space and also with indoor flexibility for home working. This chimes with many comments received through the Masterplan engagement process to date regarding the amenity and living environment of some recent housing developments in the Town Centre. They are also supported by the analysis of private outdoor amenity space described above, the levels of provision of which shows high levels of variation between different developments. In lockdown conditions, which may return in future, these issues, together with security, accessibility and neighbourly relations, take on additional importance for the wellbeing and mental health of residents, and this was evident through the engagement so far. In addition, whilst much of the housing in the town centre might not have been designed with families in mind, it is inevitable that families will live in the town centre and their needs should be taken into account.

The introduction of the National Design Guide (NDG) and National Model Design Code (NMDC) over the past three years has also changed the context for assessment of design, by outlining, illustrating and (in the latter document) expanding on the Government's priorities for well-designed places.

It is not possible to introduce a requirement for development to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards through this SPD, as the national policy regarding those requires a viability assessment. Likewise, potential increased requirements for accessible dwellings will require additional evidence on housing need. These issues can potentially be considered through the next review of the Core Strategy. However, it is possible to introduce guidance relating to other parts of the lived residential environment.

With regard to private outdoor amenity space, the NMDC guidance notes (p.75) state 'Access to external private space is important for people's wellbeing... Guidance may ... be provided about the provision and size of balconies on apartments.' Woking's Design SPD and Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight SPD already set several different requirements for the design of balconies, including a minimum width of 1.5m, but, unlike for gardens, where size standards are included in the Outlook SPD, there is currently no size requirement for balconies. The review of recent housing developments revealed a great deal of variation in balcony size, with the usefulness of many balconies being limited by their small size. It is therefore proposed to introduce a minimum area standard for balconies.

The NMDC guidance notes (page 75) also state that 'People's feeling of security within their home is influenced by the design of the home and the way it relates to its neighbours... Layouts need to ensure natural surveillance, encourage community interaction, engagement and participation and environmental control'. Internal circulation space plays a big role in the character of apartment buildings, in particular interactions between neighbours. Where the space is dark and constricted, interactions between neighbours are less likely to be positive. Where corridors serve large numbers of flats it is less likely that neighbours will recognise and get to know one another, so the circulation space can feel intimidating. On the other hand, a well designed and secured circulation space can help to build a community, which is one of the main aims of this Masterplan.

The NMDC guidance notes (p.67) also note that 'Single aspect apartments... can cause environmental issues in terms of light and ventilation. Gallery access and limited apartments per core can facilitate dual aspect apartments that address such issues.' Further guidance on best practice regarding internal circulation space, in particular in tall buildings, can be found in 'Recommendations for Living at Superdensity' (2007), 'Superdensity: The Sequel' (2015) and 'Secured By Design: Homes 2019' (2019). These have informed the guidance on internal circulation spaces below.

26 The Masterplan

26.1 Townscape Strategy Framework

The Townscape Strategy provides a design led framework to guide development in the Town Centre, in particular, to determining the appropriateness of the heights of development in the various character zones. The accompanying Site Analysis includes useful information on how each site should be considered within the overall Townscape Strategy and these should be considered at the early stages of the development process. The framework will be a significant material consideration in determining the acceptability of a proposed development.

visual verification to the access control system (between the occupant and the visitor) should be provided where any of the following apply:

- more than 25 dwellings are served by one core, or
- the potential occupancy of the dwellings served by one core exceeds 100 bed spaces, or
- more than 8 dwellings are provided per floor.
- Where dwellings are accessed via an internal corridor, the corridor should receive natural light and adequate ventilation where possible.
- All dwellings entered at the seventh floor (eighth storey) and above should be served by at least two lifts.
- It is desirable that every wheelchair user dwelling is served by more than one lift.

26.2 Town Centre wide guidance

Private outdoor amenity space

A minimum of 5sqm of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1sqm should be provided for each additional occupant.

Internal Circulation Space

- Each core should be accessible to generally no more than eight units on each floor.
- An access core serving 4 or more dwellings should provide an access control system with entry phones in all dwellings linked to a main front door with electronic lock release. Unless a 24 hour concierge is provided, additional security measures, compliant with GDPR, including audio-

Table 1.11 Spatially specific guidance for Character Areas

GUIDANCE	CHARACTER AREA WHERE GUIDANCE APPLICABLE
Ground floors facing the street should be active frontages.	Victoria Way North, Church Street, Historic Quarter
Ground floors facing the street should be active frontages or contribute to passive surveillance through multiple street entrances and large windows.	Parts of the Town Centre outside Townscape Strategy character areas (except for Heathside Crescent and Heathside Road)
	Achieve mandatory credits under water category of BREEAM assessment.
Minor non-residential development	Incorporate energy measures in accordance with interim requirements of Part L to the Building Regulations and full Future Buildings Standard once it comes into effect. Incorporate water efficiency measures (as per Climate Change SPD guidance).
Ground floors facing the street should be active frontages or contribute to passive surveillance through multiple street entrances and large windows.	Parts of the Town Centre outside Townscape Strategy character areas (except for Heathside Crescent and Heathside Road)
The proportion of affordable housing in these areas has been particularly low to date. To ensure diversity of tenure in the areas, future proposals should seek to redress this balance.	Victoria Way North, Goldsworth Road, Chertsey Road, Historic Quarter
The provision of private outdoor amenity space in housing developments has been relatively low in these areas. Opportunities should be taken through new development and spending by the Council and partners to deliver additional, multifunctional public open space in the areas, to help address the needs of local residents.	Goldsworth Road, Chertsey Road, Historic Quarter
The area has seen a relatively low number of one bedroom/ studio flats compared to other parts of the Town Centre. Therefore this would be the preferred location for developments focussed on this type of housing.	Station Approach
Development in these areas has been disproportionately of one-bedroom and studio flats. New development should redress this balance with a higher proportion of two-bedroom flats.	Chertsey Road, Historic Quarter
As an area with little current housing, this part of the town centre could have good potential for development of the night time economy or other town centre uses with the potential to generate a nuisance to residential neighbours. Proposals for new housing should take this into account and avoid the potential for conflicts with any such uses.	Church Street



LEISURE AND CULTURE

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27 Objectives

The Leisure and Culture objectives for the Town Centre are as follows:

- **To build on recent development and enhancements to ensure that Woking Town Centre is a leisure and cultural destination that competes strongly with neighbouring towns and provides for the leisure and cultural needs of its residents, workers and visitors.**
- **To ensure a dynamic, varied and vibrant cultural and leisure economy during the day and evening:**
- **Enabling small and large commercial leisure and cultural enterprises, as well as non-commercial and community culture, music and arts organisations, which bring significant social benefits and civic pride to Woking, to thrive.**
- **Expanding the evening economy, particularly the range of activities and events available, including the growing music and culture sectors (Retail Topic Paper, 2019)**
- **To continue to encourage co-location and flexible use of spaces to maximise the use of existing assets, both indoor and outdoor, for temporary installations, displays, uses and events. This adds changing activity and interest to the town centre, which can respond to variations in market demand and exploit major events and festivals (e.g Wimbledon, Queen’s Jubilee and Christmas).**
- **Ensure that accessible and sustainable social and community infrastructure is provided and safeguarded in line with Core Strategy Policy CS19.**

28 Overview

Woking town centre has a strong and varied leisure, culture and entertainment offer, highlighted by the provision of three theatres and the newly refurbished state of the art Nova Cinema, which opened in 2021. The town's theatre offering is both professional, at the New Victoria Theatre and amateur, hosted at the Rhoda and Buzz Theatres.

There is a diverse and vibrant food and drink offering throughout the town centre. Recent openings include Island House, Luciano's, the Tea Terrace and Itsu, which expand, upgrade and diversify the town's the food and drink scene. There is a good mix of restaurants, cafes and shops that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the town, and Market Walk provides space for an eclectic mix of small, often start-up, businesses. Residents in Woking value the multicultural nature of the town, and paired with an improved public realm, cafes and restaurants are considered to create a positive atmosphere (feedback from the Residents Panel).

Further to this, the Council runs a programme of events under its Celebrate Woking brand, which aims to highlight and support the Borough's cultural attractions. It has hosted Party in the Park (in Woking Park), Woking Food Festival, Diwali and Chinese New Year celebrations in the centre. Alongside Woking Shopping, other arts and cultural events include the Summer Zone with deckchairs, table

tennis, giant chess and a big screen, and an Ice Rink in winter 2021-22, the anachronists library (an immersive theatre event in Jubilee Square in 2021-22) and the Wiggle and Scribble playground in March - April 2022.

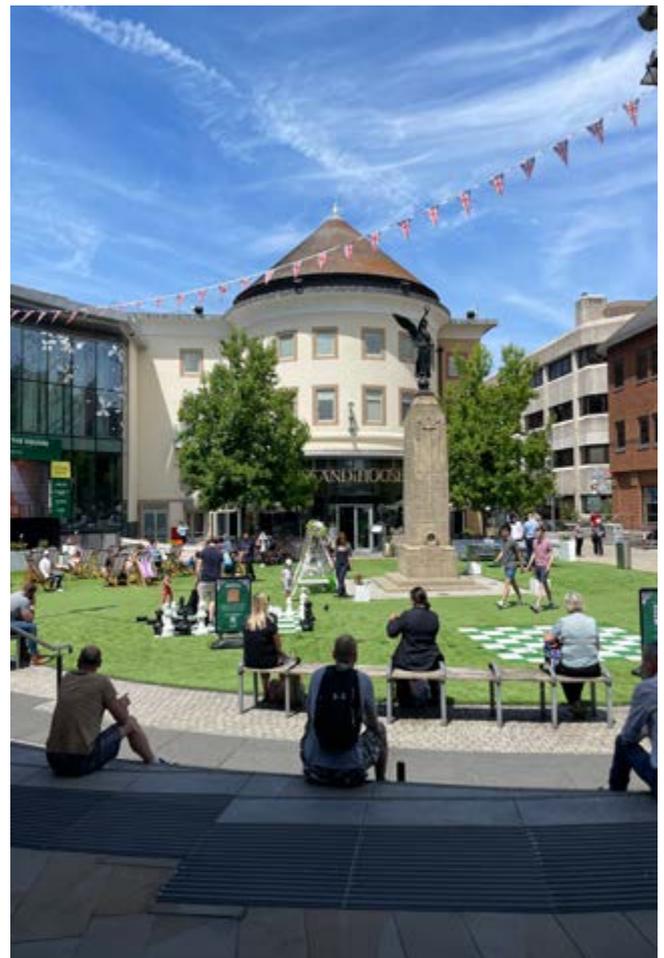


Fig 143 Jubilee Square: Summer Zone

The Lightbox is situated by the Basingstoke Canal, within the town centre, and offers art galleries, a café, workshops and events, as well as an exhibition on the history of Woking. A pop-up Lightbox gallery has been included at Victoria Place, bringing art to the heart of Woking's expanded shopping centre. In addition the Woking Art Trail (arcgis.com) is an interactive map produced by the Council, which enables and promotes exploration of public art across the town centre and more widely.

Woking has a community music and arts venue, the Fiery Bird which hosts a range of events, workshops and training. It has seen operational disruption in recent years due to the lack of a permanent venue (previously located at the Phoenix Cultural Centre on Goldsworth Road, scheduled for redevelopment) but is expected to move to a new location at Spaces in autumn 2022, subject to funding from Surrey County Council.

Woking library is a large and valued facility in the centre which provides a range of services including free WiFi, computers and printers as well as an extensive collection of books, e-books and audio books. The library, theatres and cinema, and the Lightbox are cultural and leisure facilities that are valued by the public, together with the choirs and orchestras that use them (Residents Panel feedback, 2021).

Leisure in the form of gyms and sports facilities are provided by private enterprises within the town centre, with the Gym Group coming in June 2022 and several other private gyms

available. The Big Apple houses bowling, Laser Quest, a large arcade and bar. HG Wells is a conferencing and events space that hosts a number of local cultural activities (including the orchestra mentioned above) and is proposed for redevelopment with the Big Apple, as one of the Council's Site Allocations.



Fig 144 Fiery Bird

29 Opportunities

Woking's spatial vision (Core Strategy 2012) sets out that the town centre will be a focus for economic activity centred on a vibrant, enhanced town centre that provides a good range of quality shops, jobs, cultural facilities, services and infrastructure. Development to date is expanding cultural and leisure facilities, with two large spaces provided within the newly opened Victoria Place. The first of these will be occupied by Woking Superbowl, expected to open later this summer and offering a bowling alley, Laser Quest, pool tables, party rooms, bar and diner. The second is Italia Conti, a leading performing arts academy, relocating and consolidating from three previous sites to a purpose built 48,000 sq ft two floor unit, expected to open in September 2022. Both of these facilities will strengthen cultural, events and entertainment provision in the centre, and provide scope for further opportunities.

An opportunity could link to the Italia Conti as well as existing performing arts groups, to potentially create activity and animate outdoor public spaces for performance. The Council will explore how this can go forward as part of its events and cultural programme.

Another recent addition at Woking Shopping Centre this spring (2022) has been a virtual reality gaming business, Animo Gaming. This brings interactive entertainment aimed at families and young people to the heart of the Peacock's Centre, and its continued operation will help bolster the attractiveness of the centre.

The Council's Retail Topic Paper (2019) highlights the growth of leisure and restaurant uses in the Borough in recent years, as can be seen with recent openings in the town centre, and points to need for responsiveness to a rapidly changing retail market. This evidence can be used to support further growth of such uses and to inform the Council's assessment and determination of planning applications for new development, both for changes of use within existing floorspace, and for new buildings. The Council's adopted Planning Policy framework, encompassing the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD, allows for delivery and implementation of development, taking account of the latest available evidence.

Further opportunities for leisure and culture lie in the form of allocated development sites. The Council's Site Allocations DPD (2021) seeks to deliver the Core Strategy's vision and objectives for a vibrant and enhanced town centre. It contains a large site in the town centre, taking in the Big Apple and HG Wells as part of Site Allocation UA15, proposed for mixed use development that includes re-provision of floorspace to accommodate entertainment, cultural and community uses. Existing uses includes music, dance and concerts, and events for the public and charity sectors and religious groups, who used the centre at a reasonable cost. Re-provision of this floorspace is necessary to ensure that a number of existing operators, which contribute to the Town Centre's diverse cultural economy and support its vitality, can

continue and thrive, and are not left without a home. There are limited alternative venues within the centre which can accommodate these activities.

While not specific allocated uses in the Site Allocations DPD, the development on land north and south of Goldsworth Road, allowed at appeal on 12 January 2022 and covering UA11, UA12 and UA13 includes 2,710 sq metres (gross) floorspace for flexible commercial uses including shops, cafés and restaurants, bars and pubs as well as assembly and leisure uses and non-residential institutions. Once complete, this will provide space and opportunities for a range of cultural and leisure uses, dependent on market demand.

In addition, the Canal has potential for an expanded cultural offer. As mentioned the Lightbox provides a significant cultural asset located by the Canal. However it does little to allow visitors to appreciate the Canal, as windows do not look out on it and landscaping in the garden entrance area shields views of it. This relationship could be enhanced. Woking Wharf has recently been improved to widen and re-surface the towpath on this well-used stretch of Canal. There are further opportunities to be explored for the Canal as a distinct cultural asset and small scale hub of activity, linked to its heritage and green open space value. This could foster increased water related activity and moorings for small businesses (where they are sensitive to Canal's environment, access and amenity).



Fig 145 The Lightbox

30 Constraints

While a variety of cultural and leisure facilities are available in the town centre, residents highlight that cultural and entertainment provision in the town centre is insufficient or are concerned about its decline (Residents Panel feedback 2021). Since the point of survey, facilities are expected to improve with the new openings and occupiers at Victoria Place. However, these concerns should be addressed in the Masterplan's objectives, particularly with regard to smaller, niche and non-commercial cultural and leisure uses.

There are both financial and space constraints to provision. While space constraints have been mitigated to some extent by the opening of Victoria Place development including the Hilton hotel, this primarily caters to the commercial leisure, hospitality and conferencing market. It does not cater to or accommodate cultural or leisure activities, particularly those run by community/ voluntary groups or the public sector that do not make profit but create significant social benefits and civic pride to the town centre, making it more attractive to residents and business. There is limited floorspace available to accommodate these groups and a challenge will be to find an approach that enables sufficient floorspace for such uses within the town centre.

31 The Masterplan

- a) As development comes forward, the Council will expect developers to assess the latest evidence and work with local community and cultural groups to explore potential for space to accommodate cultural or leisure activity. Where loss of community or social uses is proposed, this will need to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS19.
- b) To make better use of existing cultural and leisure spaces, such as the Buzz Theatre as a venue for a range of performance. The Council will publicise these spaces to relevant community organisations and schools etc.
- c) To maximise the benefit of the town's expanded restaurant and bar scene, and improved cinema, and work with stakeholders (local residents, businesses and community groups) to identify opportunities to improve and enhance the day time and evening time economy on offer in the town centre. This may include helping to facilitate an expanded music scene.
- d) To work with existing community groups and businesses, and new occupiers such Italia Conti to maximise the benefits of performing arts in the town centre. Initial ideas would include more outdoor performance to help animate public spaces, particularly at Victoria Place and Jubilee Square. This may require enabling improvements to the public realm, such as more seating and improved spaces for performance. Some ideas can be seen below.
- e) Maximise the connections between culture and heritage, as highlighted in the Heritage report for the Masterplan. This primarily seeks improvements to outdoor spaces and information/ signage to increase appreciation and awareness of protected heritage assets. This could help enhance informal culture and recreation, linking to the Council's social and well-being objectives. Spatially, it focuses on Jubilee Square (with regard to Christ Church and the War Memorial) and on the Canal, the latter being a cultural, heritage and green infrastructure asset in the town. Improvements have already taken place at Woking Wharf, and encouragement of small businesses (in addition to Kiwi and Scot café boat, (image 3), particularly food and drink business, could increase activity and enhance the Wharf as a distinct focal point and small-scale hub of activity.



1



2



2



3



3

- 1 Outdoor amphitheatre at More London, by the GLA building
- 2 Outdoor seating examples that could enable use of space for performance and appreciation of heritage assets
- 3 Basingstoke Canal



COMPLETE RPI Your property our priority

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

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32 Objectives

The objectives for Green Infrastructure in the Town Centre are as follows:

- To take proactive steps to support ‘more, bigger, better and joined up’ habitats, green ways and spaces. This simple but effective ambition should inform all development proposed in the town centre.
- To be tenacious in the long-term effort to reduce our impacts on the environment and to plan for sustainable growth. Ensuring excellent quality, connected greenspaces and a richness of wildlife habitats will contribute strongly to making these visions a reality.
- To increase people’s access to enjoy greenspaces, recognising the well-being lift this gives, whilst protecting and enhancing our habitats. Earlier work has identified the existing network and gaps for potential new provision, and to connect the individual elements to make strong recreational, ecological and environmental networks.
- To ensure that planned development is supported by infrastructure including new natural and recreational assets. Natural Woking seeks to balance these environmental and ecological needs with the development and economic needs of the borough.
- To increase the area of the overall tree canopy cover of the Town Centre and ensure successful establishment and long-term growth potential as well as a diversity of suitable tree species.
- To work collaboratively with partners in all sectors to achieve the objectives.

33 Overview

As a consequence of the impacts of the Pandemic, the link between Green Infrastructure provision and the health and wellbeing of the community continue to be of significant importance.

For the purpose of the Masterplan, the term green infrastructure describes the network of multi-functional green spaces, threading through and around urban and rural areas, which together deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits.

These include biodiversity and habitat creation, supporting mental and physical wellbeing through improved access to green space, reduction of flood risk and improved quality of the urban environment, for example through mitigation and adaptation to climate change, screening and softening, and replenishing oxygen. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will be integral to expanding Green Infrastructure.

Increasingly the economic value of eco-services is being recognised and attempts made to quantify these (natural capital). High quality green infrastructure is also a positive driver of development saleability, property prices and encouraging inward investment, eco-tourism and a strong local economy.

Green infrastructure is made up of different landscape elements, which can often be considered as separate entities, but these together form a whole landscape which exceeds the sum of its individual parts. This is an overarching principle of green infrastructure,

alongside biodiversity connectivity and networks. Biodiversity (biological diversity) encompasses the whole of the natural world, all living things and the rich variety of habitats, species and ecosystems of which they are a part. It is not restricted to rare or threatened habitats and species. Protecting biodiversity and their habitats is critical to creating a sustainable borough.

The advice in this section should be read in conjunction with that elsewhere in this Masterplan, including sections regarding sustainable construction, blue infrastructure, leisure and culture (including sport), and transport.

Woking 2050, the borough's current climate change strategy, provides an overarching vision to coordinate efforts to create a sustainable borough by reducing our impact on the environment. Its 'great outdoors' theme celebrates access to local natural environments, whilst also recognising our responsibility to protect these as a legacy for future generations.

Natural Woking, our biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy, explains in more detail how the council and others will enhance the provision and accessibility of green spaces, conserve existing biodiversity and habitats and creating opportunities for species to return.

Woking borough contains a wealth of green infrastructure assets, each individual element forming part of the wider green infrastructure network. From statutorily designated sites, protected landscapes, formal and informal greenspaces like parks, through to private gardens, individual trees, shrubs and vegetation, these existing assets and the new green infrastructure coming forward through development are making an increasingly significant contribution to Woking's distinctiveness and appeal as a great place to live, work and visit.

The wider landscape is mainly characterised by our areas of the Thames Basin Heaths, being generally low lying with gentle undulations in the landform. The entire heathland has declined over time, becoming fragmented and being overtaken by woodland. The remaining areas of heathland are of significant importance for nature conservation and are protected as such. Although the heathland is outside the Town Centre, there are trees and woodland that play a key role in enhancing the town centre's landscape setting.

A detailed audit of the green infrastructure and biodiversity which the local environment supports is available in Natural Woking, the borough's biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy (see appendix 4 of the Natural Woking Supporting Information guide). This identifies green assets within the borough and outlines the existing protection these are afforded, as a basis for identifying what may be lacking and what approach can be taken to further strengthen and enhance the natural environment and access to it in the future. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan, meanwhile, explains what new green infrastructure is required to meet the levels of growth planned for by the Core Strategy.

This evidence highlights that, whilst green infrastructure is more evident on the outskirts than the borough's central built-up core, the urban areas including Woking town centre are far from absent of green assets.

As [Figure 146](#) and the townscape strategy illustrate, Woking's town centre has a diverse abundance of attractive, accessible green spaces, link routes and sensitive habitats within walking and cycling distance of its boundary. Just a few minutes' journey will take you from the vibrant town centre to amenities such as the Basingstoke Canal and Brookhouse Common, offering the biophilic qualities of nature, and a gateway to, the borough's wider countryside beyond.

Town centres can be a thriving home for many species of trees, shrubs, plants, mammals and birds, which in turn highlight the diversity of habitats needing to be present for such a range of species. The variety of different land uses found in and close to the town centre creates a rich and varied mosaic of habitats. For example, a high-rise building in Woking town centre is a preferred nesting location for peregrine falcons.

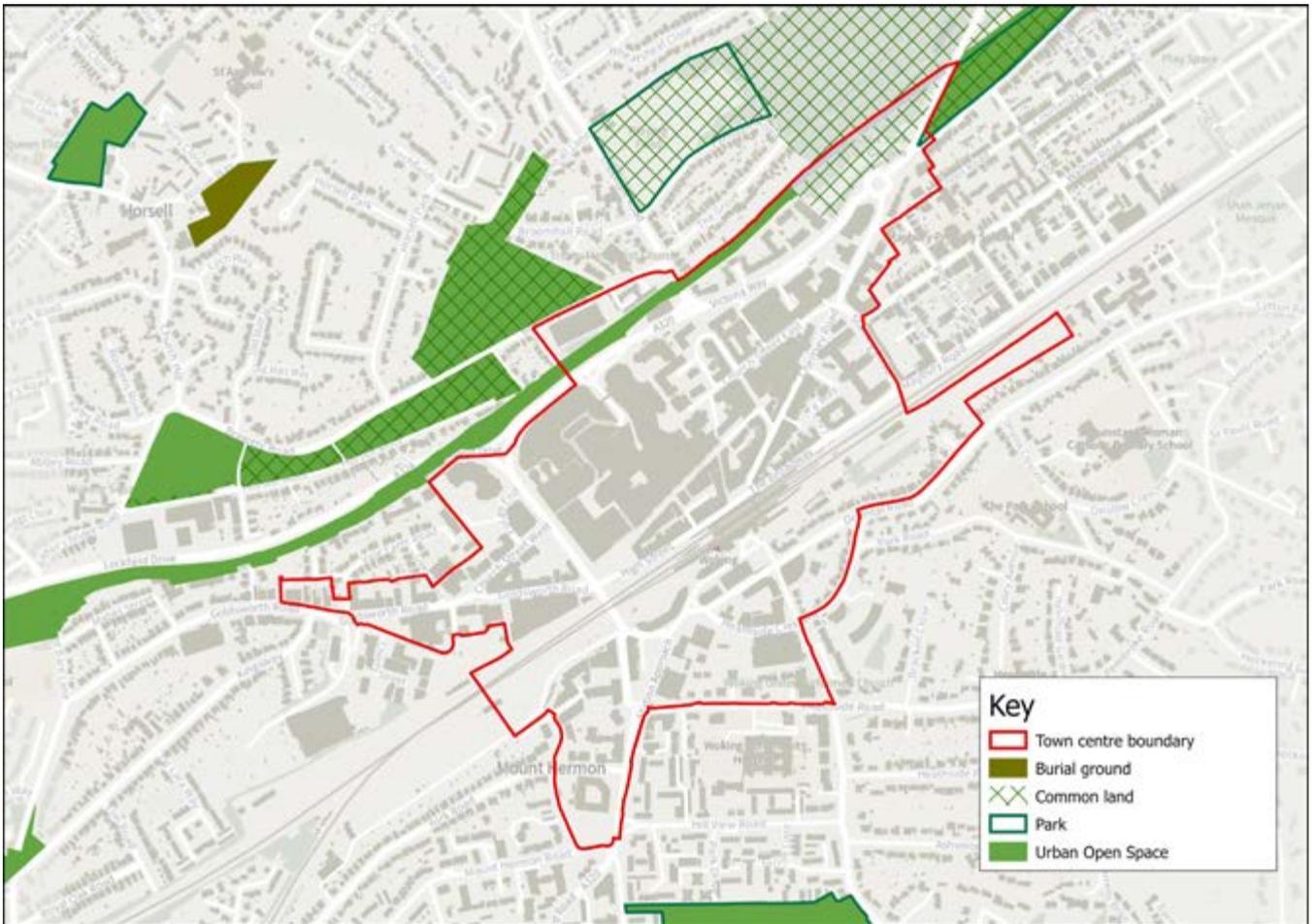


Fig 146 GI map 1 Woking borough green infrastructure network

Green spaces including parks, recreation areas, road and railway verges, and tree lined streets can, depending on their structure and management, support a large number of invertebrate and bird species. In addition to serving as places for recreation, and providing visual amenity, these green (and blue) infrastructure assets additionally act as biodiversity reserves and wildlife corridors for the movement of species from one neighbourhood to another, enabling the dispersal and migration of flora and fauna and, in so doing, bringing more biodiversity into the town.

Urban environments are under pressure. For instance there is a national trend towards surfacing of private front gardens, providing room for car parking but reducing vegetation and space for nature.

At one time the contrast in the amount of green and open space elements between the outskirts and the more central areas of Woking appeared stark. However, a coordinated programme of improvements is now being implemented for central areas. The town centre has a range of well-defined urban open spaces, and the borough council is leading by example by incorporating additional green infrastructure into Woking town centre's urban fabric. This is being delivered through public realm improvements and new developments, via street tree planting and landscaping, living walls, green roofs, roof gardens, rain gardens, bird nest boxes and similar, working collaboratively with a range of partner organisations to create and maintain these features.

Elsewhere the council partnered with Natural England to pilot the new great crested newt district level licencing, so far delivering extensive habitat improvements for the species south of the town, and could be a part of Biodiversity Net Gain to meet development requirements of the Town Centre.

Figure 147 illustrates the existing network of green infrastructure in the Town Centre.

Figure 148 (images) show a range of examples of what can be achieved.



Fig 147 GI map 1 Woking Town Centre green infrastructure network

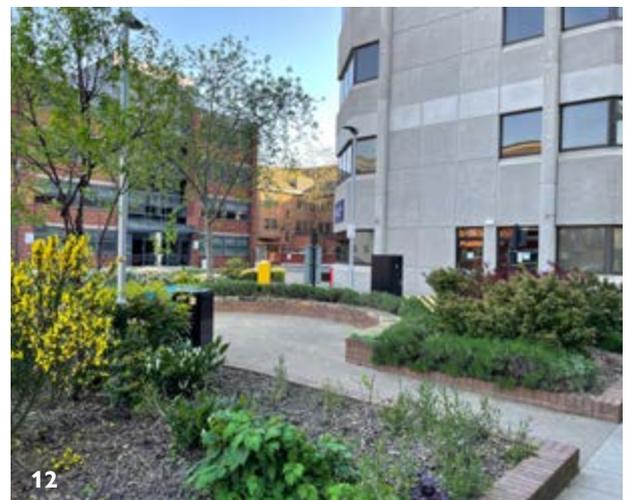


Fig 148 Existing green infrastructure and biodiversity measures in **Page 262**



- 1 Peregrine falcons (photograph by James Sellen)
- 2 Basingstoke Canal
- 3 Tree lined street Commercial Way
- 4 Landscaping New Central development
- 5 The 'Cushion Garden'
- 6 Urban open spaces
- 7 Amalanchier trees by Island House Jubilee Square
- 8 The Cushion Garden
- 9 Tree planting and landscaping, tree by Christ Church Jubilee Square
- 10 Open space in town centre
- 11 Landscaping, New Central development
- 12 The Cushion Garden
- 13 Victoria Square including silver birch trees

34 Opportunities

The Core Strategy established a presumption against the loss of open space and play facilities, except where it can be demonstrated that there is an excess of provision, or where alternative facilities of equal or better quality will be provided as part of the development.

There are clear needs, which translate into opportunities, for future provision of green infrastructure (habitat) in the borough, to which the town centre will significantly contribute.

At a strategic level, green infrastructure must be able to cope with and as far as possible respond to existing and future demands for green space and outdoor recreational facilities whilst also responding to issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation.

There is a need to ensure good access to locally based green space and outdoor recreation facilities, supporting both casual use and organised activities for residents and for those who visit or work in the borough.

There is a need to provide opportunities for individuals and organisations to access activities which develop personal health and well-being, encourage community spirit, provide for life-long learning and promote the area as an attractive place.

The need for quality standards which provide for a clean, healthy and safe environment and ensure that recreational facilities meet the standards expected by the community for formal and informal activity.

The protection and enhancement of Woking's high quality natural environments including landscapes and wildlife habitats. An existing policy requirement for schemes to deliver a biodiversity net gain will, in November 2023, become a national mandatory requirement for most developments to formally demonstrate and deliver at least a 10% uplift in biodiversity net gain.

There is clear potential to link together green infrastructure assets within the Town Centre and where possible beyond the Town Centre and borough to strengthen our green infrastructure network. This will also benefit biodiversity by increasing habitat connectivity, building nature recovery networks. Multifunctional links and spaces are ideal in this respect. Town centre development has a key role in contributing to expanding such connectivity, through scheme design and financial contributions to off-site infrastructure such as SANG. Figure 30 illustrates the geography of green infrastructure opportunities in the borough.

Improving integration of the Basingstoke Canal into the town centre, currently a somewhat hidden jewel, by making it more known about, easily accessed and enjoyed.

Inclusiveness and accessibility for all - except where access would harm wildlife or their habitats.

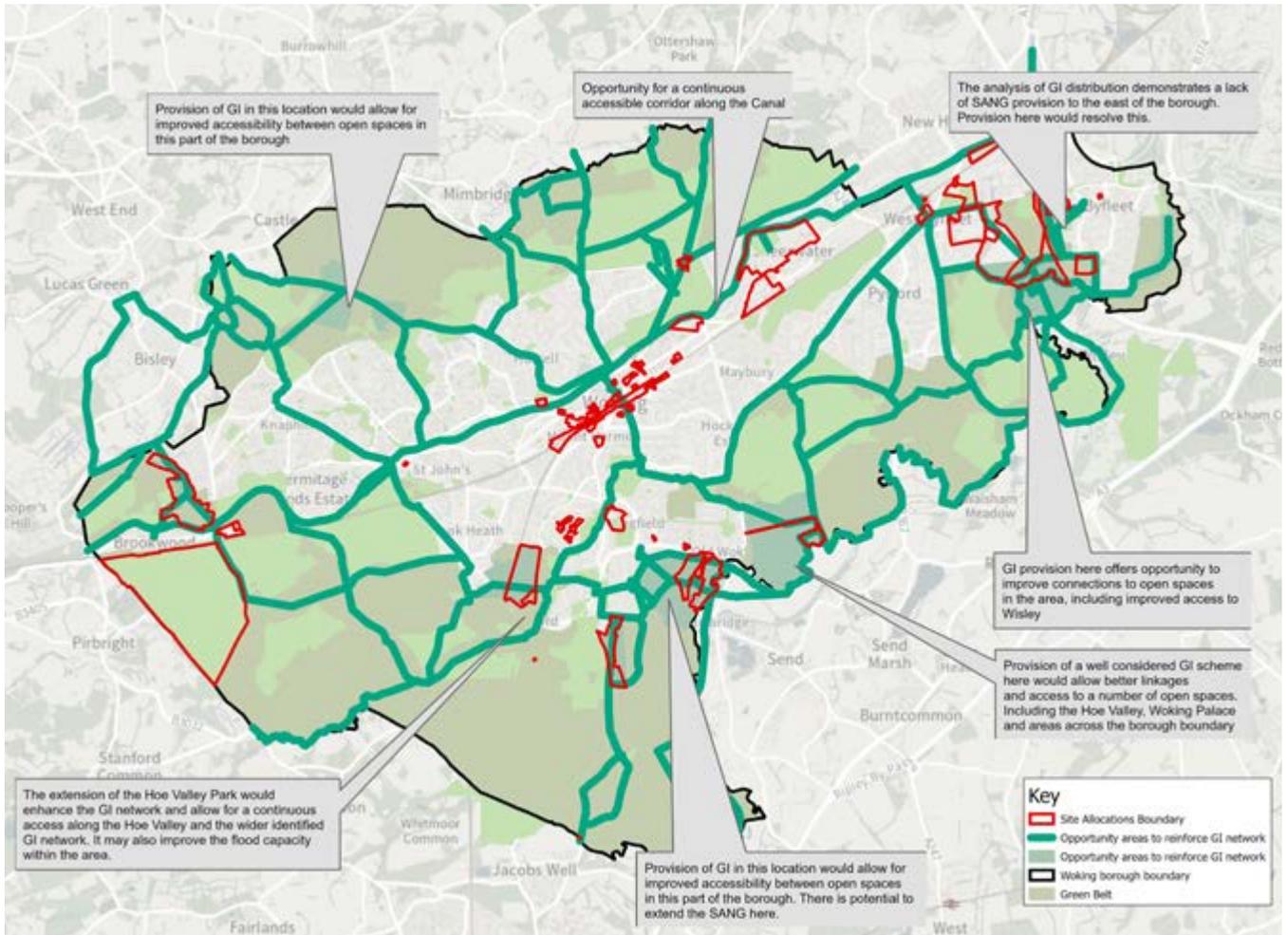


Fig 149 Borough wide Green Infrastructure network

Cohesiveness in the design and detailed specification of green spaces, features and planting throughout the town centre, through having regard to existing infrastructure and continuing or complementing these. High quality, innovative design is also welcomed where this will sit comfortably within its visual context.

Awareness raising through visibility, where appropriate access and interpretation signage, helping understanding of in particular the more innovative green infrastructure and/or habitat measures.

Designers of new development in Woking town centre must consider the ways in which their new build or conversion schemes can contribute to fulfilling these opportunities.

35 Constraints

Woking town's urban core is well contained. This compact form features a series of quality urban open spaces, and some green pockets of public or private land, however more green areas and the amenities these offer will benefit the town centre environment.

Under-used publicly owned/managed public realm space is limited, imposing a natural constraint on future opportunities to create new pocket parks and large planting beds. This underlines the importance of taking every opportunity possible to design in new, high-grade, multi-functional green infrastructure into town centre development.

A national challenge is the declines seen over time in our natural environments including in the populations of many species, the outcome of a combination of many factors but including climate change, pollution, habitat loss fragmentation and disturbance, changing building and land management practices, and a lack of shared knowledge about species and what they need to thrive.

Artificial lighting can present a significant barrier to sensitive wildlife, such as bats, and disrupt normal nocturnal behaviour patterns.

The State of Surrey's Nature notes the important role of urban environments for wildlife is often overlooked but these areas can in fact offer an improved sanctuary to some species that are under greater pressure elsewhere.

Some wildlife is very dependent on buildings for breeding, including birds such as the starling, swift, house martin and swallow, as well as many of the commoner bats (ibid). Unless specifically designed in, modern buildings exclude such eaves nesting sites.

An absence of connectivity within, to and from the centre and its surrounds inhibits the natural migration and colonisation throughout ecological networks. Detached habitats lead to vulnerability and species losses.

The barrier effect of the railway also hinders ease of movement, particularly walking and cycling into and out of the town centre in a north/south direction due to limited crossing points. This includes Victoria Arch and the railway station subway.

Modern property boundary treatments like fencing can be impermeable or hazardous to wildlife. Grey infrastructure such as road and rail corridors act as barriers to movement of land-based species. Yet at the same time their often tree/shrub edged fringes and verges provide habitat, their linear forms are a preferred flight path for bats, and they offer opportunities for re-connecting to habitat elsewhere.

36 The Masterplan

To ensure that development plays a significant role in delivering green infrastructure and biodiversity gains.

The development sites allocated by the Site Allocations DPD provide a clear basis and requirement to introduce new natural and formal spaces, greenways and habitats on site, connecting these to surrounding existing and other new provision. The key requirements for each allocated site 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.

Smaller development proposals will also be required to bring forward smaller, incremental improvements or may be required to pay towards off-site provision via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 legal agreements.

The Council will seek to ensure that development proposals are policy compliant to be acceptable. The Core Strategy establishes the strategic approach to green infrastructure provision. The policies of the Development Management DPD then set out more detailed criteria for developers in terms of identifying opportunity areas for green infrastructure extension and enhancement. These include trees and landscaping, outdoor sport and recreation, development near the Basingstoke Canal, environmental pollution, air and water

quality, and noise and light pollution.

When considering the function and design of green infrastructure assets designers should consider sustainability issues relevant to the development site, which new or enhanced green infrastructure assist to address.

Early consideration of green infrastructure and biodiversity requirements is strongly recommended, to make space for green infrastructure spaces and features from the outset in all design processes. These needs cannot be properly planned for as an add-on at the end. A lack of early consideration of these issues will not justify poor or no such provision within a development proposal. It is important to make space for nature, green space and links from the outset in all design processes.

Adoption of an integrated design approach will support delivery of these environmental plus the development's other key objectives, as part of an overall sustainable design. In some cases, multiple aims can be achieved through a single space or feature. Early engagement with the borough council during the iterative design process is encouraged.

New development will be expected to deliver the following, as appropriate to the nature, scale and position of the proposal.

In accordance with Policy DM1, where new or enhanced green infrastructure (GI) is proposed and/or is required as part of a major development, the following information should be submitted:

- a description of any GI assets affected by the development, and how the development seeks to incorporate and/or enhance and/or conserve them
- a map of new GI assets
- a short statement of the functions and benefits achieved by the provision of the GI asset(s) e.g. wildlife habitat, surface water flooding alleviation.

More information on these topics is available where cited and from the further resources, including appendix 8 of the Natural Woking supporting information guide's specific advice for land managers and developers.

Development schemes should contribute to the goal of better connecting the town centre core out to its edge and beyond to the residential hinterland and attractive greenspaces beyond. The following measures are specifically intended to achieve that.

Figure 149 illustrates the geography of green infrastructure opportunities in the wider borough. This seeks to link the urban core (in particular Woking town centre) with the natural open spaces within the wider borough by identifying a series of radial routes connecting to the wider countryside. Connections between these green corridors of a quiet nature are also shown. Whilst there is no absolute science behind this approach, hence the routes illustrated are not definitive, they do represent a good guide of what is expected to be achieved.

There is a need to enhance access to green spaces across Victoria Way, which acts as a barrier for walking and cycling. Connections from the north of the town centre offers particular opportunities to link into Woking

Heaths (which includes Horsell Common) and to the south the River Wey and tributaries Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). In the future regard should also had to the Urban Biodiversity Area for Byfleet to Woking and Knaphill (UrBOA 05) and to the proposed nature recovery strategies.

The strengthening of an area's green infrastructure network is a flexible and iterative process. The most appropriate method or route for enhancement will depend on the circumstances of a site together with a clear understanding of what is to be achieved. In this regard, early engagement with the Council to determine what is appropriate for a particular proposal is encouraged.

The growing network of SANG (existing and proposed) sites will continue to contribute to the borough's wider green infrastructure network. Development will be required to contribute towards the provision of SANGs through CIL payment or Planning Obligations where relevant.

Permeability for pedestrians and cyclists around and where appropriate through schemes, utilising linear tree, shrub and other planting to form green connections within the town centre, will help to link into green corridors beyond. The local walking and cycling plan also identifies walking and cycling networks that would connect Woking town centre to surrounding areas.

Details of requirements relating to improvements to the walking and cycling network are set out in the General Infrastructure and Transport sections.

There are certain instances where requirements cannot be met on site

Where required on-site provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement has been fully explored through the design process but cannot be fully realised within the development site's boundaries, consideration should be given to how effective functional provision can be made elsewhere in the borough.

In this regard a whole borough view will be taken to green space management and creation, to enable proactive delivery of more high-quality habitats and good physical connections between these; and to benefit wildlife and local people alike, whilst conserving biodiversity and maintaining existing species and their habitats. This approach will also better prepare for and respond to the inevitable changes in climate predicted for our area.

The following offers a practical guide to help deliver our Green Infrastructure objectives.

Soil

- Soil is the main medium in which most green infrastructure assets are grown. The protection of soil during development is important to safeguard future ability to grow vegetation and protect water quality.
- Maximise opportunities to recycle soil during construction projects, in situ or for alternative re-use off site.

Trees and hedges

- Incorporate planting of new trees and shrubs, of suitable size and species, in a manner

and locations which will support them to successfully establish and reach their long-term growth potential, whilst contributing to an increasing tree canopy cover within the Town Centre. The use of underground tree root cell structures recommended for all new tree planting.

- To increase diversity, age structure and diseases resistant species within the overall town centre tree canopy cover, plant using a mix of species both native and exotic.
- Use berry-bearing and nectar-rich blossoming species in suitable locations.
- Identify prominent opportunities for a feature tree to be planted.
- Plant trees for shade near a key building, space or thoroughfare.
- Use hedges and shrub planting rather than fences, to better support wildlife, trap pollution, store carbon and insulate buildings.

Vertical and high-level planting

- The Council encourages all major developments to incorporate eco-roofs and green walls and window boxes.
- Where feasible, the above should be integrated in all development. This may take many different forms and should be sought where the opportunity arises.
- Whilst it is unrealistic to green all roofs in the town centre, all viable opportunities should be taken on flat or shallow-sloped roof profiles to provide green and brown roof(s), following the standard set by current examples.
- A further step is a living roof, which can provide foraging opportunities for birds, and support a range of native plants (subject to suitable building form and structure).

- Where feasible, consideration should also be given to creating accessible roof gardens, terraces and balconies.
- Vertical green planting, through the use of living green walls and supported climbing plants can deliver multiple benefits including cooling, insulation, air quality, carbon storage, habitat and visual amenity.

Habitat provision and connectivity

- Ensure all necessary ecological surveys and advice is in place early on to fully inform the design process.
- Installation of bird nesting and bat/bird roosting features in every new development will provide homes for many species. Specialist boxes, bricks and tiles are available; bricks and tiles are preferred owing to their greater longevity. Introduce water into your design at an appropriate scale. For example, a simple ground-based feature water bowl will assist many species.
- Gardens within the urban area offer can offer many opportunities for wildlife, including the planting of native species, ponds, and links through the creation or retrofitting of hedgehog highways.
- Ensure responsible environmental practices during site construction as well as in the final development. For example: support wildlife movement by maintaining physical corridors; provide temporary nest boxes for (migratory) birds returning to regular breeding sites ahead of re-provision in the final development; request a ‘toolbox talk’ from the Woking Peregrine Project for tall building schemes.
- Utilise fruiting and pollen rich flowering trees, shrubs and plants in suitable locations (away

from the main public realm) to provide natural food sources throughout the year. Design to minimise risk of birds striking glazing panels. Consider the use of translucent glass or marked with spaced dots/lines across its surface (fritted glass).

- In spaces where nature conservation may not be the primary objective (e.g. private gardens, formal parks, footpaths and cycleways) consider how these can be designed and managed sensitively to still help sustain wildlife and serve as a green stepping stone or corridor.

Lighting

- Ensure lighting design is appropriate – lighting can greatly affect wildlife, especially bats – consider designing areas of no or low-level lighting, particularly near green spaces, canal and other watercourses.

Water management

- See the Flood Risk section for information on incorporating a well-designed and maintained SuDS, rain garden or other water management solution.
- Harvest, store and re-use rainwater to provide a local supply for irrigation of living green features in the vicinity.
- Encourage the integration of water within the design of the development where feasible, this may include rain gardens .

Education and engagement

- Design in opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to learn about nature, through appropriate features such as artwork, interpretation signage, community garden beds.

- Making space for nature and green outdoor spaces will support not just biodiversity but also the enjoyment of these by workers, visitors and residents. Being close to nature will help to raise awareness of nature's simple needs – food, water, shelter – and inspire more well-informed action that make a positive difference.

Visual amenity/views

Consideration should be given to the potential impacts of development upon the surrounding green infrastructure network's views back into the town centre. For more information see the landscape character assessment and the Design SPD.

This should include the impacts of development within but close to the town centre boundary and the affects upon views towards this urban fringe and its visual integration into the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Built form, public realm and landscaping specifications

To continue to build a cohesive palette of high-quality materials and detailing throughout the town centre, new development and its associated public realm and landscaping will be expected to have regard to a range of townscape specifications, which are already present through recent public realm or development works or which represent new opportunities to complement these earlier investments in the quality of Woking's central areas.

The following is not exhaustive but gives a flavour of some of the specifications being used to achieve a repeated rhythm of high-grade streetscape throughout the town centre:

- Trees - disease resistance Elms in Commercial Way, Amelanchier's in Jubilee Square, silver birch in Victoria Square, Pyrus Calleryana along Gloucester Walk.
- Well maintained green living walls and other vertical/climber planting
- Horizontal green planting links for wildlife movement and assisting air quality (High Street ivy wall, hedges and shrub planting)
- Green pocket parks (garden r/o Civic Offices)
- Successful green roofs (Middle Walk, new shoppers' car park)
- Tree root pits to give scope for future root growth
- Bird nest boxes (nest boxes integrated within the Dukes Court living wall)

For more information, see the townscape strategy, tree strategy and Design SPD.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act gained ascension in November 2021 and has a two year transition period for its requirements to come into effect. The Act requires a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 10% on development for which Planning permission is granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (there are a few exemptions). The Council currently has no mechanism to secure the mandatory BNG in advance of the effective date of its introduction and does not have a Local Plan Policy which requires a 10% BNG. However, it is important to note that the current up to date policies of the development plan highlights the need for biodiversity enhancement as a result of development, which needs to be applied when determining day to day planning applications until the mandatory requirements are introduced.



Policy CS7: Biodiversity and Nature

Conservation requires 'development proposals to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and geodiversity features and also explore opportunities to create and manage new ones. ... The policy encourages new development to make positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, where appropriate, and the creation of linkages between sites to create a local and regional biodiversity network of wildlife corridors and green infrastructure. It seeks to retain and encourage the enhancement of significant features of nature conservation value on development sites.'

Policy DM1: Green Infrastructure Opportunities stresses that 'the provision of new or enhanced green infrastructure assets will be expected to take any reasonable opportunities to connect to, or enhance, the existing Green Infrastructure Network. Particular attention should be given to enhancing the green infrastructure opportunity areas that provides biodiversity benefits such as biodiversity opportunity areas (BOA) identified in Natural Woking: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy and by Surrey Nature Partnership. The Council will encourage partnership working in the delivery of new or enhanced green infrastructure'

Policy DM2: Trees and Landscaping 'require the design, size, species and placement of trees and other landscape features to take practicable opportunities to realise their multifunctional green infrastructure benefits as set out in Natural Woking: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy, including: connecting the development site to the surrounding green infrastructure network and wildlife habitats'

These development plan policies provide policy justification to seek biodiversity enhancement on the back of proposed development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) also promotes 'the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.' The NPPF is a material consideration to be fully taken into account when determining planning applications.

The Council's preference is for Biodiversity enhancements to be provided on site. Where this could not be achieved for justifiable reasons, a financial contribution will be secured through planning obligations to support biodiversity off site. The Council is in the process of making sure that it is ready to introduce the national requirements when it is introduced in 2023. The Council is happy to work in partnership with Developers to enhance biodiversity using the Policies stated above and to develop its approach to applying the mandatory requirements. His section future-proof to allow the introduction of the mandatory requirements and to request developers to take that into account at the early stage of developing their proposals.

36.1 Delivery

A proportion of funding for green infrastructure provision will come from the CIL. This will contribute towards specific forms of strategic green infrastructure identified and costed in the CIL Regulation 123 list. Currently these include the following forms of open space: outdoor sports, allotments, child play space and teenage play space.

The CIL tariff also includes SPA mitigation through the provision of SANG. The CIL tariff allows for payment in kind, for example land payment, determined on a case-by-case basis.

36.2 Future maintenance

The delivery of a green infrastructure asset does not necessarily signify the end. Developers should be mindful of the long-term maintenance and management requirements.

A maintenance and management plan will be required where provision is on private land.

If the site is to be in public ownership, then the council will manage and maintain these areas through CIL or other available sources of funding. There is usually also a maintenance charge through s106.

Development proposals should clearly demonstrate how green infrastructure spaces and features will be maintained in the future, minimum 10 years, including how, when and who by.

Careful planning and funding are also essential to ensure effective long-term care for green infrastructure spaces and features delivered. Without adequate provisions in place these will degrade over time, as will the benefits secured and potentially also risking safety.

Take up of the most environmentally friendly land management practices viable for existing land and properties is also important.





- 1 Bird box in green living wall
- 2 Living Walls, Dukes Court
- 3 Living Walls, Dukes Court
- 4 Living Walls Dukes Court
- 5 Living walls - example from new shoppers car park
- 6 Living walls - example from new shoppers car park
- 7 Living walls - example from new shoppers car park
- 8 Ivy wall
- 9 Rain garden, Chertsey Street
- 10 Landscaping by Town twinning swift sign
- 11 Horizontal green planting links for wildlife movement and assisting air quality
- 12 Living walls - example from new shoppers car park
- 13 Swift (photo by James Sellen)
- 14 Horizontal green planting links for wildlife movement and assisting air quality





FLOOD RISK AND SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT

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37 Objectives

The objectives for Flood Risk and Surface Water Management in the Town Centre are as follows:

- **The inclusion of SuDS within all development within the TCMP area will help to reduce flood risk to the multiple catchments the area drains to as well as helping to improve water quality to our rivers as required by the Environment Act 2021.**

38 Overview

Woking Borough is a thriving, vibrant and growing community. New developments of all shapes and sizes have the potential to adversely affect surface water runoff and flood risk within the borough if measures are not incorporated into the Masterplan for the sites at the earliest opportunity. Suitable measures have the potential to impact the design, levels, and layouts of developments and therefore it is essential that these are thought about and strategically designed at the planning phase of development to ensure features are integrated into the design and to maximise their benefits.

Parts of the town centre masterplan area are shown to be at risk of surface water flooding, and the areas that are not, contribute to the surface water flooding experienced historically outside of the masterplan area. Therefore, it is essential that any development within the masterplan area incorporates suitable mitigation measures to ensure surface water flood risk is not increased to the site itself or to others.

The majority of the Town Centre Masterplan Area (TCMA) is highly urbanised and very little of the area is natural and permeable meaning rainwater currently runs off uncontrolled overland or through existing piped surface water drainage systems directly into the boroughs watercourses. During intense rainstorms the piped network is often overwhelmed prior to reaching the final discharge points causing water to flood surrounding areas including properties.

The rainwater discharged to the watercourses is untreated meaning that pollutants from highways and other impermeable areas flows straight into the rivers affecting the water quality within it and in turn affecting the biodiversity of those watercourses. After long, dry spells pollutants can build up on hard surfaces and are then washed into the waterways at high concentrations causing existing aquatic wildlife to be killed.

Since a change in legislation to NPPF in 2015 all development that requires planning permission has had to incorporate suitable mitigation measures to ensure flood risk from all sources is investigated and mitigated to ensure flood risk to the development and others is not increased and it must be ensured that any surface water runoff from the site mimics the natural process and where this is not possible it must be discharged as close as reasonably practicable to predevelopment discharge rates.

In addition to developments, small scale measures have started to be retrofitted within the town centre area to deal with discharge from the highway areas which include the incorporation of bioretention features such as raingarden these help to reduce the volume of water discharge from the highways but also provides treatment of the water to reduce the volume of pollutants reaching the boroughs watercourses.



It is vital that any new or retrofitted development does not adversely affect the surface water drainage of site, increasing flood risk to itself or to others as is a requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) mimic nature's way of managing rainfall.

37.1 Flood risk

Surface water flood risk is the main source of flooding that affects the Town Centre, in addition adjacent to the Basingstoke canal, where it is raised above the surrounding ground levels there is also small areas that are classified as rapid inundation zone, as shown in red hatching on [Fig 150](#). Any development proposed within the rapid inundation zone will require a site-specific flood risk assessment, including breach modelling, which demonstrates that the site will be safe for the proposed vulnerability use over the lifetime of the development.

There is an increased likelihood of surface water flooding and sewer flooding in urban areas, due to impermeable surfaces and culverted channels. The Town Centre drains to 4 separate catchments as shown within [Fig 151](#). The northwest of the masterplan area drains to the River Bourne Catchment. The northeast area drains to the Basingstoke canal, the Southeast catchment drains to the Rive Ditch and the Southwest Catchment drains to the Hoe Stream. Each of these catchments has a history of flooding the most recent being in 2016. Due to the nature of surface water flood events, they are very difficult to predict and therefore there is no form of flood warning.

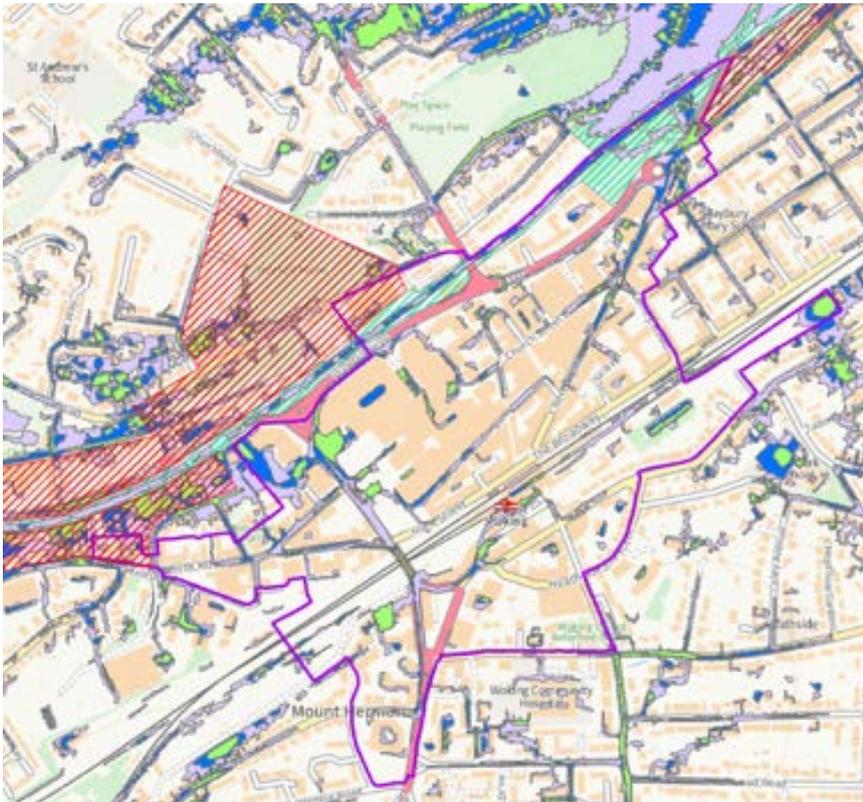


Fig 150 MAP

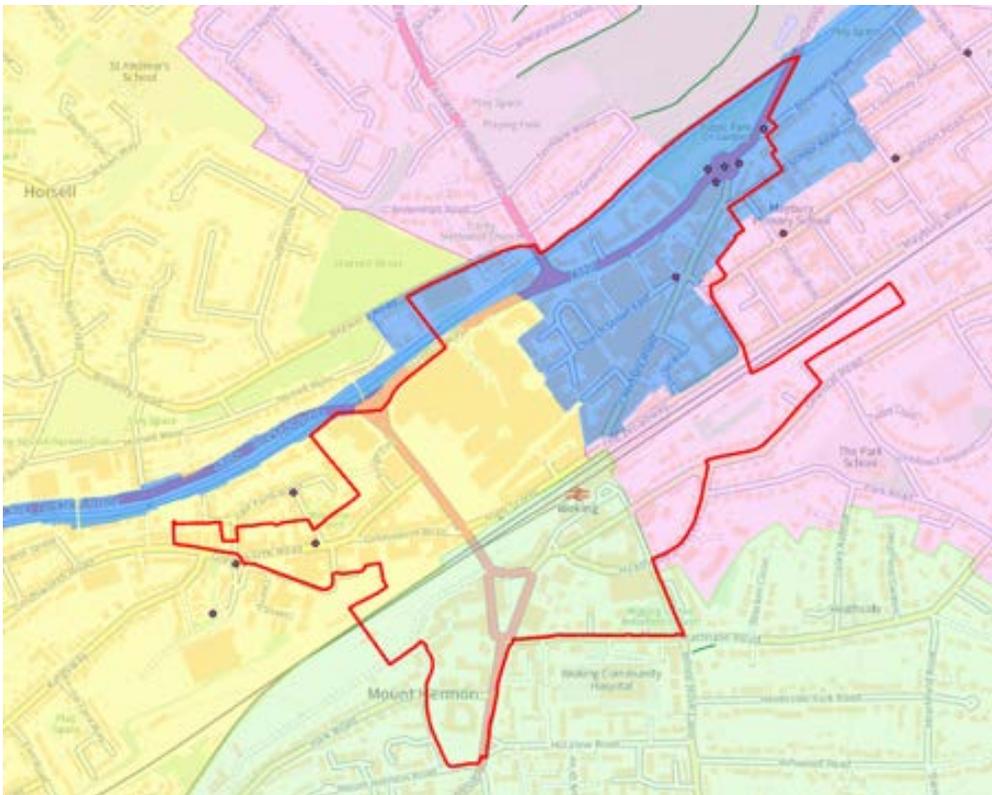


Fig 151 MAP

38.1 River Bourne Catchment

Surface water runoff from the northwest of the Town Centre eventually flows to the River Bourne, located in the north of the Borough. This part of the town is heavily urbanised and includes a large proportion of Victoria Way in addition to the High Street and Goldsworth Road as well as multiple smaller roads within the area. The surface water from this area drains through multiple pipes towards the Basingstoke Canal and then syphoned under the canal in two locations although these networks join up again at Arthurs Bridge Road to the north of the canal and outside the Town Centre. On this network there are historic records of flooding on Arthurs Bridge Road where the pipe network combines, as well as the south side of the canal where properties have flooded internally along Vale Farm Road.

the water is highly alkaline down to the acidic waters in Woodham, Woking. These's water conditions are ideal for a variety of aquatic water plants and in turn provide a perfect habitat for a variety of dragonfly. The Canal interacts in places with the Rive ditch, in some areas and therefore increases in untreated surface water runoff from the Town Centre area can not only adversely affect the rare habitat provided by the canal but also contributes to the flood risk to surrounding properties from the Rive.

38.2 Basingstoke Canal Catchment

Surface water runoff within the northeast of the Town Centre area drains directly to the Basingstoke Canal, which flows along the northern boundary of the Town Centre area. Although the canal upstream and downstream of the Town Centre area is designated as a site of Special Scientific Interest due to the Flora and Fauna found along the entire stretch of the canal, due to the urbanised nature of the canal and its hard banks, the Town Centre section is not designated. The Basingstoke canal is a rare manmade watercourse, which is Groundwater fed, due to the changes in groundwater acidity from its source in Greywell in Hampshire where

38.3 River Ditch Catchment

The southeast of the Town Centre, mainly to the south of the main railway line, flows directly to the Rive Ditch. In 2016, flash flooding from an intense storm which was estimated to have greater than a 1 in 30 (3.33%) return period caused 44 properties to flood internally within the Rive Ditch Catchment area, in some locations the depth of water was over 800mm deep. South of the railway line incorporates mainly residential developments as well as the train station and a carpark, and includes large areas of permeable surfaces include gardens, highway verges and green open space.



Fig 152 photo

38.4 Hoe Stream River Catchment

The Southwest of the Town Centre area drains to the Hoe Stream, this areas is heavily built up and include a large proportion of the A320. The surface water network in the area is known to surcharge and flood White Rose Lane outside of the Town Centre boundary. The last recorded occurrence was in August 2020 and is shown in the photos below although no properties were internally flooded water depths were recorded as just below door threshold levels and due to the surface water entering the foul sewerage system, issues with foul flooding occurred elsewhere on the network. Storm overflows for the foul pumping station within White Rose Lane and discharge untreated foul sewerage into the Hoe Stream were also activated.



Fig 153 photo



39 Opportunities

Water is a natural part of our environment and in Woking Borough we require developments to consider this and design accordingly. Water is a part of everyday life and should not be hidden away. Woking Borough Council welcomes new creative ideas for managing surface water runoff. The benefits of early consideration of SuDS are substantial for developers as well as the communities that will live in the new development.

40 The Masterplan

- SuDS should be considered from the start of a development not part way through. This is particularly important with the location of above ground drainage features as these can be challenging to retrofit effectively and efficiently. The non-statutory standards for SuDs are the minimum standard the council requires all development to comply with in accordance with NPPF, this includes ensure all developments, even those that were previously developed, achieve predevelopment greenfield run off rates. Guidance supporting the design of SuDs can be found within the SuDS Manual 2015 Ciria C753.
- Thames Water should be engaged on major developments at an early stage to determine the appropriate measures for managing sewage and waste water infrastructure to serve development.
- Naturally rain falling onto the ground will either evaporate, be absorbed by the soil or follow over land flows to the nearest watercourse, or pond helping to sustain life by refiling our waterbodies. A sustainable drainage system will mimic this by filtering, infiltrating and attenuating rainwater before it is discharged from the site. A well-designed SuDS system should be easy to install, maintain, low cost to construct and provide betterment to the local community by providing green space, improving air quality and biodiversity. The Key Requirements of the Proposals in the Site Allocations DPD stresses the need for SUDs on specific sites.
- Sustainable drainage systems can enhance existing open space and new development adding character to the Borough with new landscaping and improved surroundings. Careful consideration must be applied to the position and design of SuDS elements to ensure that they form an appropriate and integrated component of the landscape -taking into account all site constraints, including issues of access and safety. This does not cover just the general layout but also the design character and distinctiveness of schemes to ensure special landscapes are retained or established.
- The management of surface water should be carried out as close to the source as possible and consideration needs to be given to the inlet capacity of any drainage feature. Buildings should incorporate suitable designed green/sedum roofs where appropriate to attenuate the 1st 5mm of rainwater prior to the roof discharging through a guttering system or green walls if suitable to the ground system as required with Woking Borough Councils Core Strategy Policy CS9. Open surface features such as raingardens, swales, permeable paving, should be considered in the first instance to allow treatment of the rainwater and attenuation of any flows below the ground. Designs should allow for the attenuation and conveyance of flows through the development and should not rely on end of pipe tank designs which only provide water quantity benefits on their own and no other benefit that properly designed SuDS can provide.

- When selecting SUDS components, the site opportunities and constraints need to be fully considered, it is sometimes schemes that provide a combination of approaches that provide the best results.

Appropriately designed, constructed and maintained SUDS systems are more sustainable than traditional drainage methods as they can mitigate many of the adverse effects on the environment of storm water runoff, for example by:

- Reducing runoff rates (i.e., reduces risk of downstream flooding).
- Reducing additional runoff volumes and runoff frequencies that can exacerbate flood risk and damage water quality of receiving waterbody.
- Reducing pollutant concentrations in storm water, thus protecting the quality of the receiving waterbody.
- Contributing to the enhanced amenity and aesthetics value of developed areas.
 - A SUDS approach to drainage can be implemented for all development sites, although individual site constraints may limit the potential for a solution to achieve maximum benefit for all functions.
- Highways within the town center should be designed to drain via rain gardens and surface water tree pits where appropriate. Creating green/blue streets along Chertsey Road has already begun and it is visioned that this will continue all the way towards the Basingstoke canal, creating raingardens within the Brookhouse Roundabout and existing verge areas. This has the potential to link to the new green street proposed along Goldsworth Road as part of the developments taking place there and linking to the plans of raingardens at the Morrisons roundabout adjacent to Vale Farm Close. There may be opportunities to expand the network of rain gardens throughout the Town Centre.
- To the south of the station, there is also opportunity to incorporate rain gardens and surface water tree pits along White Rose Lane, attenuating some of the excess surface water overflows prior to it reaching the houses. This will connect the Town Centre to the Hoe Stream River Corridor.



Fig 154 photo



GENERAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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41 Objectives

The objectives for General Infrastructure in the Town Centre are as follows:

- **To work in partnership with providers and key stakeholders to ensure that development in the town centre is supported by the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure in the right place at the right time, whether this is by using current spare capacity in existing infrastructure or bringing forward new infrastructure where necessary.**
- **To deliver committed and emerging schemes that will provide efficient and sustainable transport networks – create a high-quality network of streets in and around the town centre, and improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.**
- **To seek opportunities to facilitate the enhancement of infrastructure through new and redevelopment coming forward along Chertsey Road to the east, along Christchurch Way and along High Street / Commercial Way to the centre, and around Goldsworth Road to the west.**
- **To seek opportunities for dedicated cycle lanes North to South and East to West across the Town Centre and enhance existing cycle routes as well as opportunities for secure cycle parking both North and South of the railway line.**

42 Overview

Woking town centre attracts and retains business and people because of its diverse selection of retail, leisure, cultural and office facilities, and its strategic location at the heart of two of the South East's main growth corridors, with exceptional communications and connectivity. After the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now crucial to ensure the town centre is fit-for-purpose into the future by continuing to invest in transport and other infrastructure improvements to support development.

The Council has published an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to assess the infrastructure needs to support future planned growth and how and when they would be delivered, and where relevant at what cost. The IDP assesses needs for transport, education, health care, social and community facilities, green infrastructure, public services and utilities. It also identifies key stakeholders and funding streams necessary to deliver infrastructure requirements.

There are some major schemes currently being delivered to improve highway and sustainable transport infrastructure in the town centre but securing sufficient funding to deliver all of the infrastructure necessary to support growth remains challenging.

To demonstrate its commitment to infrastructure delivery to support development, the Council has set up a cross party Infrastructure Sub Group of the Woking Joint Committee to coordinate infrastructure

delivery in the borough, including within the Town Centre. The Council has also adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy as the primary means for securing developer contributions to fund infrastructure.



43 Opportunities

- Site Allocations DPD recently adopted, which allocates land at Woking Railway Station, bus/rail interchange, railway flyover and Victoria Arch, High Street, Broadway, Station Approach and Victoria Way for essential transport infrastructure improvement
- Infrastructure investment can facilitate appropriate development to enhance vibrancy and vitality of the town centre including during economic recovery from Covid-19
- Good existing relationship with infrastructure providers, including Surrey County Council to improve public transport and cycle/pedestrian facilities in the town centre
- Woking Borough Council is a significant land owner within the town centre which will allow it to lead and strongly influence the infrastructure delivery process
- Significant amount of funding already secured via Housing Infrastructure Fund and Local Enterprise Partnership to improve highway and sustainable transport network to meet additional demand for travel from new homes e.g. Victoria Arch and Woking Flyover
- Significant public realm and wayfinding improvements already achieved, with good quality and quantity of pedestrian-priority spaces - any proposals to update highways to improve traffic flow and movement also brings the opportunity to continue to improve the public realm and increase the town centre's overall attractiveness
- A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been produced and identifies some priorities for investment

44 Constraints

- Barrier effect of the railway, which compromises ease of movement into and out of the town centre in a north/south direction due to there only being limited crossing points – within the town centre boundary, this includes Victoria Arch and the railway station subway
- Accommodating proposed growth in the town centre without putting significant pressure on the existing infrastructure
- Encouraging infrastructure providers / stakeholders to focus their time and resources in Woking as a priority, when they have competing demands from neighbouring boroughs. Infrastructure providers are also all working to different timetables for delivery.
- A broader Use Class Order removes ability of the Local Planning Authority to allocate sites for specific uses to meet infrastructure needs e.g. healthcare infrastructure
- Identifying and attracting appropriate streams of finance, which are subject to a range of external influences and significant risk, particularly in the current economic climate

45 The Masterplan

Specific measures are set out under various infrastructure topics where need has been identified. Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy identifies the town centre for housing, employment, and retail growth, supported by adequate social, community and transport infrastructure as set out in the IDP. The latest IDP was published in 2021 to support the planned growth set out in the Site Allocations DPD. For the Town centre, the Site Allocations DPD allocates land to deliver an indicative 1,264 dwellings and 32,000sqm of office/retail floorspace. Poole Road Industrial Estate, just outside the town centre boundary, has also been allocated to deliver around 41,000sqm of office/warehouse floorspace, and potentially an element of residential development. In addition, the Council will use all its endeavours to deliver 3,300 new homes that would be ‘unlocked’ through the £115 HIF project to replace Victoria Arch and improve transport infrastructure in the vicinity of the Arch.

The following infrastructure requirements have been identified to support growth in the Town Centre:

Transport

- **Woking Integrated Transport Project** – funded by a combination of developer contributions and a grant from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), this multi-modal improvement scheme is now nearing completion and has achieved much to improve the highway network and create a safer, better connected environment for cyclists and pedestrians within the town centre. Works include creation of a new public plaza outside Duke’s Court; a new pedestrian and cycling bridge uniting two sides of the canal path, improving connectivity to the rest of Woking’s cycle and pedestrian routes; the new Bedser Bridge over the canal; a new public plaza outside the railway station; relocating the taxi rank to The Broadway; resurfacing various streets with granite block paving; reconfiguring High Street to a one-way bus lane with widened pedestrian footpath and cycle lane; and improving the highway network at various locations [Fig X]. Resurfacing works along Chertsey Road have resulted in a semi-pedestrianised zone boasting a wide, shared cyclist and pedestrian path, interspersed with rainwater gardens to reduce surface water run-off [Fig X]. The funding has allowed for major improvements to the town centre’s public realm, resulting in improved pedestrian facilities and access to the town centre.
- Victoria Arch Widening Scheme – The Council has been awarded £95m grant towards a £115M project to replace the Victoria Arch and to widen the highway along Guildford Road and Victoria Road, put in place traffic management systems and provide improved pedestrian and cycle routes to Woking Train Station, the town centre, and join up with other existing off-road routes. The project will provide the basis

for significant rail improvements including the Woking Flyover and a new Platform Six. The Council is working in partnership with Network Rail to achieve these rail benefits

- Woking Sustainable Transport Package – This is a LEP funding package which has delivered a series of improvements to Woking’s pedestrian, cycle and bus infrastructure, addressing gaps in the network into/out of the town centre and Woking railway station and aiming to improve the attractiveness of sustainable travel modes. Completion is expected within two years. Details of the package includes a safe, direct route through the town centre between the Victoria Way/Chobham Road junction and Woking railway station; improved cycling parking provision in the town centre; a new shared surface bridge across the canal adjacent to Lockfield Drive highway bridge; and improvements both onboard buses and at bus stops. This project has been designed to complement and integrate with the Integrated Transport Package. It also lays the foundations for Woking’s long-term walking and cycling infrastructure network, which is laid out in the Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Woking LCWIP – see below).
- Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Projects – SCC has worked with WBC to develop a LCWIP which identifies how investment might best be made to increase rates of walking and cycling in Woking. A key objective is to connect the high quality town

centre ‘Core Walking Zone’ and canal towpath facilities with the borough’s surrounding residential neighbourhoods, to create a cohesive network. Priorities for investment in cycling infrastructure are to connect Sheerwater to the town centre and West Byfleet (‘Ceres Trail’), upgrading cycle facilities along Lockfield Drive; improved cycle provision along Oriental Road’s Deimos Trail (a key route improving connectivity with the town centre); and connecting Horsell to the town centre (‘Europa Trail’). To help connect surrounding neighbourhoods to the pedestrian-friendly town centre, priorities for investment in walking infrastructure include along Chertsey Road, from the railway station to Carlton Road; from the railway station to Monument Road; from the canal to College Road; connecting the railway station to Woking College; and links between Horsell and the town centre. Some of the schemes highlighted in green which will help improve gaps in and around the town centre, including Maybury Road]. Both the LCWIP and SCC’s Forward Programme (accompanying the Transport Plan) will provide SCC with the basis for funding bids to support the delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure and the Local Transport Plan. Development will be required to help deliver the cycling and walking infrastructure.

- Woking Railway Capacity Enhancement, including Woking Flyover and a new platform – a project to facilitate an increase in mainline capacity as passenger demand recovers in the longer-term, which would see the upgrade of

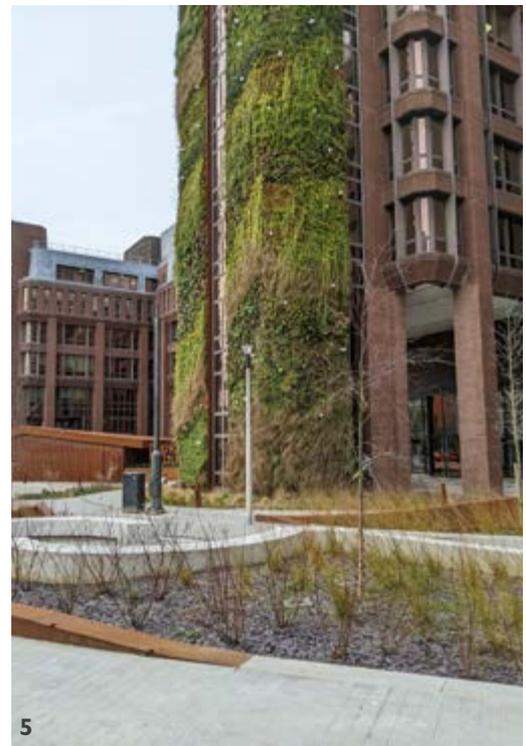


Woking Junction to incorporate a flyover from the Portsmouth Line in the London direction, together with an expansion at Woking Station.

The Council has safeguarded land in the Site Allocations DPD for future transport infrastructure provision. Policy UA7 of the Site Allocations DPD safeguards 9.43ha of land for a transport interchange hub at Woking Railway Station, to include a plaza, bus interchange, railway flyover, improvements to rail facilities and taxi rank to the south side of the station, secure bike parking area within station facilities on the south side, improvements to bus interchange to the north side and improvements to Victoria Arch.



Fig 155 Safeguarded land, policy UA7





3

- 1 Bridge
- 2 Bus infrastructure
- 3 Lightbox
- 4 New Bridge
- 5 Public Plaza, Dukes Court
- 6 Public realm
- 7 Chertsey Road
- 8 Maybury Road
- 9 Public realm, Church Path
- 10 Square Green
- 11 Middle Walk
- 12 High Street Corridor



6



7



8



11



12



Education Infrastructure

- Early Years: The IDP finds that even with additional provision coming forward in the Sheerwater community hub, additional early years provision would be needed in Canalside to support demand arising from town centre housing growth – and this would need to incorporate access to two-year-old funded, affordable places assuming a proportion of new, flatted development is categorised as affordable.
- Primary and secondary: the IDP finds that planned growth in the town centre is not such that it is likely to warrant the establishment of new primary or secondary schools, and demand could be met predominantly through capacity in existing schools or expansion in admission numbers.
- The delivery of additional 3300 homes on the back of the HIF project would generate a need for a two-form entry primary site ideally near the town centre, with the remaining pupils provided for with local expansion across a number of sites, dependent upon availability at the time. Expansion of two 'edge of centre' schools – Bishop David Brown to the east and Hoe Valley to the south – would also need to be considered to accommodate secondary pupils.

Education infrastructure continues to be identified as a priority for CIL investment to address the cumulative impact of development coming forward in Woking.

Healthcare

Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) commissioned Coplug Ltd to assess likely health service requirements and cost impacts of planned growth in the town centre, using up-to-date assumptions associated with new models of healthcare provision. Existing facilities in and around the town centre were mapped, and indicative yields and housing trajectories from the SA DPD were used - a higher incidence of smaller, one person and single couple households was taken into consideration. The model then calculated the healthcare needs to meet town centre growth, illustrated in. It is the CCG's preference to expand or reconfigure existing healthcare facilities in the first instance where it is feasible to do so, and then establish new healthcare facilities which are modern and flexible enough to support implementation of the new workforce model and new ways of working. The Victoria Place development in the town centre includes approximately 600sqm of new medical floorspace to help meet demand arising from housing growth, and there are likely to be opportunities for further on-site provision through redevelopment proposals coming forward. The Council continues to work with the CCG to identify suitable opportunities to improve healthcare infrastructure

Town Centre Outputs to 2027	Healthcare outputs	Floorspace outputs (sqm)	Capital cost outputs (£s)
Acute healthcare provision			
Acute elective inpatient needs	0.10 Beds	4.11	22,748
Acute non-elective inpatient needs	2.04 Beds	98.25	526,836
Acute day case needs	0.52 Beds	24.96	138,999
Total Acute Needs	2.66 Beds	127.32	688,583
Mental healthcare provision			
Mental health needs	1.25 Beds	61.25	338,925
Intermediate healthcare provision			
Intermediate needs	0.67 Beds	43.55	208,091
Intermediate Day needs	0.93 Spaces	48.36	231,466
Total Intermediate Needs		91.91	439,557
Primary healthcare provision			
GP and Primary Care Services	1.52 Clinical Rooms	133.76	628,211
TOTAL		633.47	2,095,277

Fig 156 Town Centre healthcare outputs to 2027, generated by SidM Health data analytics platform, conducted by Coplug Ltd.



Social and Community Infrastructure

Policy C19 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, including that of the town centre.

A new community hub is being delivered as part of the Sheerwater regeneration scheme to help meet needs generated by development in the town centre – this is expected to include nursery, youth, and healthcare facilities.

The Council is working in partnership with SCC to explore the ongoing modernisation of the town centre library through use of new technologies to make services more efficient, engaging and accessible to a growing population. The co-location of interrelated activities at the library is also being explored.

As well as increasing the utility of existing community facilities, there is potential for new multi-purpose facilities to be delivered as part of redevelopment of sites in the town centre, including specialist accommodation and community uses as part of the Goldsworth Road proposal (UA13), and community/cultural uses as part of The Big Apple/HG Wells Conference Centre redevelopment (UA15). The Victoria Place redevelopment, for example, includes new facilities for the performing arts and for bowling.

SE Cambridge Ambulance Service has identified a need for a new ambulance community response post in the town centre to respond to planned growth, and the police force has indicated that increased incidents caused by housing growth in the town centre will generate a need for capital infrastructure to support additional uniformed officers and support/divisional staff. The Council will work in partnership with these service providers to meet the identified needs.

Utilities

- The Council will continue to share development data with utility providers regularly to inform their population and property forecasts and shape their plans to meet the demands of growth. The utility providers have indicated that town centre growth is likely to require reinforcement of their networks in order to sustain current levels of service and stem the loss of capacity due to additional loads imposed by development, including for water, wastewater, gas and electricity. Developers will need to engage with providers early in the development management process to review specific needs.
- UK Power Networks have identified a particular need for high and low voltage reinforcements to respond to an increased demand for electric vehicles – the town centre EV network is expected to expand. Individual circuits and substations will be prioritised accordingly, as and when this new load materialises.
- The decentralised heat network will expand to help meet energy demands from planned growth, including under Victoria Arch to reach areas to the south of the railway [see section on Sustainable Construction].

Digital

New development in the town centre will be expected to be designed to enable high-quality and future-proofed broadband connectivity, in accordance with policy DM21 (and amended Building Regulations). Whilst the town centre enjoys good digital connectivity, improvements to enable gigabit-capable broadband and 5G coverage will be required. [See section on economy)



TRANSPORT

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46 Objectives

The objectives for Transport in the Town Centre are as follows:

- **In addition to the above Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council have jointly developed a number of schemes that will make it easier to travel on foot, by bike and by bus to and from Woking town centre and railway station as part of the Woking Sustainable Transport Package (WSTP). Some of these works have already been completed and some still to be completed. They will:**
- **Support the town centre regeneration and other development planned in Woking Borough, by improving access to the town centre and helping to lower traffic congestion**
- **Increase the range of sustainable travel options, which have a lower impact on local air quality and lower carbon emissions**
- **Make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk and cycle short journeys in Woking, giving more people the opportunity to enjoy healthy, physical activity as part of their everyday travel**
- **To introduce dedicated lanes for mobility scooters where it is feasible to do so.**

47 Overview

Transport accounts for 30% of the Borough's carbon footprint. Whether you live, work or visit the Borough, the Council would like travelling around Woking to be easy while also contributing to and maintaining cleaner, greener borough. The Council's priority would be that walking, cycling and public transport will be the first choice for short journeys. Not only does this benefit local air quality and carbon emissions, there are clear health and wellbeing advantages of Active Travel.

Much of the provision of transport infrastructure has been covered under General Infrastructure. It is not intended for this to be repeated. This section on transport focuses on key elements of the transport provision and should be read in conjunction with the General Infrastructure section.

Woking Borough Council has recently made considerable investment into the town centre for sustainable transport infrastructure. Working in partnership, Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council have recently completed the Woking Integrated Transport Project (WITP) a multi-million pound highway improvement project delivering new infrastructure to transform the highway network and significantly enhance traffic flow in the area whilst make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and stimulating economic growth in Woking town centre work.

The works range from minor highway changes, resurfacing works and creating new junctions to relocating the existing town centre taxi rank.

The project has improved the town centre for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors. The Woking integrated transport project was funded by developer contributions and a grant of £11m from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership.

Since 2016 when the project began, Woking Borough Council has achieved much to improve the highway network and create a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians within Woking town centre. A summary of the works completed is below.

- Created a new public plaza outside Duke's Court with a Green wall and restaurant complete with green roof.
- Created a pedestrian footbridge across the Basingstoke Canal at Chobham Road
- Improvements to Maybury Road junction with Stanley Road.
- Created new bus lane and Town Wharf bus stop along Victoria Way.
- Removed planters and widened Church Path before resurfaced with granite block paving.
- Created new pedestrian public plaza outside railway station.
- Relocated the taxi rank to The Broadway.
- Resurfaced Chapel Street with granite block paving.
- Rebuilt and resurfaced The Broadway and bus bays with granite block paving.
- Reconfigured High Street to a one-way bus lane, widened the pedestrian footpath, incorporated a contra-flow cycle lane and resurfaced the highway.



- Extended High Street and created new junction with Victoria Way.
- Adapted Goldsworth Road to incorporate new box junction and reconfiguration of junction with Victoria Way.
- Rebuilt and resurfaced Stanley Road.

In addition to the above, Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council have jointly developed a number of schemes that will make it easier to travel on foot, by bike and by bus to and from Woking town centre and railway station as part of the Woking Sustainable Transport Package (WSTP). Some of these works have already been completed and some still to be completed. They will:

Support the town centre regeneration and other development planned in Woking Borough, by improving access to the town centre helping to lower traffic congestion

Increase the range of sustainable travel options, which have a lower impact on local air quality and lower carbon emissions

Make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk and cycle short journeys in Woking, giving more people the opportunity to enjoy healthy, physical activity as part of their everyday travel.

48 Opportunities

There are further opportunities for improvements to transport provision through the Victoria Arch widening scheme. Homes England have provided Woking Borough Council with the opportunity to improve the road and rail infrastructure at Victoria Arch when in 2020, following approval by Woking Borough's elected members a contract was signed between the borough and Homes England to deliver the £115 million (£95 million grant from Homes England) highways enhancement scheme, Woking's biggest infrastructure project to date.

The highways works will comprise of a number of changes to the A320 (Guildford Road) to facilitate better access into and through the town centre. The proposed works include:

North of Victoria Arch (Victoria Square development side of the bridge)

- Widened highway on the western side of Victoria Way.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle link along Victoria Way.
- Left turn moved from Goldsworth Road to Church Street West.

South of Victoria Arch (The Triangle side of the bridge)

- Removal of the one-way gyratory system and replacement two-way dual carriageway.
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycle paths.
- Installation of four new toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Revised junction at Heathside Road to provide a left in and left out to/from Guildford Road.
- Improved informal pedestrian crossing island near York Road to ease access to the bus stop.
- Improved informal pedestrian crossing facilities near Constitution Hill.



49 Constraints

The railway line is a key barrier to travel and transport within Woking town centre. The historic road layout underneath and on either side of the Victoria Arch railway bridge create a pinch-point for traffic resulting in significant peak-time congestion. These issues have restricted local growth and housing development opportunities for many years. Demand for housing in Woking is high, leading to an unmet affordable housing need. Research suggests that developers are willing to develop in Woking, but are restricted by the lack of transport infrastructure which places a significant burden on development viability. It has been a long held aspiration of Woking Borough Council to address these issues by upgrading the highways configuration and widen the Victoria Arch bridge to benefit all users and unlock development sites for much needed town centre housing. Historically, this has been constrained by the substantial investment required to deliver such major improvements and the timely alignment of Network Rail's strategic objectives and resources.

50 The Masterplan

Deliver the Victoria Arch Widening Scheme which will have the following benefits:

- Substantial improvement to movement within the town centre
- Reduced town centre highway congestion
- Improved cycling and walking facilities linking the town centre under the Victoria Arch to the southern part of Woking town and around the railway station
- Improved sustainable travel mode options to support the climate change agenda
- An enhanced railway bridge, funded and delivered as part of this HIF project, supports future Network Rail objectives such as Woking Station redevelopment, and future Flyover (yet to be given the go ahead by the Department for Transport), will significantly increase passenger capacity on the Wessex Region rail network which will underpin both local and regional growth.
- Improvement to the town centre highway will unlock housing development potential as 13 town centre brownfield sites, which will provide up to 3,304 extra town centre units over and above existing commitments. Affordable housing provision will be included within this allocation.
- Continues the regeneration of Woking town centre, which benefits the wider borough and supports the Council's ambition of being a regional focus of economic prosperity
- The Council will work with Surrey County Council to explore the feasibility of introducing Liveable Neighbourhoods where it is reasonable and justified.
- The Council will work with developers and partners to expand the use of the Transport Plan and promote its benefits in accordance with the policies of the Core Strategy.
- Improve connectivity for walking and cycling including across Victoria Way from Goldsworth Road.
- Enhance connections for cycle access throughout the Town Centre.
- Make it easier, safer and more pleasant to walk, cycle or use pedestrian controlled vehicles, such as mobility scooters to give more people the chance to enjoy healthy, lower carbon and less polluting options as part of their everyday travel.



DELIVERY

51 Overview258

51 Overview

The Masterplan will lead to a continuous process at the Town Centre. In this regard, the delivery of the Masterplan will be continuous, sustained, coordinated and sustainable. There would be barriers and challenges along the way such as national economic factors that are beyond the Council's control, however, the Council will work constructively with its partners to find creative solutions to these challenges.

The key delivery mechanisms for the Masterplan will through:

The Development Management process, ensuring that development proposals are policy compliant and in general conformity with the requirements of the Masterplan and other Supplementary Planning Policy Documents to be acceptable. The Council will not compromise on good quality design;

Ensuring that development is of high environmental standards. Meeting our climate change and environmental standard is a primary objective of the Council to be taken full account;

- The rationalisation of public sector assets to achieve comprehensive development/ redevelopment where necessary;
- The use of compulsory purchase powers and Article 4 Direction where that can reasonably be justified;
- Work with partners to undertake joint venture schemes that has wider community benefits;

- Securing developer contributions to align infrastructure provision to development;
- Public sector investment in infrastructure to create the environment for business investment;
- Engagement with local villages, communities and neighbouring authorities to ensure that their views are considered in the development management process;
- Effective engagement with councillors to ensure that their views are considered in the development management process.
- The changes envisaged in the Town Centre will require more than physical intervention, it will also require partnership working, promotion and branding of the opportunities that exists at the Town Centre.

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Woking

Town Centre Masterplan

Site specific guidance

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DRAFT REPORT

04 JULY 2022

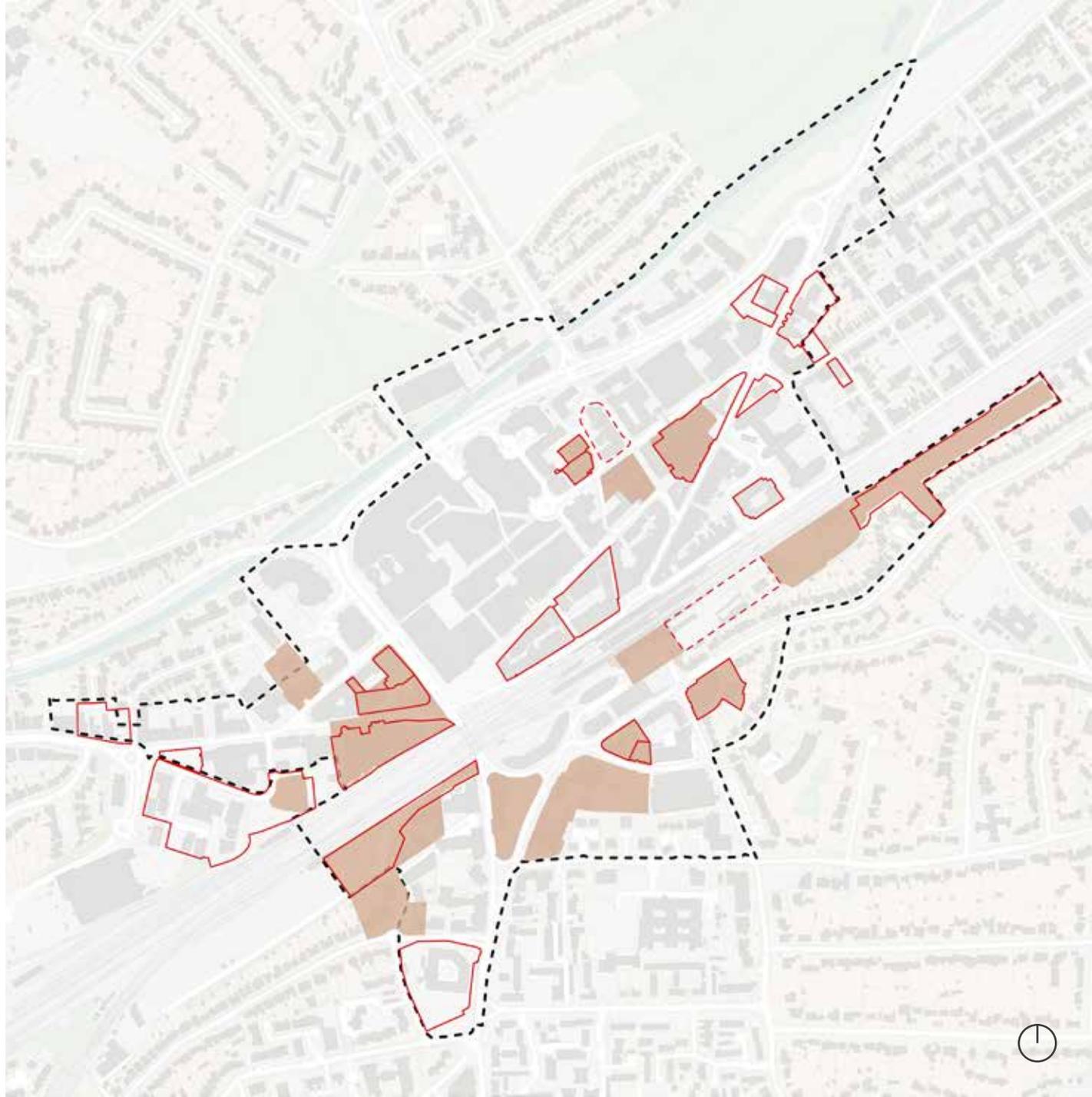
SITES

- UA2 Trizancia House, UA3 Chester House
- UA4, UA6 High Street and Commercial Way
- UA5 The Cornerstone
- UA8 Former Goldsworth Rd Arms
- UA9 113-129 Goldsworth Road
- UA10 MVA House (HIF8)
- UA11 1-7 Victoria Way (HIF8)
- UA13 30-32 Goldsworth Road (HIF8)
- UA14 Poole Road industrial estate (HIF12)
- UA15 The Big Apple (HIF11)
- UA16 Chertsey House
- UA17 Griffin House, UA18 Concord House (HIF10), Chobham Road (W1)
- UA25 101-121 Chertsey Road
- UA28 29-31 Walton Road
- UA30 Walton Road Youth Centre
- UA31 Car Park (East) Station (HIF2)
- UA32 Royal Mail Depot (HIF1)
- UA33 Coal Yard (HIF3)
- UA34 Quadrant Court
- UA35 The Crescent, UA36 Somerset House (HIF6)

- HIF4 Police Station
- HIF5 Station Plaza
- HIF9 BHS
- HIF7 The Triangle
- HIF13 Church Gate

- Station sidings (W2)

- HIF site
- Local Plan site allocation
- Windfall site



MASTERPLAN

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- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- Parking (surface)
- Parking (decked)
- Potential for taller building
- Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT CAPACITIES

Two targets are reported in this capacity schedule. The first relates to the Local Plan site allocations and the second relates to HIF sites. The balance in relation to each of these targets reflects the development potential of each site according to the masterplan as well as the number of homes which have already been delivered on each site.

Notes:

- All capacities are subject to further, detailed design work
- All dimensions in sqm unless specified otherwise
- GEA areas measured from OS Map
- Av. apartment = 100 sqm GEA
- Av. apartment = 72 sqm NIA

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Site

UA2 Trizancia House, UA3 Chester House

UA4 1-6 High Street and Commercial Way

UA5 Former Goldsworth Rd Arms

UA7 11-129 Goldsworth Road

UA10 MVA House (HIF8)

UA11 1-7 Victoria Way (HIF8)

UA13 30-32 Goldsworth Road (HIF8)

UA14 Poole Road industrial estate (HIF12)

UA15 The Big Apple (HIF11)

UA16 Chertsey House

UA17 Griffin House, UA18 Concord House (HIF10), W1 Chobham Road

UA28 29-31 Walton Road

UA30 Walton Road Youth Centre

UA31 Car Park (East) Station (HIF2)

UA32 Royal Mail Depot (HIF1)

UA33 Coal Yard (HIF3)

UA34 Quadrant Court

UA35 The Resent, UA36 Somerset House (HIF6)

HIF4 Police Station

HIF5 Station Plaza

HIF7 The Triangle

HIF9 BHS

HIF13 Church Gate

W2 Station sidings

Indicative capacities of the Woking Town Centre Masterplan					Targets and balance					Targets and balance			Targets and balance	
Residential		Employment	Retail/F&B	Community	Total housing on site as per original HIF bid	Local Plan indicative	Expected delivery of planning permissions	Balance against number in HIF bid	Balance against Local Plan	Local Plan target	Has received permission	Balance	Local Plan target	Balance
GEA sqm	Dwellings	GEA sqm	GEA sqm	GEA sqm	Dwellings	Dwellings	Dwellings	Dwellings	Dwellings	GEA sqm	GEA sqm	GEA sqm	GEA sqm	GEA sqm
2,272	23	8,121	-	-		64		23	41	8,000		121		
19,074	191	833				199		191	8	4,000		3,167		
3,442	34		572			43		34	9			-		
5,530	55		619			55		55	0			-		
										16,719	19,800	3,081		
886	9									3,000		3,000		
					1,205	180	928	268	757	10,000		10,000		
23,197	232	5,076	547		120			112	232	49,000	3,168	40,756		
6,754	68	6,535	754	2,225	400	67	68	264	69			6,535	4,049	1,824
		1,300								1,000		300		
5,818	58	6,932			200			142	58	3,500		3,432		
1,048	10					10		10	0			-		
1,648	16			282		16		16	0			-		
14,453	145				400	250		255	105			-		
5,973	60				200	88		140	28			-		
18,342	183	236		396	400	100		217	83			236		
6,837	68	8,280		1,392				68	68	1,000		7,280		
7,868	79				150	20		71	59			-		
												-		
21,109	211	2,908			600			389	211			2,908		
4,840	48	664	457	650	200			152	48			664		
4,052	41	694	1,514		300			259	41			-		
9,525	95		394		200			105	95			-		
3,890	39				180			141	39			-		
												-		
5,202	52							52	52			-		
												-		
												-		
TOTALS	171,756	1,718	41,579	4,857	4,945	4,555	1,092	996	1,841	1,622	96,219	32,366	4,049	1,824

* Note that any minor discrepancies in capacity reporting is likely to be a result of rounding in spreadsheet calculations.

EXISTING MASSING

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction



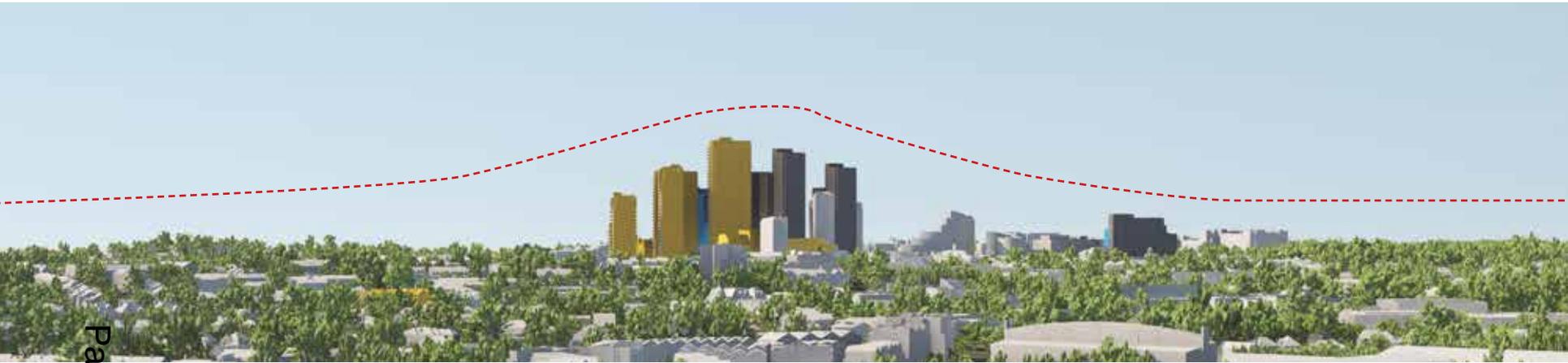
PROPOSED MASSING

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Proposed scheme

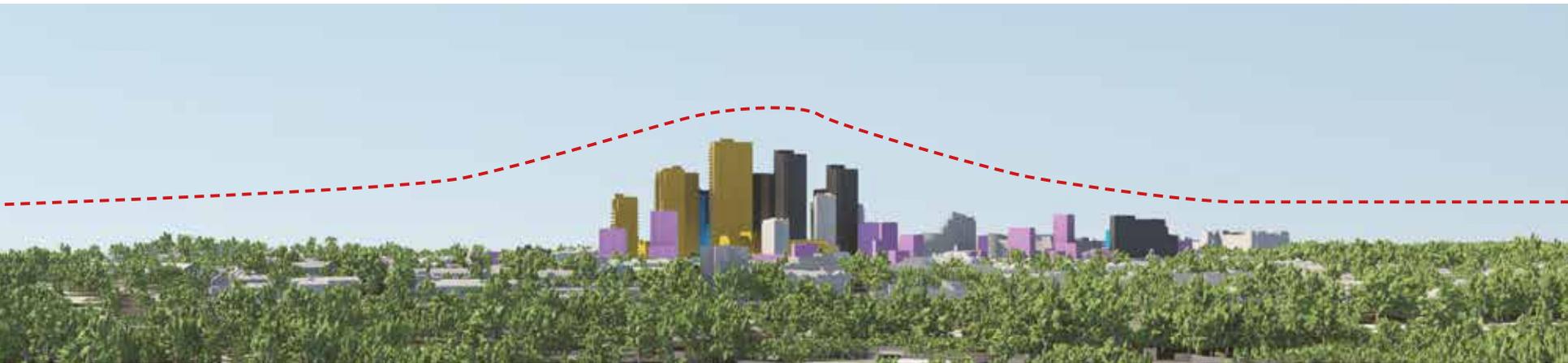


- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Proposed scheme

Existing skyline facing North

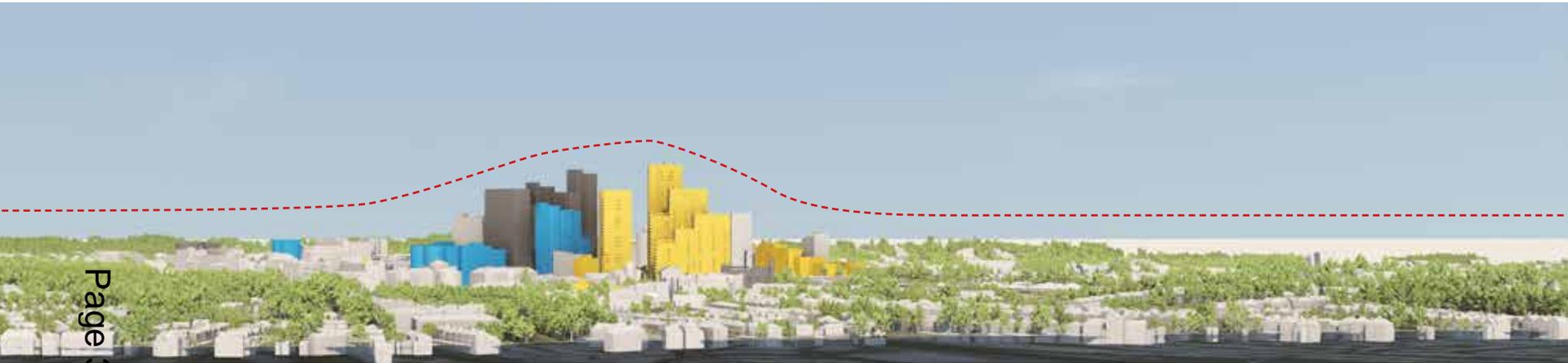


Potential skyline facing North



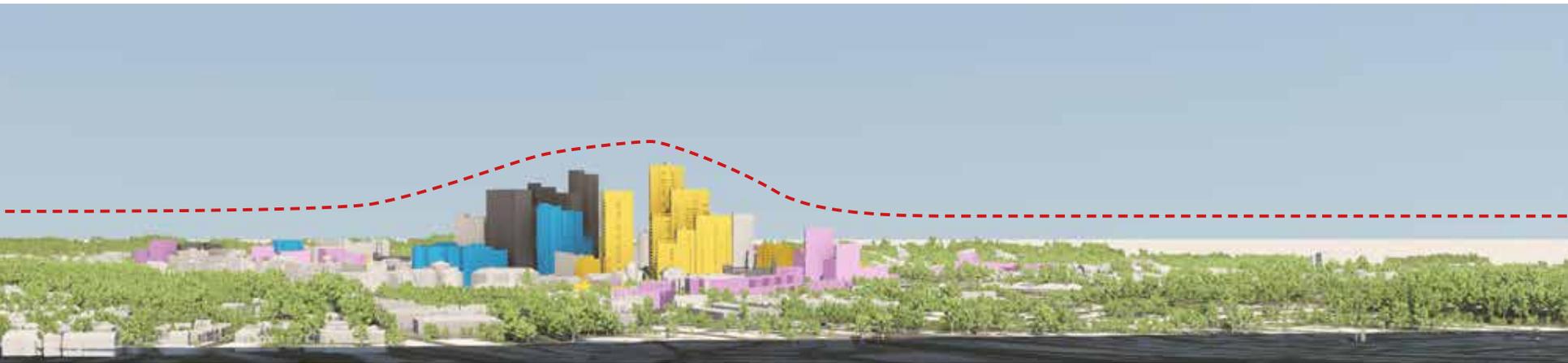
- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Proposed scheme

Existing skyline facing East



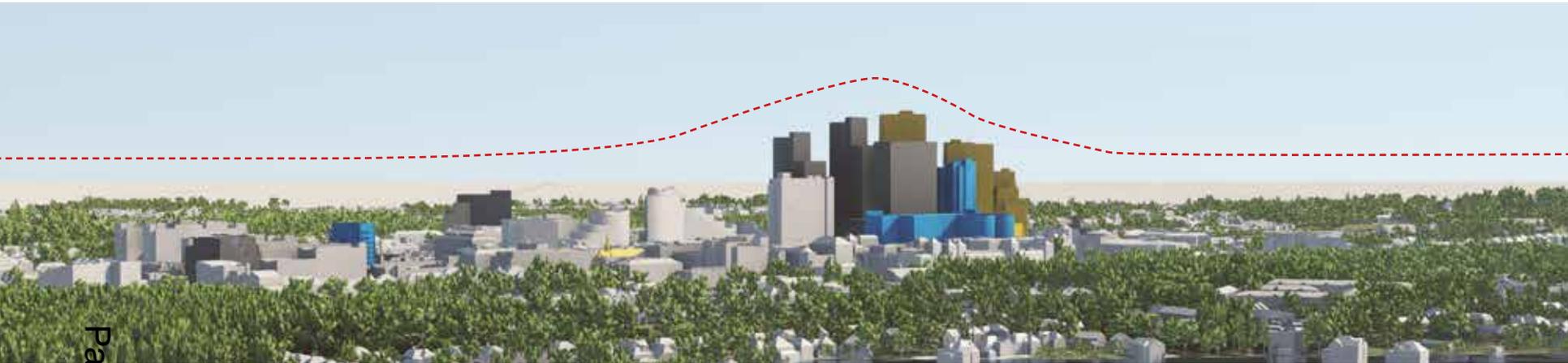
Page 324

Potential skyline facing East



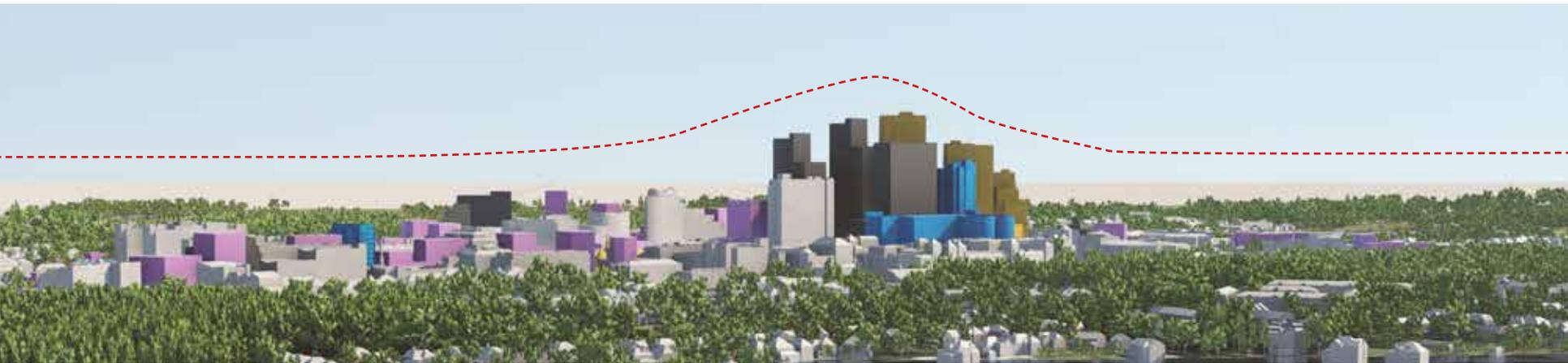
- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Proposed scheme

Existing skyline facing South



Page 325

Potential skyline facing South



- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction
- Proposed scheme

Existing skyline facing West



Potential skyline facing West



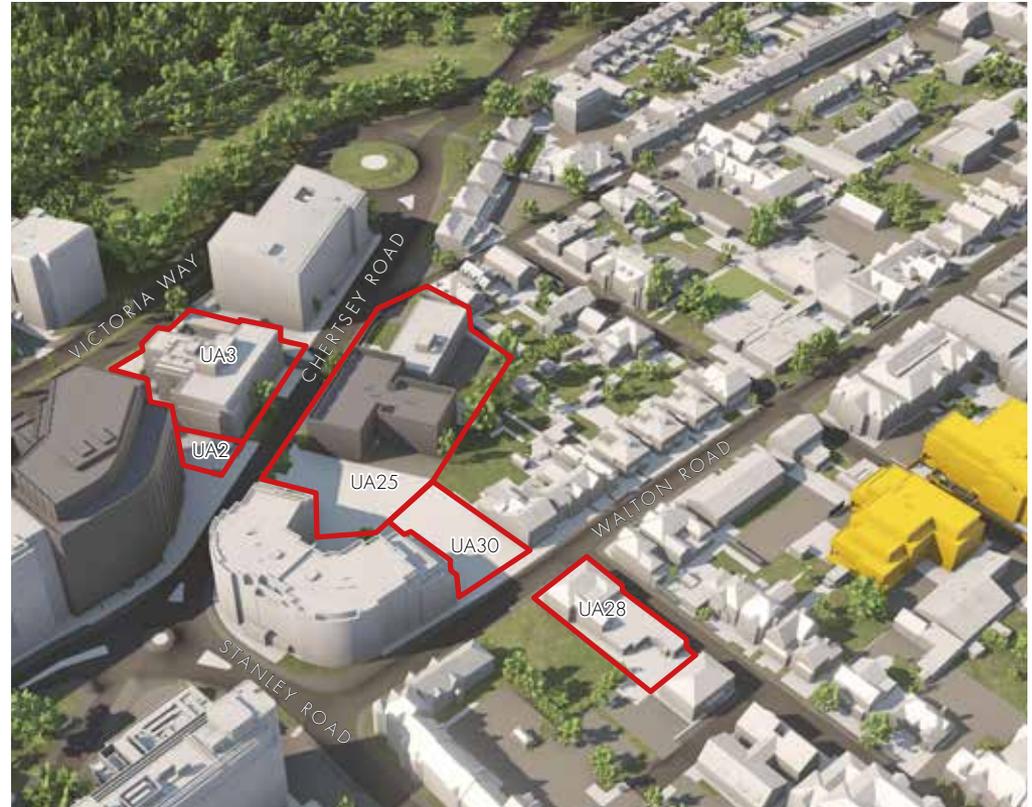
CHERTSEY ROAD CLUSTER

CHERTSEY ROAD CLUSTER

Site overview

- The Chertsey Road cluster comprises the following sites: UA2 Trizancia House / UA3 Chester House / UA25 101-121 Chertsey Road / UA28 29-31 Walton Road / UA30 Walton Road Youth Centre
- Within the Chertsey Road character area
- The prevailing height is 4.8 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 7 storeys
- The collection of sites to the north sit along the north eastern approach to the town centre. UA2, UA3 and UA25 sit along this approach on Chertsey Road. They're bound by Victoria Way to the north with the surrounding context comprising of mid-rise office buildings, dropping to a low-rise residential area to the east and south.
- The remaining sites on Walton Road are enclosed by a residential area of much lower density to the east and south.

Page 328



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

Issues and opportunities

- Bordered by Victoria Way to the north
- Large residential area of fine grain to the east and south
- UA30 - vacant site
- Large amounts of surface car parking
- Sits along a key approach to the town centre

Page 329

Location plan

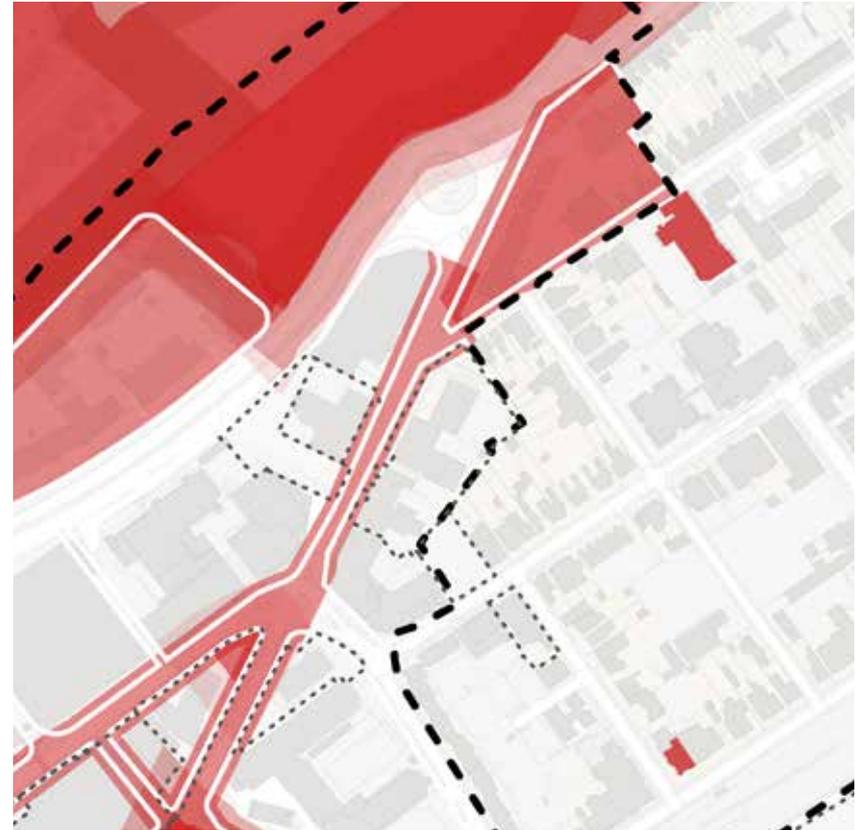
- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Composite suitability



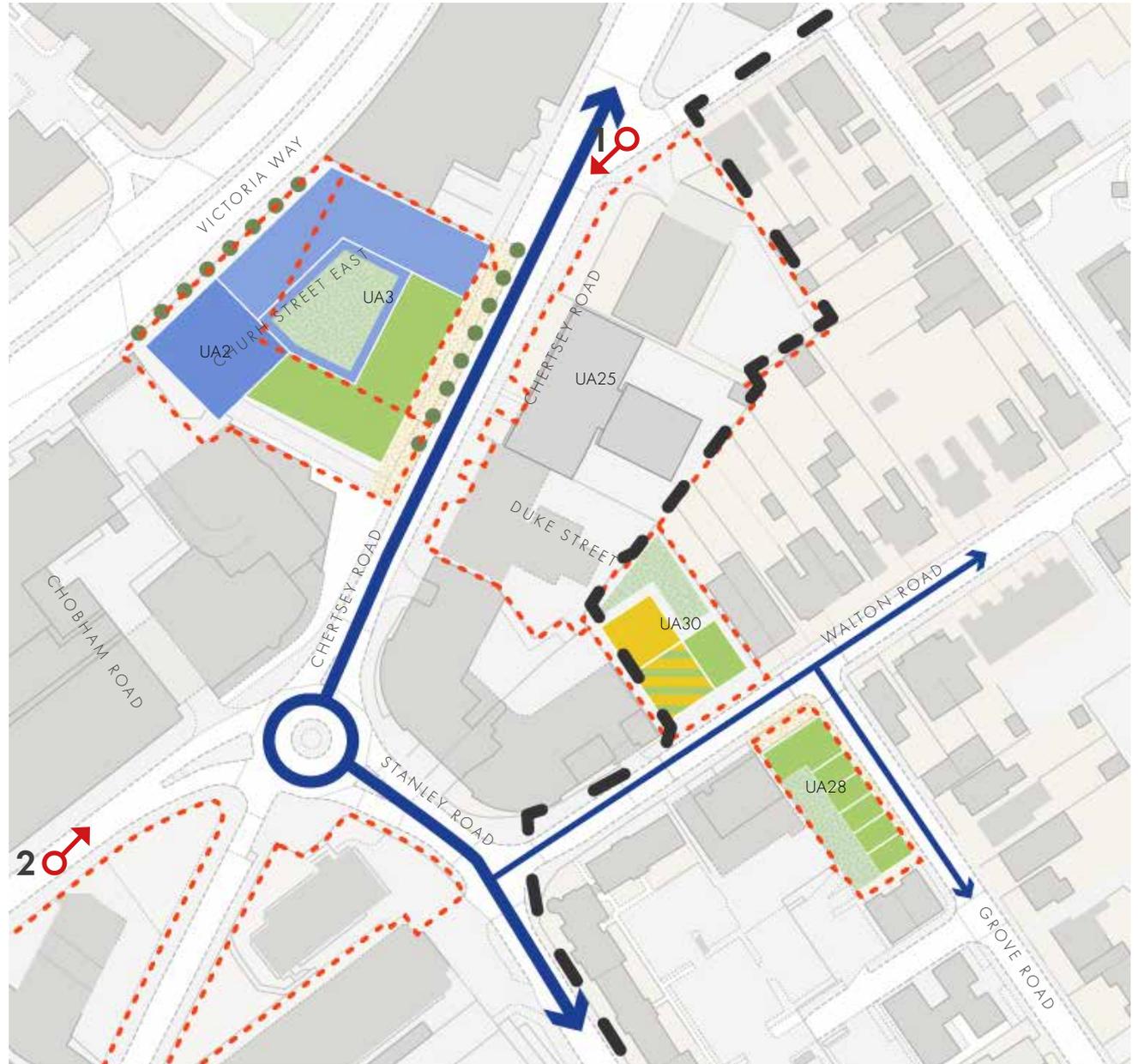
Composite sensitivity

Page 330

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 331

-  Commercial / retail
-  Residential
-  Community / leisure
-  Business/office
-  Improved public realm
-  Parking (surface)
-  Parking (decked)
-  Potential for taller building
-  Existing taller building
-  Sensitive frontages
-  Commercial frontages
-  Secondary route
-  Primary route
-  Pedestrianised route
-  Busy road
-  Key access
-  Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access for UA2/3 should be provided off Chertsey Road
- Residential entrances for UA2/3 should face Chertsey Road and Walton Road
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the town centre and bus routes.

Land uses

A community centre should be reprovided on site UA30

Developments along Walton Road should be residential in character

Developments along Chertsey Road should be mixed-use in character for site UA3 and pure residential for site UA2

- Offices are better suited along Victoria Way

Form of development

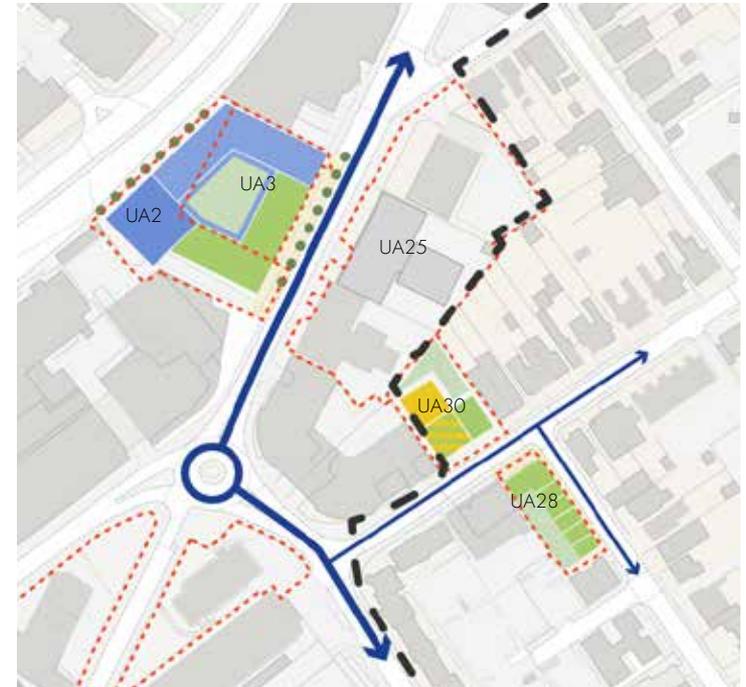
- Low-rise infill residential developments are appropriate for sites UA28/30
- Mid-rise infill linear apartment blocks and maisonettes are suitable for site UA25
- A mid to high-rise mixed-use perimeter block is suitable for site UA2/3
- The scale of developments should rise towards the roundabout which marks a key approach into the town centre
- Given the depth of sites UA2/3 and UA25, there is potential to create private amenity space for residents away from Chertsey Road

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm along Chertsey Road will be required as part of the development of sites UA2/3
- Tree planting along Chertsey Road is encouraged to create a more boulevard-like approach to the town centre
- Soft landscaping should be provided towards the rear of each site where appropriate.
- Proposed building lines should be set back to create wider pavements with better landscaping, especially along Chertsey Road

Relationship to surroundings

- Active frontages should be provided along all street edges
- Residential frontages should be sufficiently set back from pavements to accommodate defensible spaces
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline
- New developments should respond sensitively to existing residential frontages and avoid privacy and overlooking issues through careful design and setbacks
- The coordinated development of sites UA25/30 is encouraged as they are contiguous and it would encourage a broader consideration of urban design and may result in mutually beneficial outcomes in terms of design quality



Illustrative framework



UA30 WALTON ROAD YOUTH CENTRE

Page 336

	Block A		
	1	2	3
25th			
24th			
23rd			
22nd			
21st			
20th			
19th			
18th			
17th			
16th			
15th			
14th			
13th			
12th			
11th			
10th			
9th			
8th			
7th			
6th			
5th	138		144
4th	138		144
3rd	138		144
2nd	138	95	144
1st	138	95	144
Ground	138	95	144

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 16
- Density (dph) 206
- Density (FAR) 2.41

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) N/A
- Community (sqm GEA) 282
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal
Residential (dwellings)	16
Residential Upper (GEA)	1,600
Residential Ground (GEA)	47.5
Business (GEA)	-
Industrial (GEA)	-
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-
Community / leisure	282
Parking	-

TOTAL							
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH	
1,648	17,734	16	1,930	0.08	2.41	206	

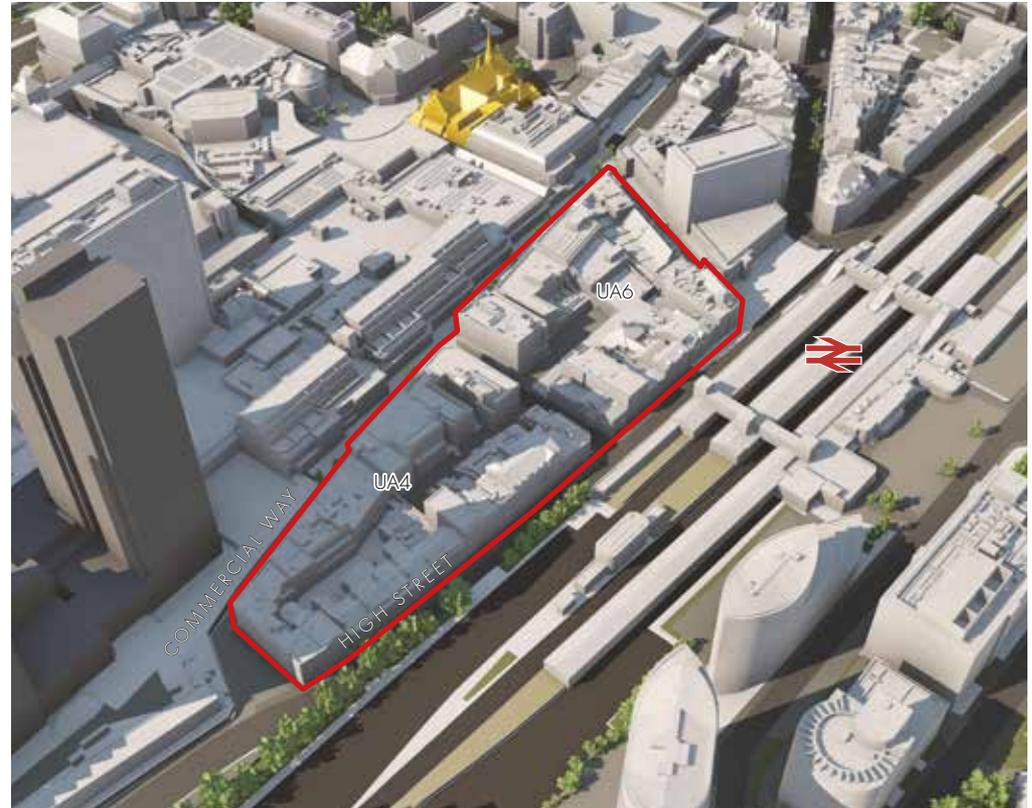
UA4 / UA6 HIGH STREET AND COMMERCIAL WAY

UA4 / UA6 HIGH STREET AND COMMERCIAL WAY

Site overview

- Within the Historic Quarter character area
- The prevailing height is 2.7 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 6 storeys
- The site is located within the town centre in a conservation area, enclosed by the High Street to the south and Commercial Way to the north. The shared surface of Chapel Street sits north-south between UA4 and UA6. It's deemed an important site as it acts as a gateway to this area of the town centre.

Page 338
The character of the site is low rise, varying between 2 and 4 storeys. Despite this, it's context is dramatically different with high rise buildings to the west and the low rise station to the east. A blank wall fronts onto the site from the railway to the south.



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

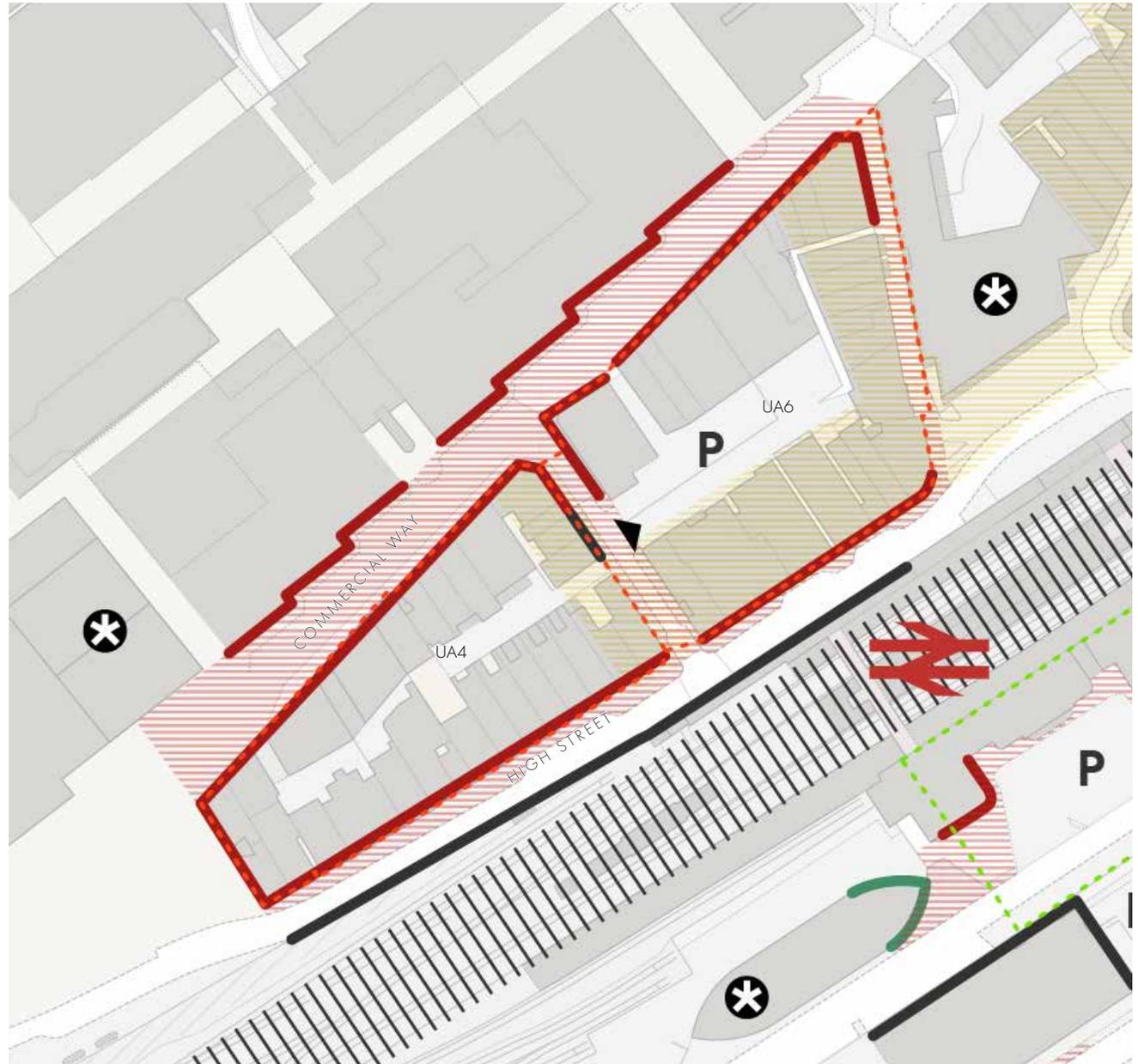
Issues and opportunities

- Sits within a conservation area
- Context has huge variation in scale
- Near emerging tall building cluster
- Proximity to station

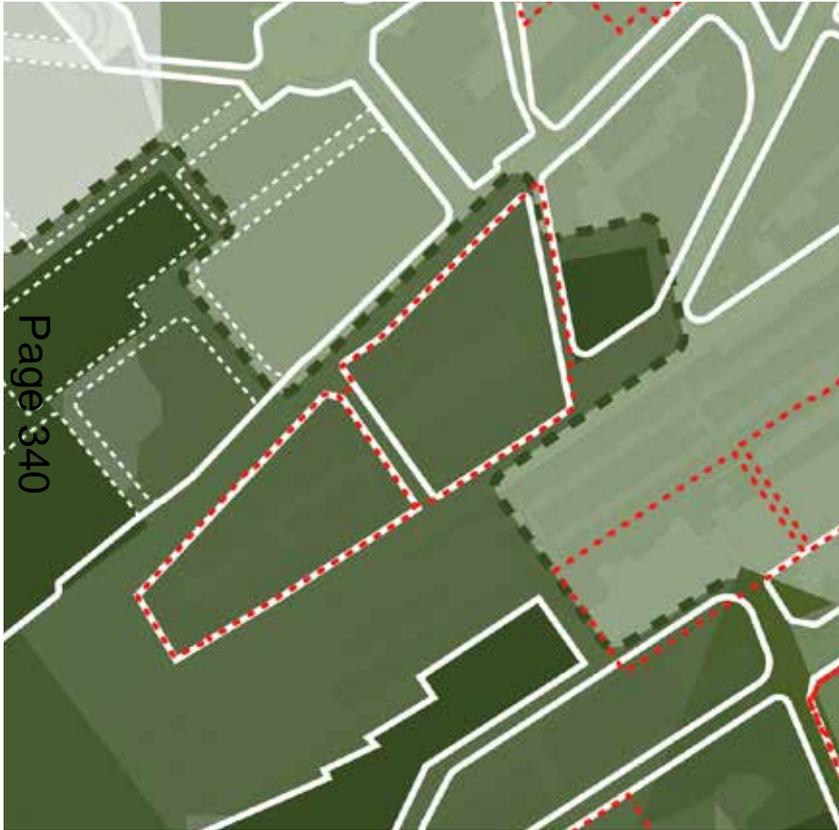
Page 339

Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬▬▬ Major route
- ▬▬▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Page 340

Composite suitability

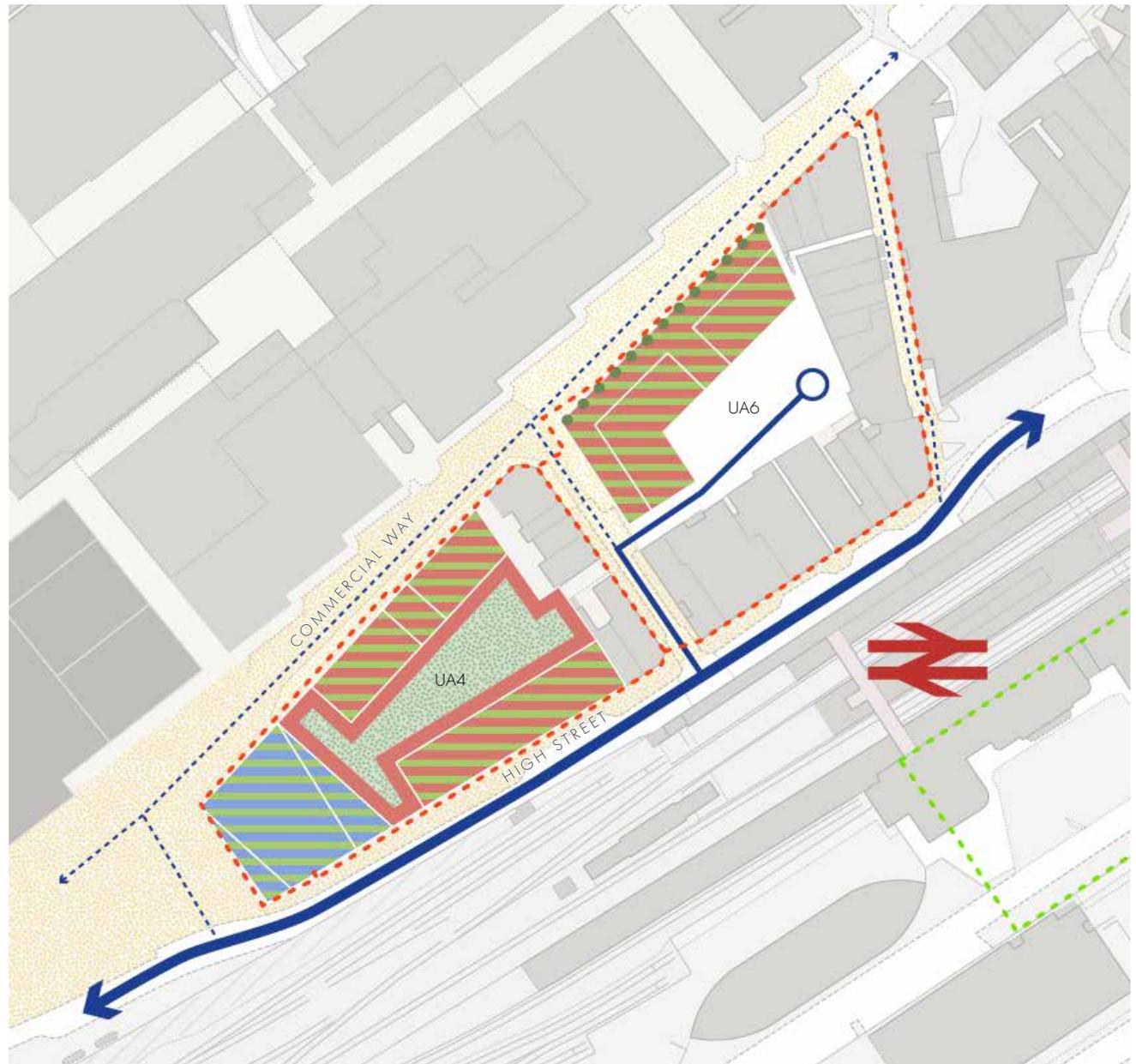


Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 341

-  Commercial / retail
-  Residential
-  Community / leisure
-  Business/office
-  Improved public realm
-  Parking (surface)
-  Parking (decked)
-  Potential for taller building
-  Existing taller building
-  Sensitive frontages
-  Commercial frontages
-  Secondary route
-  Primary route
-  Pedestrianised route
-  Busy road
-  Key access
-  Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access for sites UA4/6 should be re-provided off Chapel Street
- Minimal parking is required due to the proximity to the station and bus stops
- Residential entrances should be interspersed among shops and offices along Commercial Way and the High Street

Land uses

Ground floor retail uses are appropriate along Commercial Way and the High Street

- Residential uses are appropriate on upper floors
- Offices are best suited at the western corner of site UA4 addressing Victoria Square

Form of development

- The development of UA4 should consist of a mixed-use perimeter block that retains and works around listed buildings.
- The scale of buildings on UA4 should rise towards the south western point of the site towards Victoria Way
- The scale of development on UA6 should be most and comparable to existing buildings on the block.

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm along Commercial Way and the High Street will be required as part of the development of sites UA4/6
- Additional street furniture and tree planting is encouraged along Commercial Way to strengthen the already positive character of this key promenade
- Proposed building lines should respect the existing alignment of listed buildings in the Conservation Area
- Soft landscaping may be provided as a private amenity at podium level

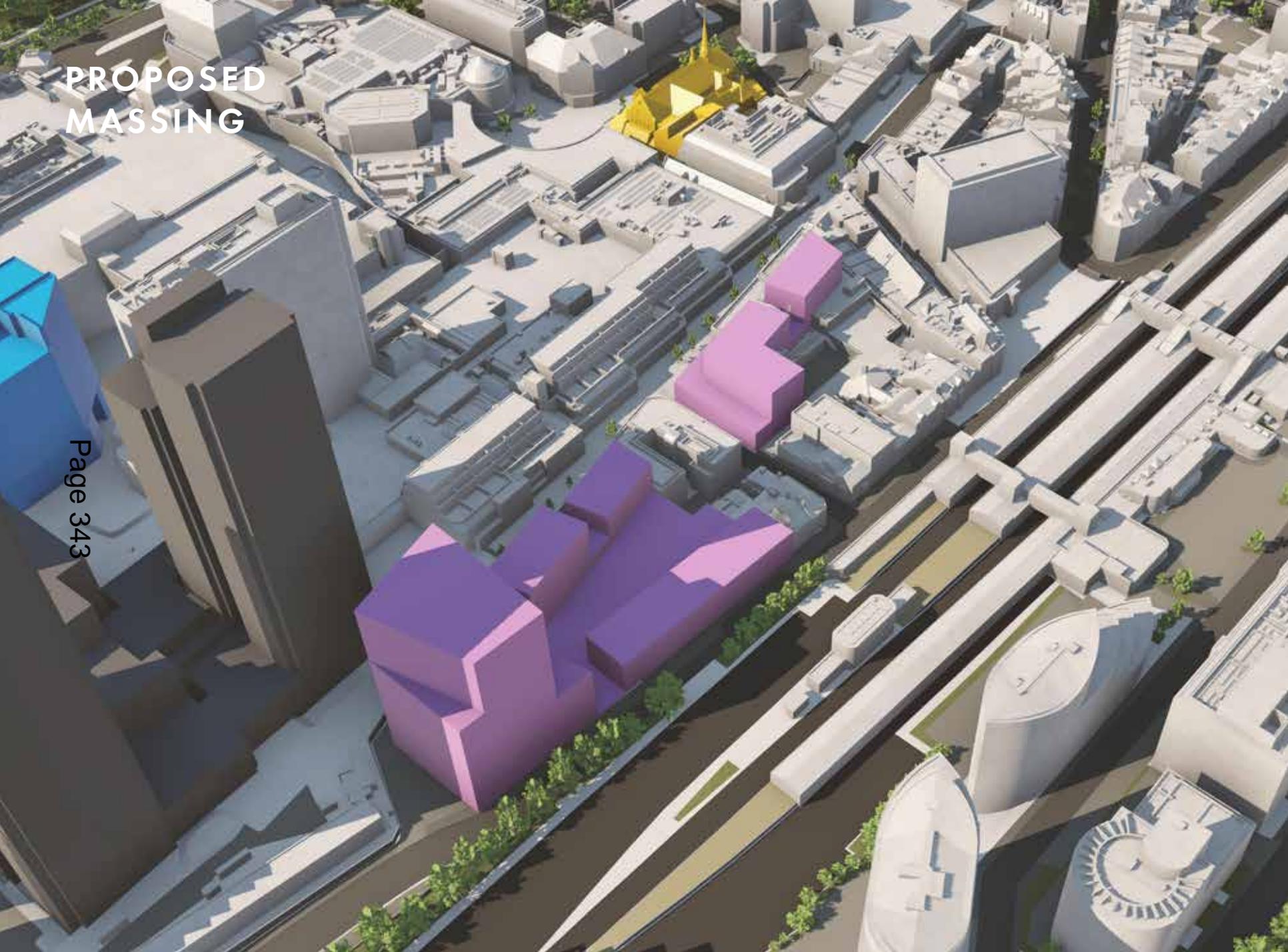
Relationship to surroundings

- New developments should respect and be designed with careful consideration to the setting of the Conservation Area
- New developments should encourage a finer grain at ground floor with a greater number of smaller commercial units encouraged
- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter of the site
- Residential frontages should be sufficiently set back from the building line at upper levels to allow daylight onto surrounding streets and accommodate private amenity
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED
MASSING



POOLE ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE CLUSTER

POOLE ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE CLUSTER

Site overview

- The cluster of sites consists of UA8 Former Goldsworth Road Arms / UA14 Poole Road Industrial Estate, HIF12 / UA9 113-129 Goldsworth Road,
- Within the Goldsworth Road character area with one site outside a character area; on the edge of the town centre
- The prevailing height is 6.7 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 10 storeys
- The sites to the east sit along Poole Road and Cherry Street; primarily an area of low-rise industrial typologies. It is a key employment area in close proximity to the town centre so retaining uses is deemed important.
- UA8 is at a main intersection and forms part of the western approach into the town centre.
- UA9 is situated north of Goldsworth Road and plays a part in the parade of shops, comprised of low-rise developments at a maximum of 3 storeys.

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Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

Issues and opportunities

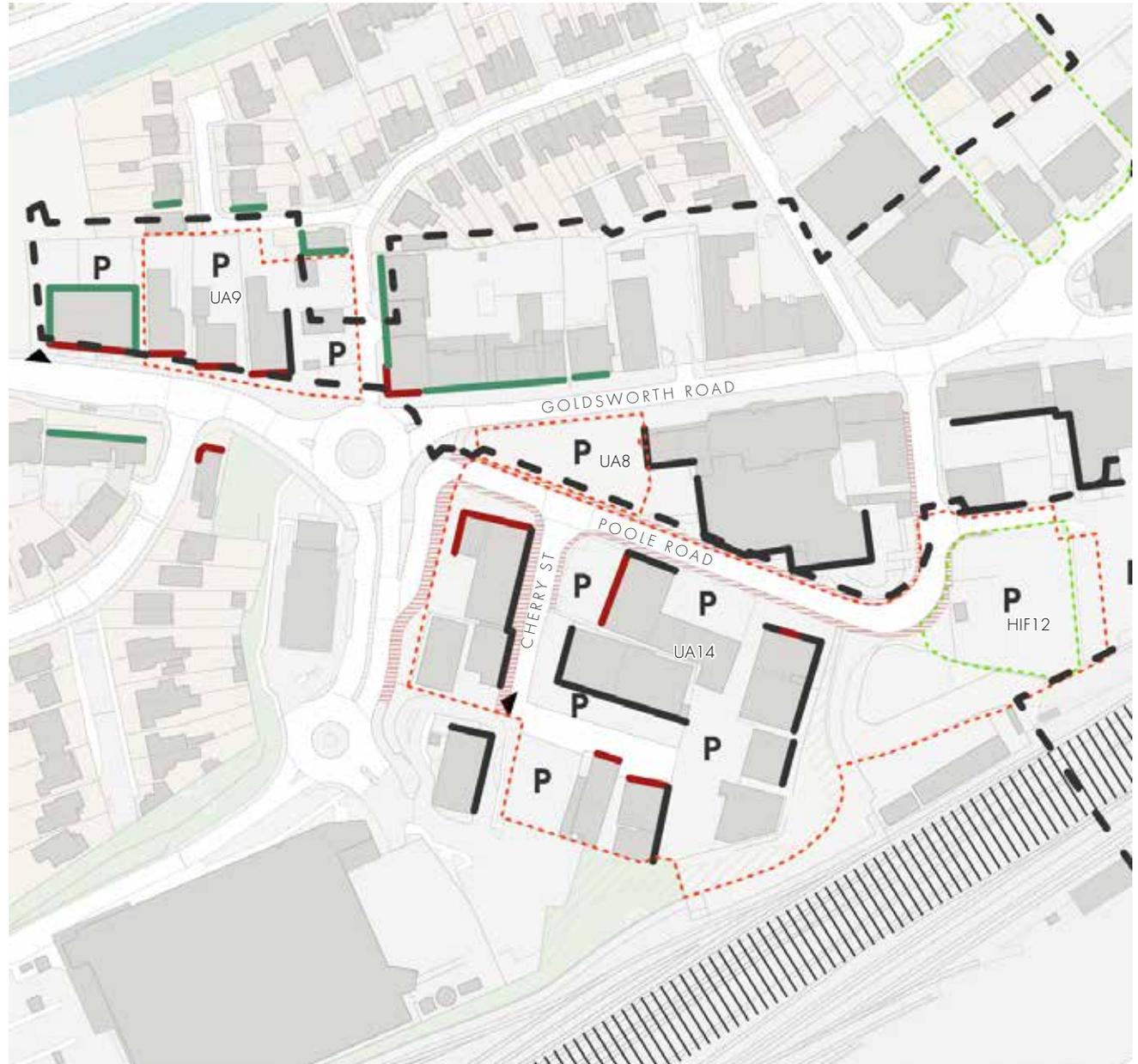
- Should contribute towards enhancing the western approach (UA8)
- Dwellings face onto the site on the north, east and western edges (UA9)
- UA14 is considered a key employment area, space and jobs should be retained

efficient use of space with large amounts of the site used for surface car parking

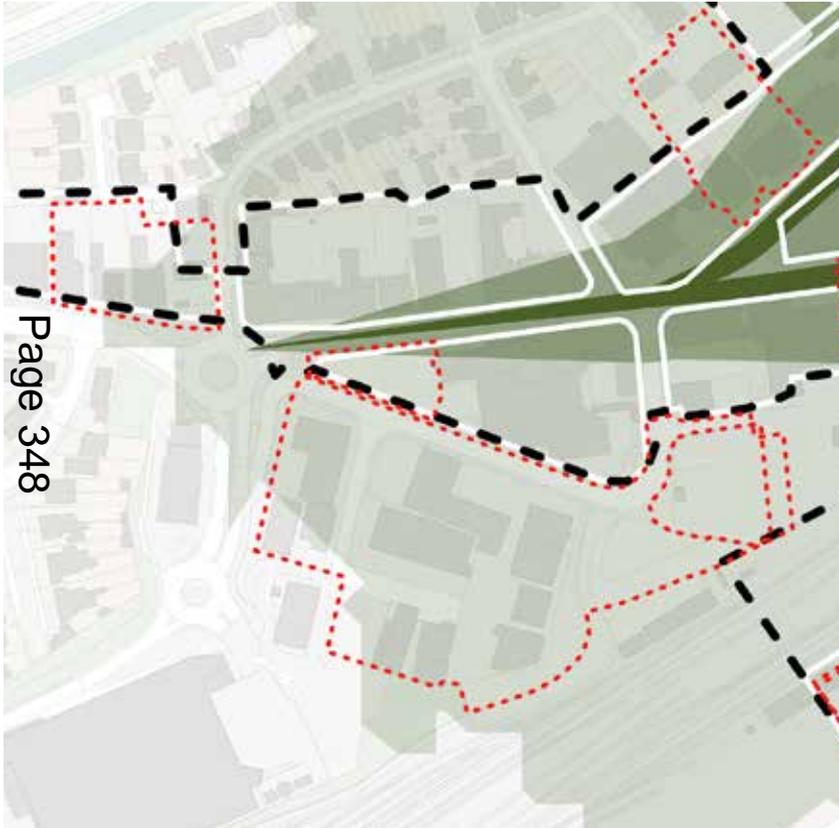
Page 347

Location plan

- Site boundary
- Major route
- Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P** Parking (surface)
- ⊗** Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Composite suitability



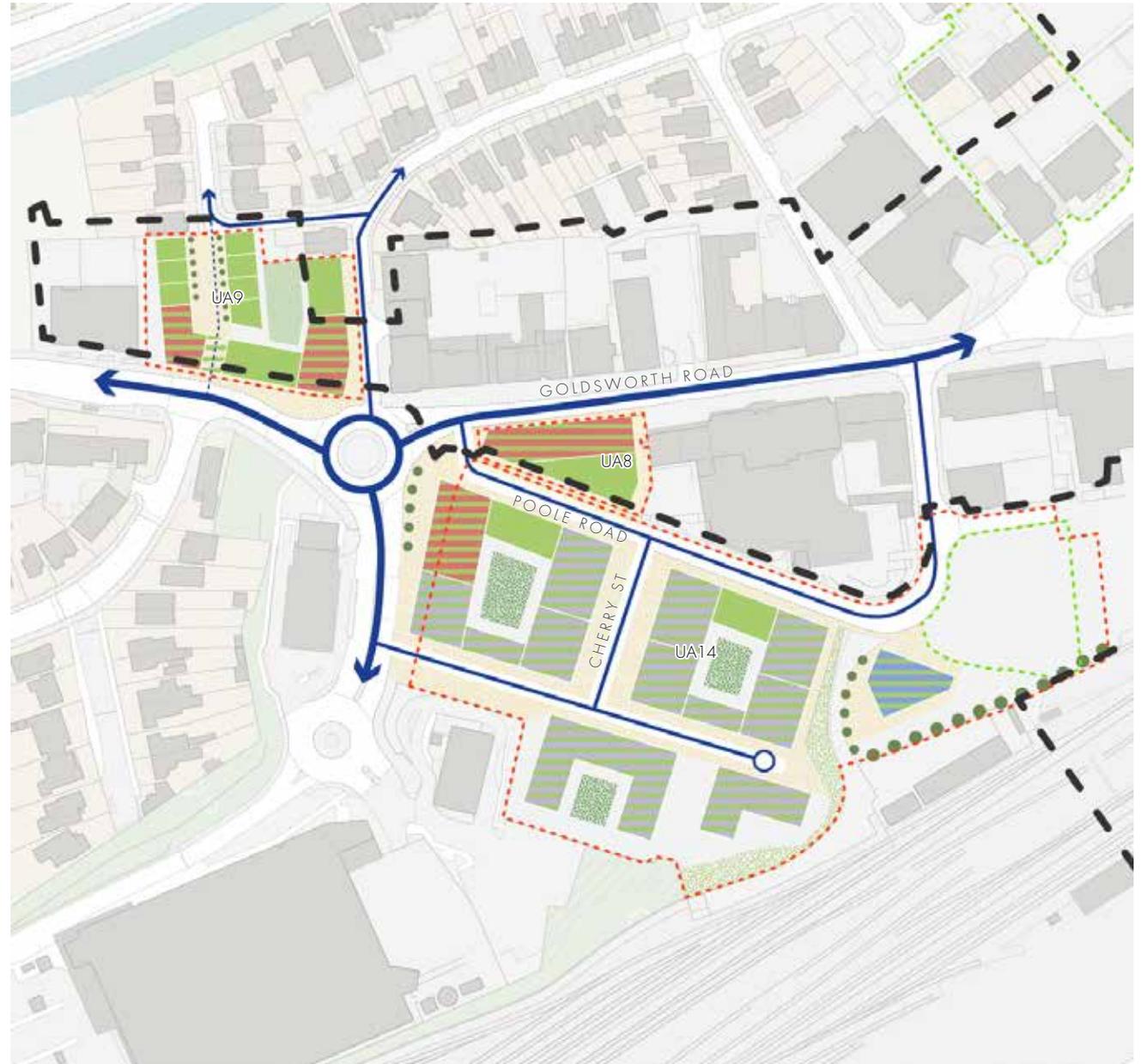
Composite sensitivity

Page 348

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 349

-  Commercial / retail
-  Residential
-  Community / leisure
-  Business/office
-  Improved public realm
-  Parking (surface)
-  Parking (decked)
-  Potential for taller building
-  Existing taller building
-  Sensitive frontages
-  Commercial frontages
-  Secondary route
-  Primary route
-  Pedestrianised route
-  Busy road
-  Key access
-  Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Improved permeability and pedestrian access to Wilbury Road from Goldsworth Road should be provided at UA9
- Servicing access for UA14 should be provided off a reconfigured Cherry Street
- Residential access to sites UA8/14 should be provided from Poole Road
- Access to the existing depot should be retained along Poole Road

Land uses

Industrial uses should be retained on the ground floor along Poole Road and Cherry Street

Residential uses are appropriate on upper floors of sites UA8/14

- Ground floor retail uses are appropriate on corner blocks along Goldsworth Road to reinforce the existing parade

Form of development

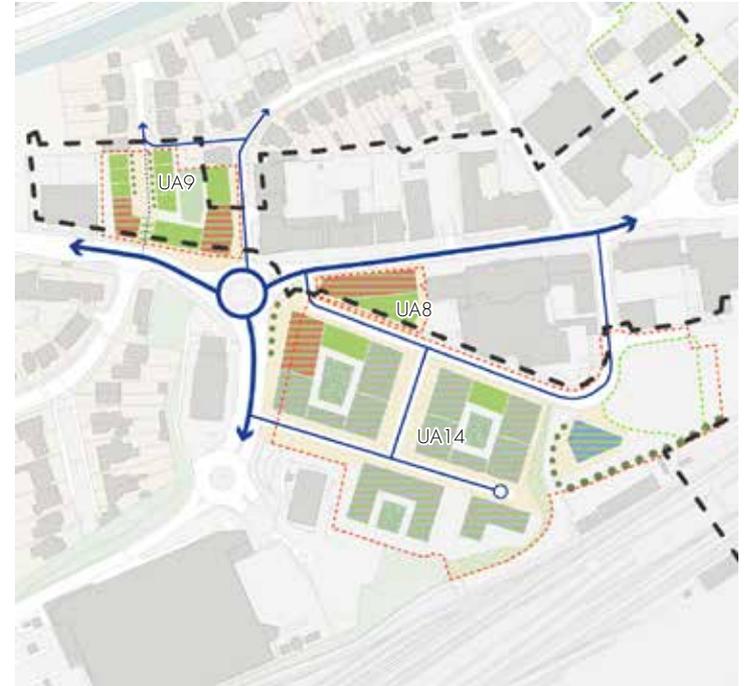
- Proposed building lines within UA9 should follow the existing housing to create a domestic street scale
- Mixed-use, mid-rise perimeter blocks of various sizes are appropriate within UA14 with opportunities for taller elements
- The scale of developments may increase to the east to respond to the emerging tall building cluster along Victoria Way

Public realm and movement

- The quality of the public realm along Goldsworth Road should be improved to encourage east-west pedestrian movement
- The quality of the public realm within the industrial estate should be improved to accommodate residential and other non-industrial uses
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided on all sites where appropriate

Relationship to surroundings

- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter of the site
- Residential frontages should be sufficiently set back from sensitive edges such as the railways to protect the amenity of new homes
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

Page 351



UA8 FORMER GOLDSWORTH ROAD ARMS

Page 353

	Block A	
	1	2
25th		
24th		
23rd		
22nd		
21st		
20th		
19th		
18th		
17th		
16th		
15th		
14th		
13th		
12th		
11th		
10th		
9th		
8th		
7th		
6th		
5th	572	
4th	572	
3rd	572	
2nd	572	
1st	572	388
Ground	572	388

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 34
- Density (dph) 287
- Density (FAR) 3.35

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) N/A
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) 572
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal	TOTAL						
		GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
Residential (dwellings)	34	3,442	37,049	34	4,014	0.12	3.35	287
Residential Upper (GEA)	3,248							
Residential Ground (GEA)	194							
Business (GEA)	-	-	-					
Industrial (GEA)	-	-	-					
Retail / F&B (GEA)	572	572	6,157					
Community / leisure	-	-	-					
Parking	-	-	-					

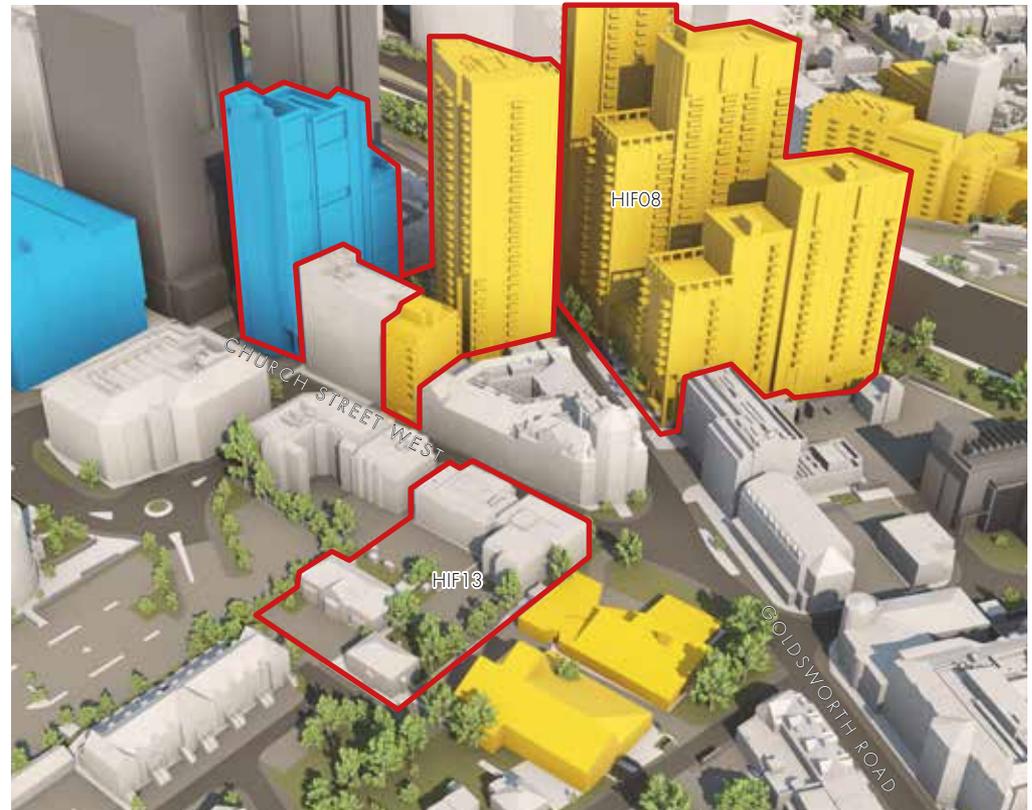
GOLDSWORTH ROAD CLUSTER

GOLDSWORTH ROAD CLUSTER

Site overview

- The cluster of sites consists of UA10 MVA House, HIF8 / UA11 1-7 Victoria Way, HIF8 / UA13 30-32 Goldsworth Road, HIF8 / HIF13 Church Gate
- Within the Goldsworth Road character area
- The prevailing height is 6.7 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 10 storeys
- The sites sit at the eastern end of Goldsworth Road, bound by Church Street West to the north and Victoria Way to the east. The sites are situated at an important point within the town where new developments are creating a cluster of tall buildings.
- Finer grain is present to the west of the sites where 2 to 3 storey residential areas and low-rise industrial units are situated.

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Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

Issues and opportunities

- Within and adjacent to the emerging tall building cluster
- Lack of quality pedestrianised links across Victoria Way to the town centre
- Sensitive residential frontages overlooking the sites

Page 357

Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Composite suitability

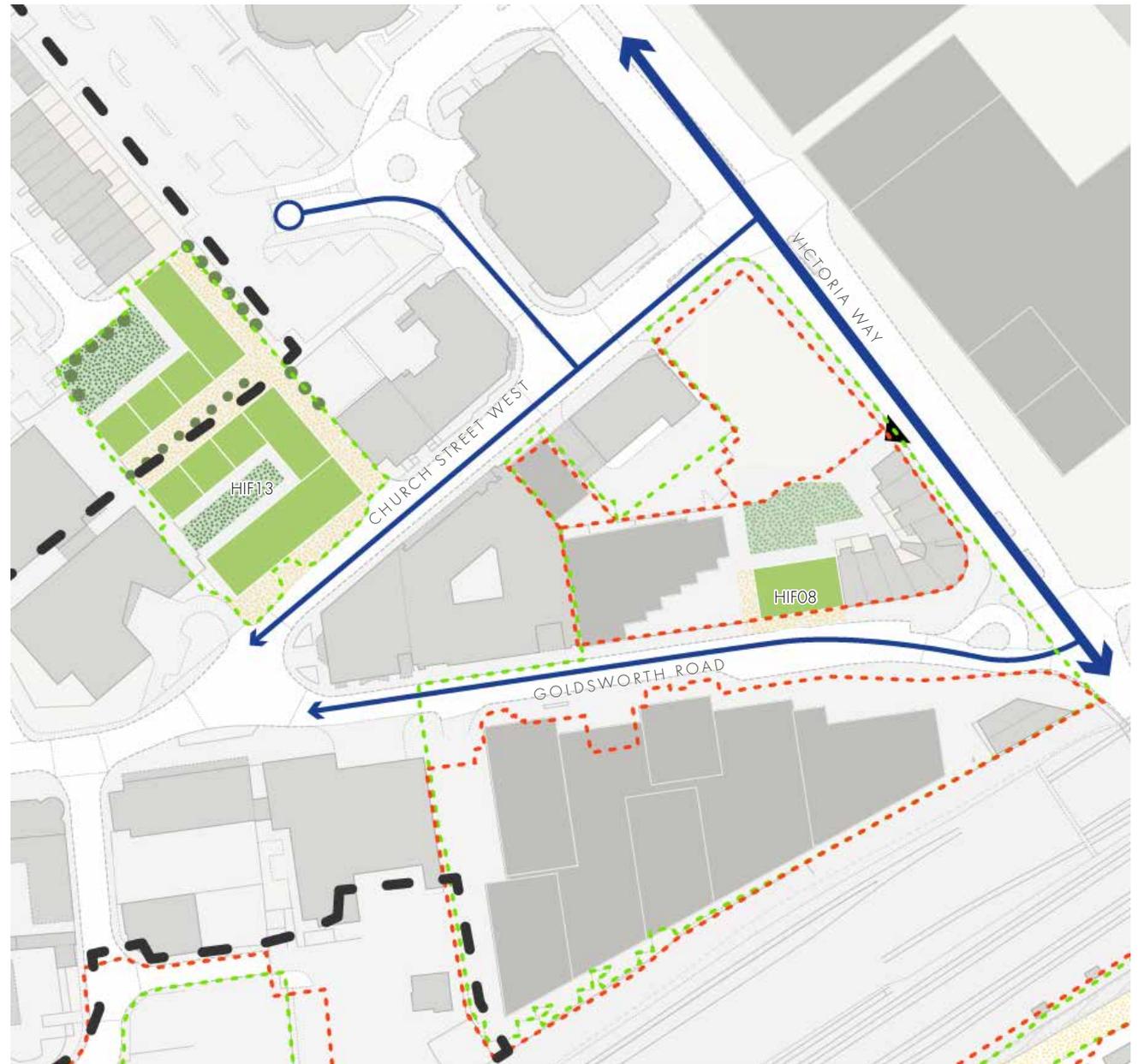


Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 359

- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- P Parking (surface)
- P Parking (decked)
- X Potential for taller building
- X Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Vehicular access to HIF 13 should be provided from a new connection between Forge End with and Vale Farm Road
- Residential entrances and improved pedestrian access between this new connection and Goldsworth Road should be provided
- Vehicular access to HIF08 should remain from Goldsworth Road

Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity of the station and bus stops

Land uses

Both HIF13 and HIF08 are suited to pure residential developments

Form of development

- The infill development for site HIF08 should work sensitively around existing parade
- Low to mid-rise linear apartment blocks and mews houses are appropriate for HIF13
- New homes within HIF13 create better front-to-front relationships with existing homes
- A small infill development of mid-rise dual aspect apartments is appropriate for HIF08

Public realm and movement

- The quality of the public realm along Church Street West and Goldsworth Road should be improved to encourage east-west pedestrian movement
- The quality of the public realm towards the hinterland of HIF13 should be improved to make the residential environment more attractive
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided along new internal streets within HIF 13
- There is potential to create private courtyard for residents towards the north of HIF08

Relationship to surroundings

- The existing parade on the south east corner of the site should be retained for its townscape character
- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter and within internal streets of both sites
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING



CHURCH UA11 1-7 VICTORIA WAY, HIF8

Block A	
	1
25th	
24th	
23rd	
22nd	
21st	
20th	
19th	
18th	
17th	
16th	
15th	
14th	
13th	
12th	
11th	
10th	
9th	
8th	
7th	
6th	
5th	
4th	
3rd	253
2nd	253
1st	253
Ground	253

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 9
- Density (dph) 30
- Density (FAR) 0.3

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) N/A
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal	TOTAL						
		GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
Residential (dwellings)	9	886	9,531	9	886	0.30	0.30	30
Residential Upper (GEA)	759							
Residential Ground (GEA)	127							
Business (GEA)		-	-					
Industrial (GEA)	-	-	-					
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-	-	-					
Community / leisure	-	-	-					
Parking	-	-	-					

UA15 THE BIG APPLE, HIF11 / UA16 CHERTSEY HOUSE

UA15 THE BIG APPLE, HIF11 / UA16 CHERTSEY HOUSE

Site overview

- Within the Church Street and Chertsey Road character areas
- The prevailing heights are 3.7 and 4.8 storeys respectively
- The tall building threshold for this area are 6 and 7 storeys respectively
- The two sites lie at a key approach to the town centre with Chertsey Road sitting between them; acting as an arterial road toward the conservation area and High Street.
- The character differs across the sites with UA15 being composed of a mixed use, impenetrable block with blank edges along it's north edge on Church Street East. Green public space is provided by the Chertsey Road roundabout.
- UA16 contains a singular low rise office building.



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

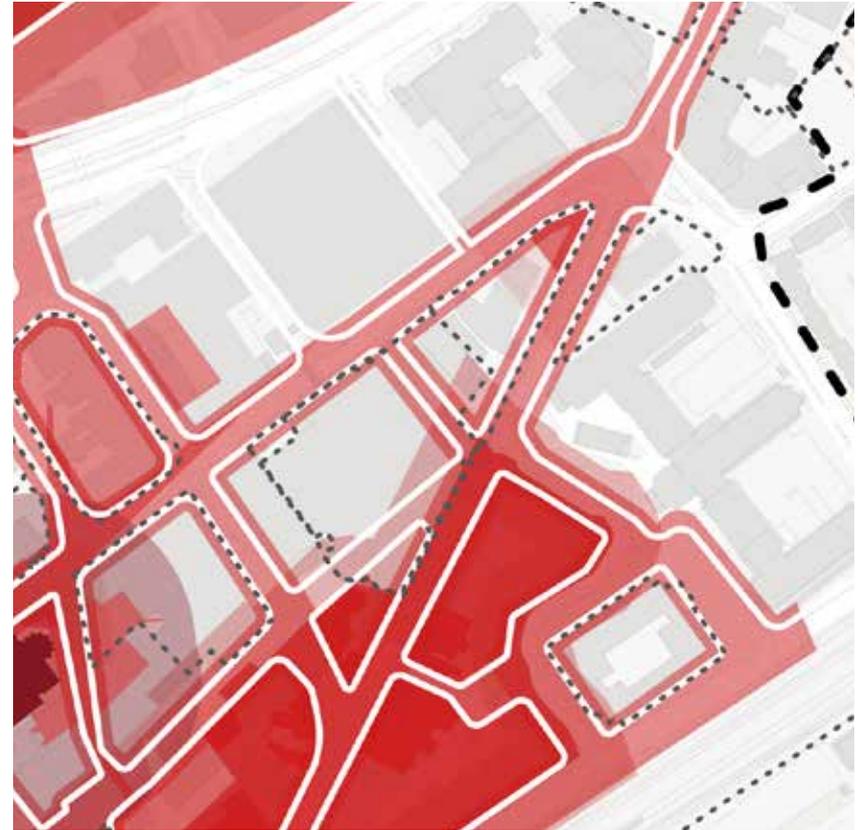
- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



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Composite suitability

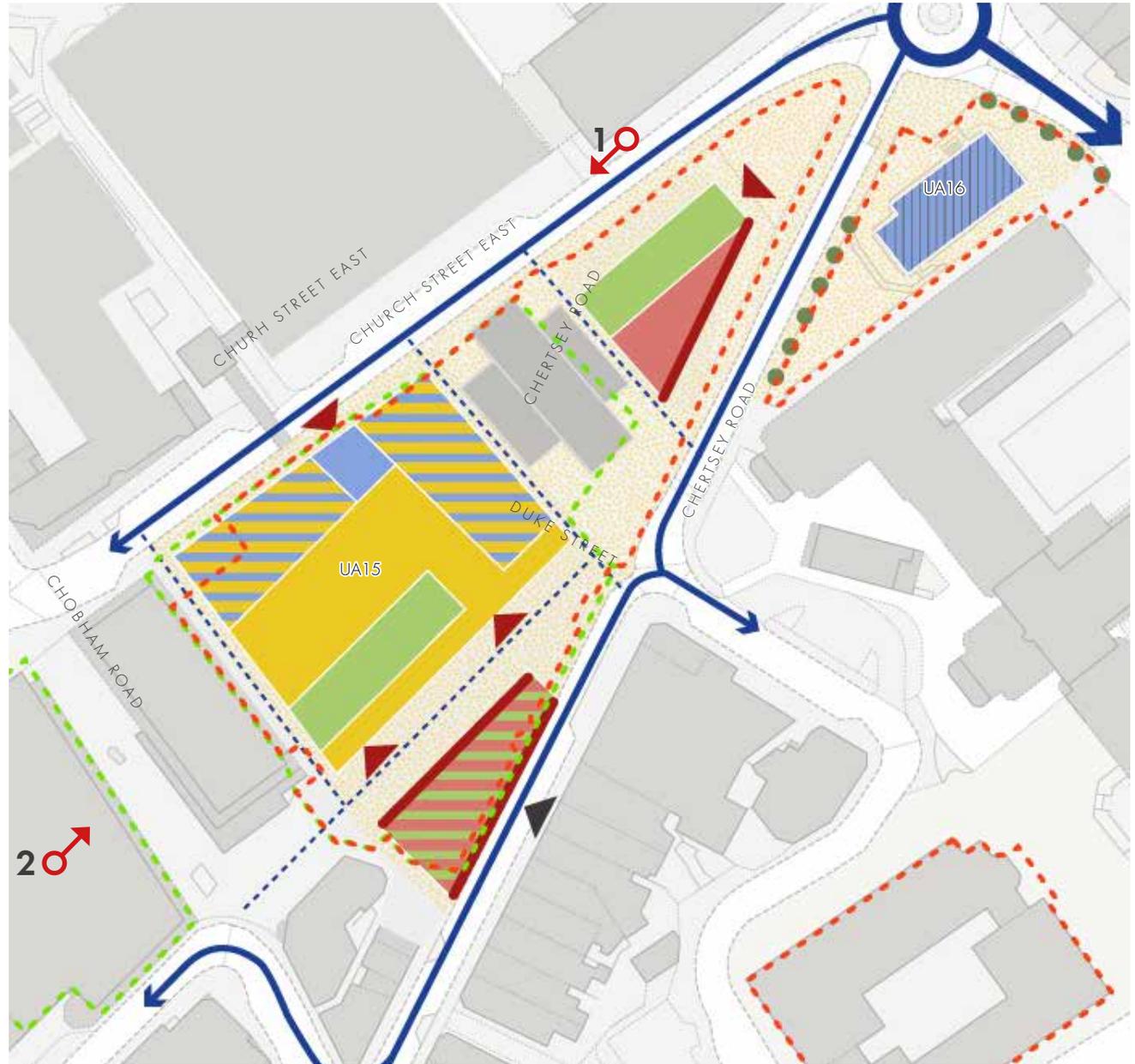


Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 368

- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- P Parking (surface)
- P Parking (decked)
- Potential for taller building
- X Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access for UA15 should be provided from Chertsey Road and the new extension of Commercial Way
- Residential lobbies should be intersped among commercial and leisure uses at ground floor
- Offices should be accessed from Church Street East (UA15) and from Stanley Road (UA16)
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the town centre, bus routes and station

Improved permeability should be provided to repair and improve pedestrian routes and create more active frontages within the larger urban block, especially as a continuation of Commercial Way

Land uses

- Community uses should be retained on site UA15
- Residential uses should be accommodated on upper floors
- Site UA16 is suited to pure office uses

Form of development

- A mixed-use perimeter blocks with mid-rise buildings is appropriate at the western end of UA15.
- A taller building is appropriate towards the northeastern tip of UA15 to mark the key town centre approach

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm along Church Street East and Chertsey Road will be required as part of the development.
- Building lines should be set back to create wider pavements offering better east-west pedestrian movement.
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided on site where appropriate

Relationship to surroundings

- The historic street pattern should be reinstated by extending Commercial Way eastwards through UA15
- New north-south pedestrian connections extending from Duke Street through UA15 are encouraged
- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter of both sites
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework



CAPACITIES

UA15 THE BIG APPLE, HIF11

	Block A		Block B					Block C
	1	2	1	2	3	4	5	1
25th								
24th								
23rd								
22nd								
21st								
20th								
19th								
18th								
17th								
16th								
15th								
14th								
13th								
12th								
11th								
10th								
9th	323							
8th	323							
7th	323		475					
6th	323		475					
5th	323	249	475		550			
4th	323	249	475		550			
3rd	323	249	475	115	550			505
2nd	323	249	475	115	550		370	505
1st	323	249	475	115	550		370	505
Ground	323	249	475	115	550	1,200	370	505

PROPOSED	Subtotal	Subtotal	Subtotal	TOTAL						
				GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
Residential (dwellings)	43	9	15	6,754	72,694	68	16,268	0.69	2.36	98
Residential Upper (GEA)	4,152	740	1,515							
Residential Ground (GEA)	162	185	-							
Business (GEA)	-	6,535	-	6,535	70,342					
Industrial (GEA)	-	-	-	-	-					
Retail / F&B (GEA)	249	-	505	754	8,116					
Community / leisure	-	2,225	-	2,225	23,950					
Parking	-	-	-	-	-					

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 69
- Density (dph) 98
- Density (FAR) 2.36

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 6,535
- Community (sqm GEA) 2,225
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) 754
- Industrial N/A

* Note that any minor discrepancies in capacity reporting is likely to be a result of rounding in spreadsheet calculations.

UA16 CHERTSEY HOUSE

	Block A
	1
25th	
24th	
23rd	
22nd	
21st	
20th	
19th	
18th	
17th	
16th	
15th	
14th	
13th	
12th	
11th	
10th	
9th	
8th	
7th	
6th	
5th	
4th	
3rd	325
2nd	325
1st	325
Ground	325

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Residential

- Proposed dwellings N/A
- Density (dph) N/A
- Density (FAR) N/A

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 1,300
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal	TOTAL						
		GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
Residential (dwellings)	-	-	-	-	1,300	0.12	1.08	-
Residential Upper (GEA)	-							
Residential Ground (GEA)	0							
Business (GEA)	1,300	1,300	13,993					
Industrial (GEA)	-	-	-					
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-	-	-					
Community / leisure	-	-	-					
Parking	-	-	-					

CHOBHAM ROAD CLUSTER

CHOBHAM ROAD CLUSTER

Site overview

- The cluster is comprised of UA17 Griffin House, HIF10 / UA18 Concord House, HIF10 / HIF 9 BHS / Windfall Chobham Road site (W1).
- Within the Church Street and Chertsey Road character areas

The prevailing height is 3.7 storeys

The tall building threshold for this area is 6 storeys

The three sites sit at the northern approach to the town centre, at the intersection of Chobham Road and Church Street East.

The sites primarily consist of low-rise office buildings with a small section of finer grain at the northern apex of the windfall site (W).



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

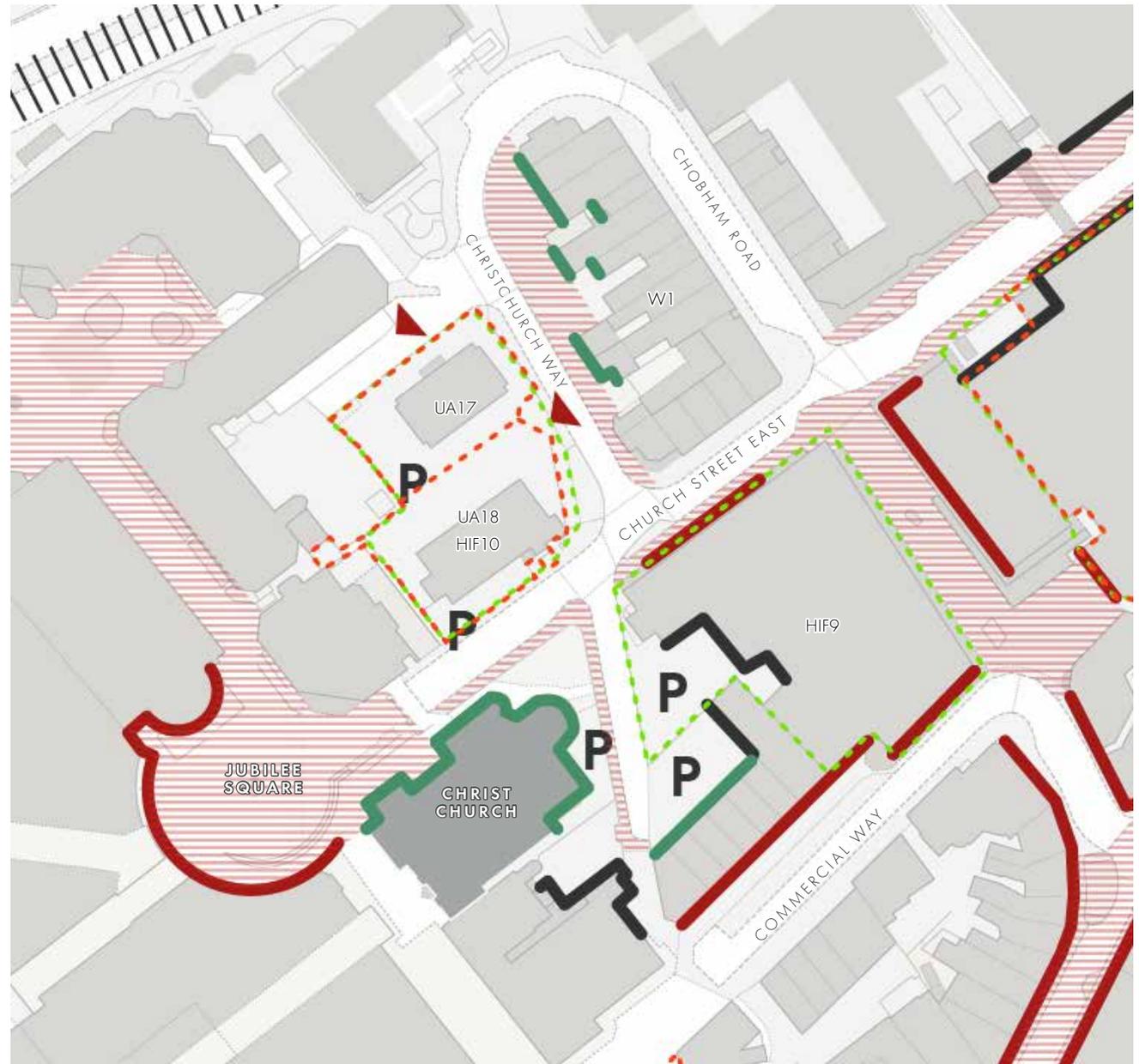
Issues and opportunities

- Sensitive location due to the church sitting adjacent to the site
- Sensitive edges to the rear of the parade of shops along Chobham Road
- Sites create poor public spaces with lack of active frontages
- At the northern approach to the town centre, desire line to the station is awkward and obstructed

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Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Composite suitability



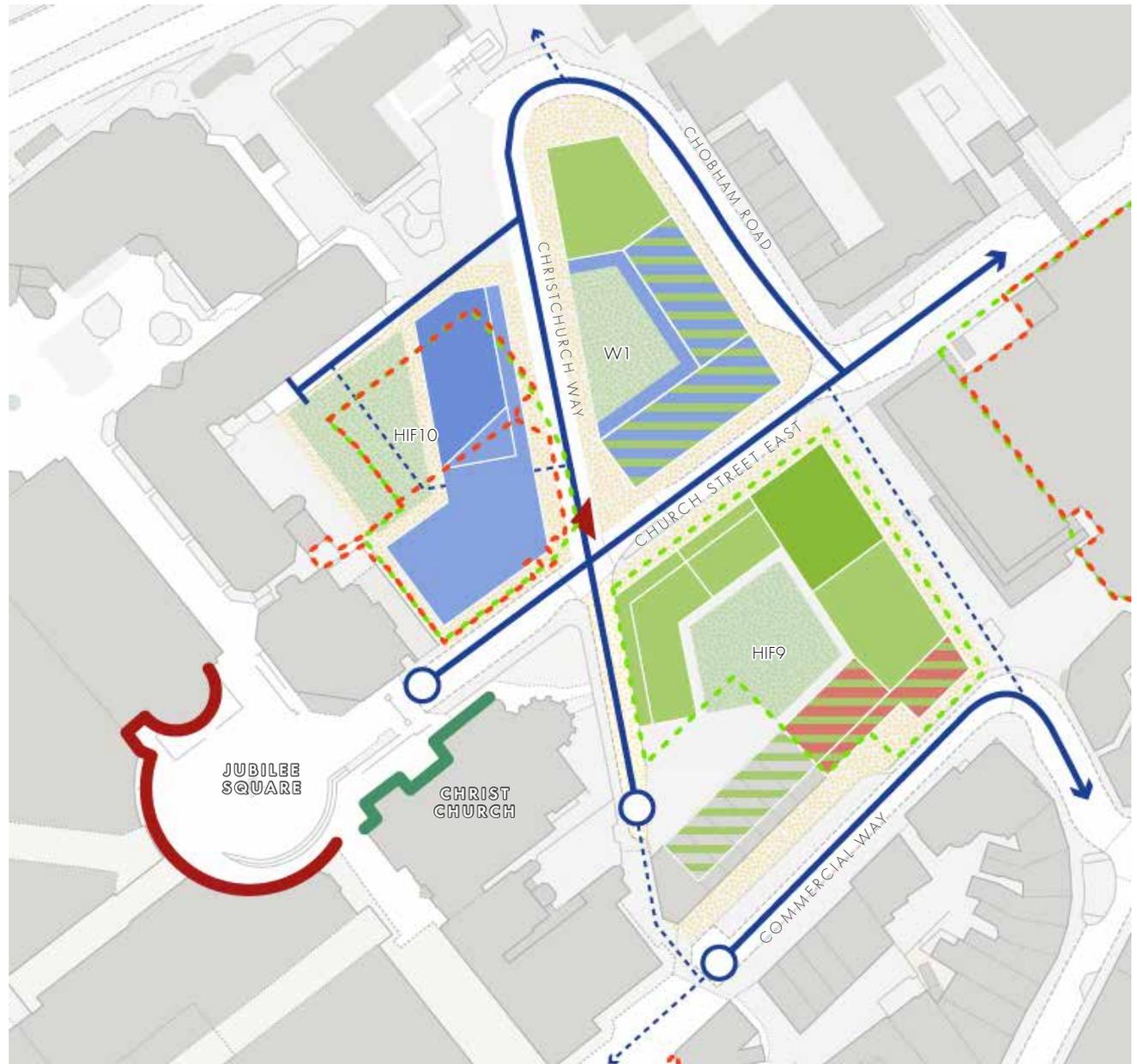
Composite sensitivity

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ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

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-  Commercial / retail
-  Residential
-  Community / leisure
-  Business/office
-  Improved public realm
-  Parking (surface)
-  Parking (decked)
-  Potential for taller building
-  Existing taller building
-  Sensitive frontages
-  Commercial frontages
-  Secondary route
-  Primary route
-  Pedestrianised route
-  Busy road
-  Key access
-  Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access for offices on HIF10 should be from West Street
- Servicing access for shops on HIF9 should be from Commercial Way
- Vehicular access should be retained along Church Street East and Christchurch Way
- Residential lobbies on W1 should be interspersed among offices uses at ground floor

Offices on HIF10 and W1 should be accessed from Church Street East

Land uses

- Site HIF9 is suited to residential development with some retail at ground floor reinforcing the existing parade along Commercial Way
- Site HIF9 should accommodate mostly office space at ground floor and residential uses on upper floors
- Site HIF10 is suited to pure office uses

Form of development

- An L-shaped linear office building is appropriate on HIF10 which would complete the existing urban block
- A C-shaped block is appropriate on W1 wrapping around a private courtyard at podium level
- The northern point of W1 is suited to taller development in order to mark the prominent approach into the town centre from the north

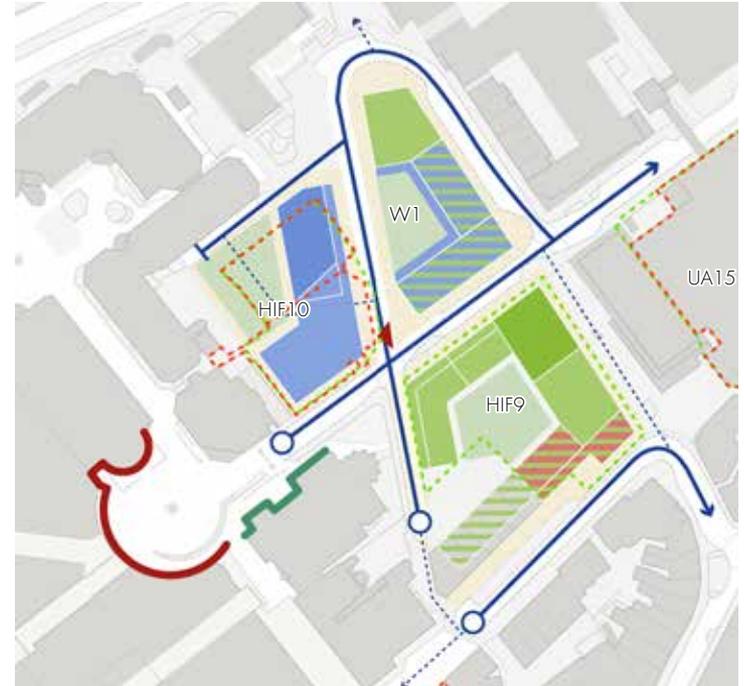
- A perimeter courtyard block is appropriate on HIF9 wrapping around the existing parade of shops along Commercial Way which could be extended upwards.

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm along Church Street East and Commercial Way will be required as part of the development
- Proposals should follow existing building lines to create a continuous frontage on already well-proportioned streets
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided on site where appropriate
- All sites present opportunities to create private courtyards in whether raised (W1) or at grade (HIF9/10)

Relationship to surroundings

- The historic street pattern should be reinstated by realigning Christchurch Way to create a more direct pedestrian connection between Victoria Way and Woking station via the Christ Church
- The extension of Commercial Way eastwards through UA15 is encouraged
- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter of all three sites
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

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UA17 GRIFFIN HOUSE, HIF10 / UA18 CONCORD HOUSE, HIF10 / WINDFALL CHOBHAM ROAD SITE (W1).

	Block A			Block B			
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
25th							
24th							
23rd							
22nd							
21st							
20th							
19th							
18th							
17th							
16th							
15th							
14th							
13th							
12th							
11th							
10th							
9th				414			
8th				414			
7th				414			
6th	424			414			
5th	424			414			
4th	424	75		414			
3rd	424	75		414	337		
2nd	424	75	751	414	337	437	
1st	424	75	751	414	337	437	
Ground	424	75	751	414	337	437	562

PROPOSED	Subtotal			Subtotal			
Residential (dwellings)	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Residential Upper (GEA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,611
Residential Ground (GEA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	207
Business (GEA)	-	5,596	-	-	1,336	-	-
Industrial (GEA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community / leisure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 58
- Density (dph) 121
- Density (FAR) 3.19

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 6,932
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) 394
- Industrial N/A

TOTAL						
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
5,818	62,624	58	12,750	0.48	2.66	121
6,932	74,615					
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

UA31 STATION CAR PARK (EAST) / HIF2

UA31 STATION CAR PARK (EAST) / HIF2

Site overview

- Within the Station Approach character area
- The prevailing height is 3.8 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 6 storeys
- The site is vast, spanning along the southern edge of the railway line. It's current use is primarily providing surface car parking for the station to the west, with a small office building abutting the railway.

The site is enclosed to the south by a low rise residential area along Oriental Road, with the rear of all dwellings facing onto the site. An assisted living complex is located to the east.

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Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

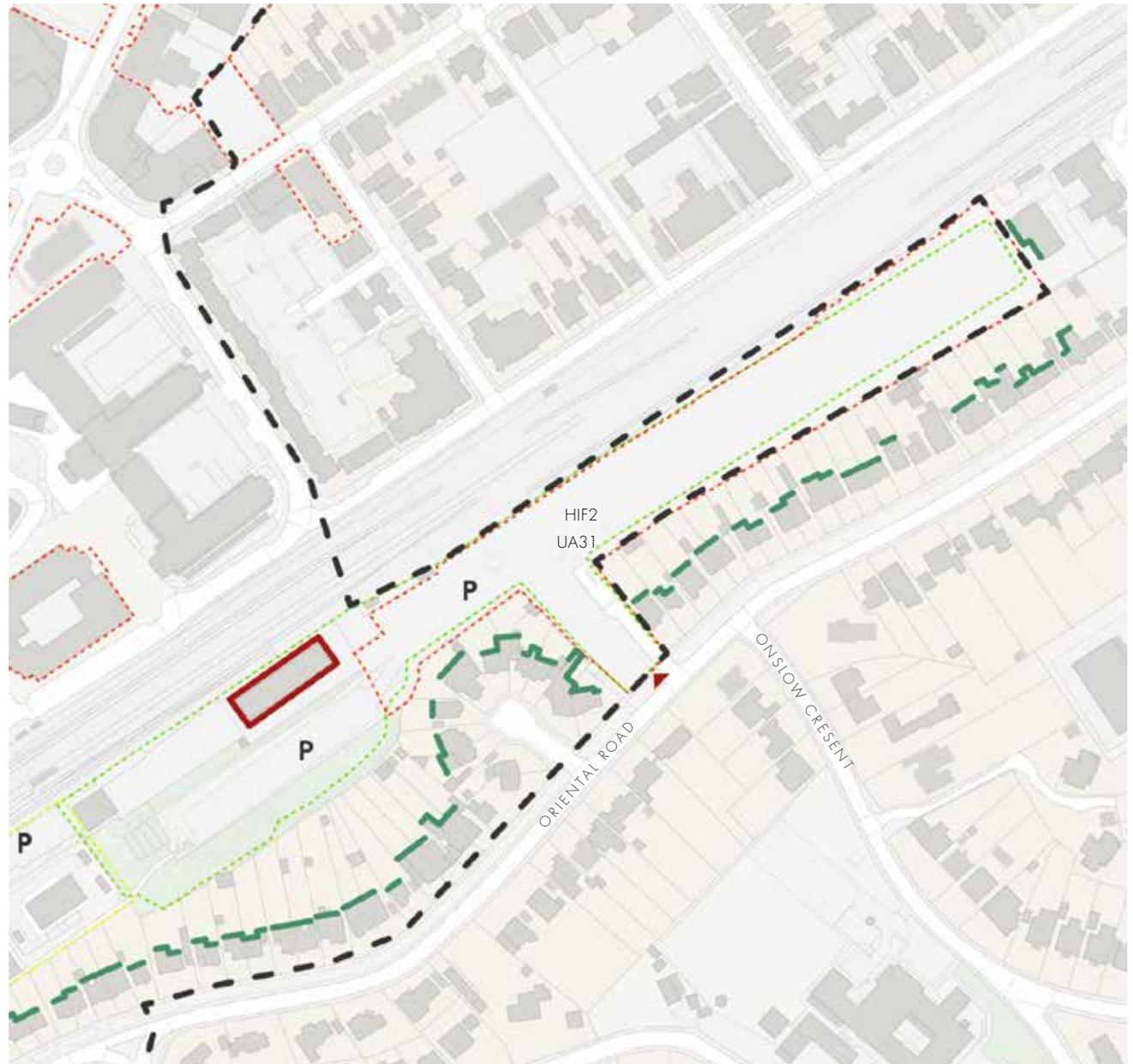
Issues and opportunities

- Adjacent to the railway line
- Sensitive edges looking onto the site from the backs of the Oriental Road residential area
- Open site, currently surface car parking

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Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building

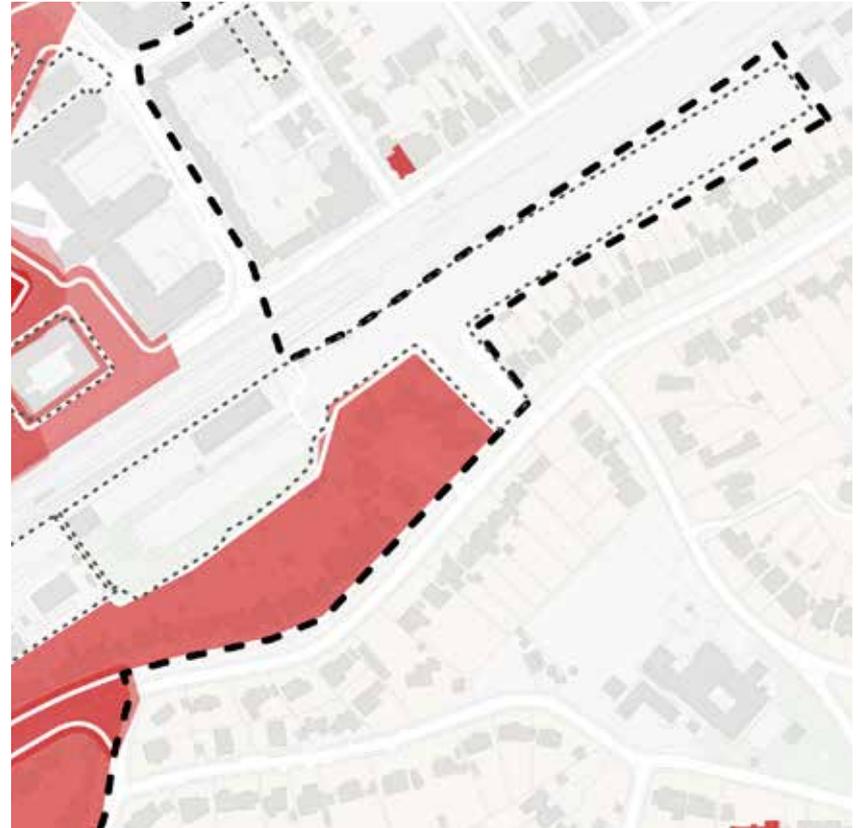


SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



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Composite suitability

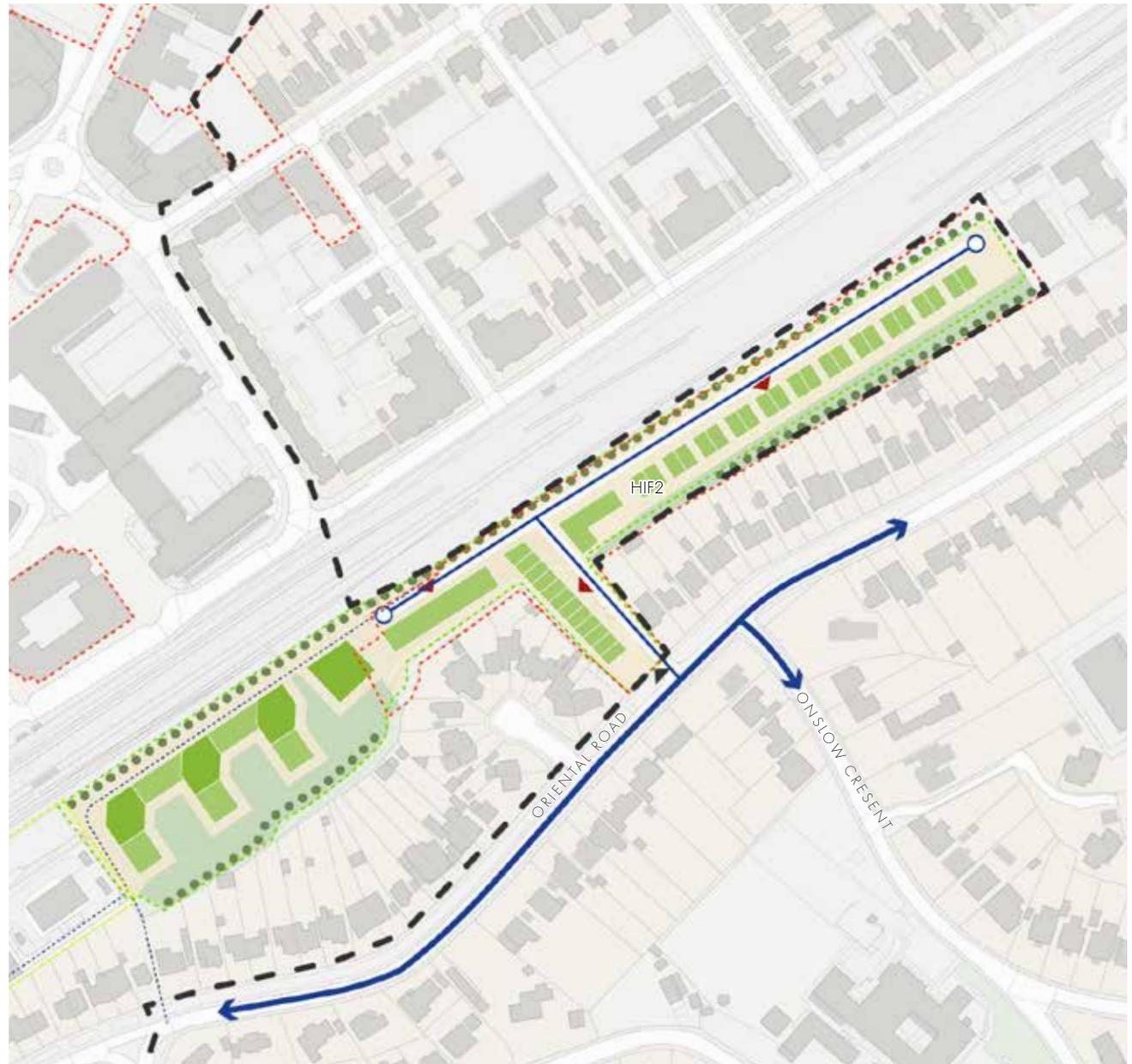


Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 386
Key

- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- P Parking (surface)
- P Parking (decked)
- X Potential for taller building
- X Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Vehicular access should be provided along Oriental Road
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the station
- Pedestrian access may be provided from multiple points off Oriental Road
- Future pedestrian access to/from the station parallel to the railway lines should be considered

Land uses

Site HIF2 is suited to pure residential development

Form of development

- Due to the length of the site, HIF2 may be subdivided into multiple sections, each with a different residential character
- Low to mid-rise linear blocks with dual aspect apartments are better suited to the east of the site
- Low to mid-rise mews houses and stacked maisonettes are better suited to the centre of the site which has a more compact and compromised geometry
- Taller buildings and courtyard blocks are better suited to the west
- Taller elements should be situated to the north of the perimeter blocks to limit overshadowing and provide better daylight
- The scale of buildings may rise towards the west as they approach the station

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm south of the railways will be required as part of the development
- Extensive tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided along the southern edge and across the length of the site
- Existing mature trees should be retained where possible, particularly towards the west
- The northern edge of the site is suited to shared pedestrian/vehicular space

Relationship to surroundings

- The car-dominated site should be transformed into a residential and pedestrian friendly environment
- There are opportunities to create better east-west movement to and from the station
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential properties along Oriental Way to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

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CAPACITIES

EX STATION CAR PARK, HIF2

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	Block A												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
25th													
24th													
23rd													
22nd													
21st													
20th													
19th													
18th													
17th													
16th													
15th													
14th													
13th													
12th													
11th													
10th													
9th													
8th													
7th													
6th													
5th							276			276			276
4th							276			276			276
3rd		276			359		276	209		276	209		276
2nd	1,320	276		500	359		276	209		276	209		276
1st	1,320	276	611	500	359	166	276	209	166	276	209	166	276
Ground	1,320	276	611	500	359	166	276	209	166	276	209	166	276

PROPOSED	Subtotal													
Residential (dwellings)														145
Residential Upper (GEA)														12,048
Residential Ground (GEA)														2,405
Business (GEA)														-
Industrial (GEA)														-
Retail / F&B (GEA)														-
Community / leisure														-
Parking														-

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 145
- Density (dph) 80
- Density (FAR) 0.8

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) N/A
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

TOTAL							
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH	
14,453	155,571	145	14,453	1.80	0.80	80	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

ORIENTAL ROAD CLUSTER

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ORIENTAL ROAD CLUSTER

Site overview

- The cluster comprises of UA32 Royal Mail Depot, HIF1 / UA35 The Crescent, HIF6 / UA36 Somerset House, HIF6 / HIF5 Station Plaza / Station Sidings, (W2).
 - Within the Station Approach character area
 - The prevailing height is 3.8 storeys
 - The tall building threshold for this area is 6 storeys
- The three sites are located in close proximity to the station, all ranging between 3 and 4 storeys; acting as a transitional area between the town centre and low rise residential areas so the east and south.
- UA32 is enclosed by a range of uses with a local parade of shops to the north, a hotel to the west and dwellings to the east and south.
- UA35 and UA36 sit along Heathside Crescent with surface parking provided to the rear. Both sites comprise of dwellings with the first being a supported residential development.



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

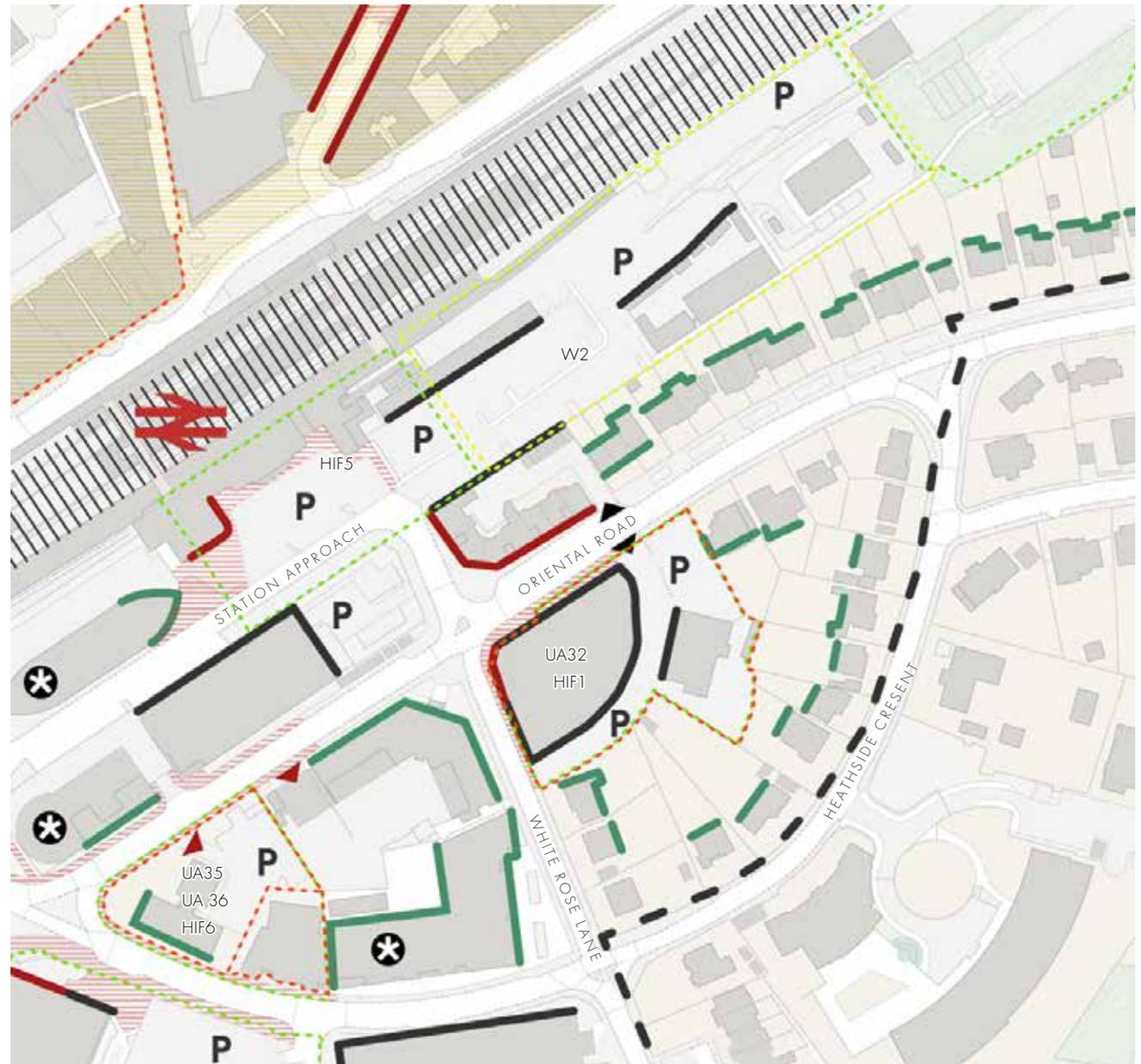
Issues and opportunities

- Sites at an intersection of building scales, dealing with a large number of sensitive frontages
- Sites include large amounts of surface car parking for the station
- Sites adjacent to the railway, inflicting noise pollution upon the sites

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Location plan

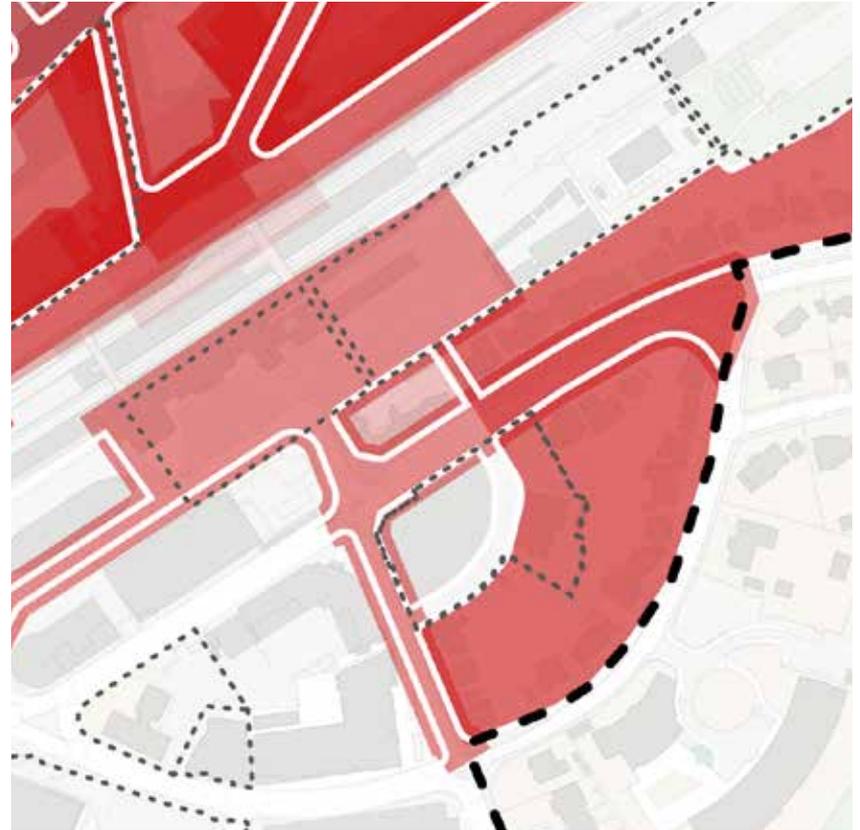
- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Composite suitability



Composite sensitivity

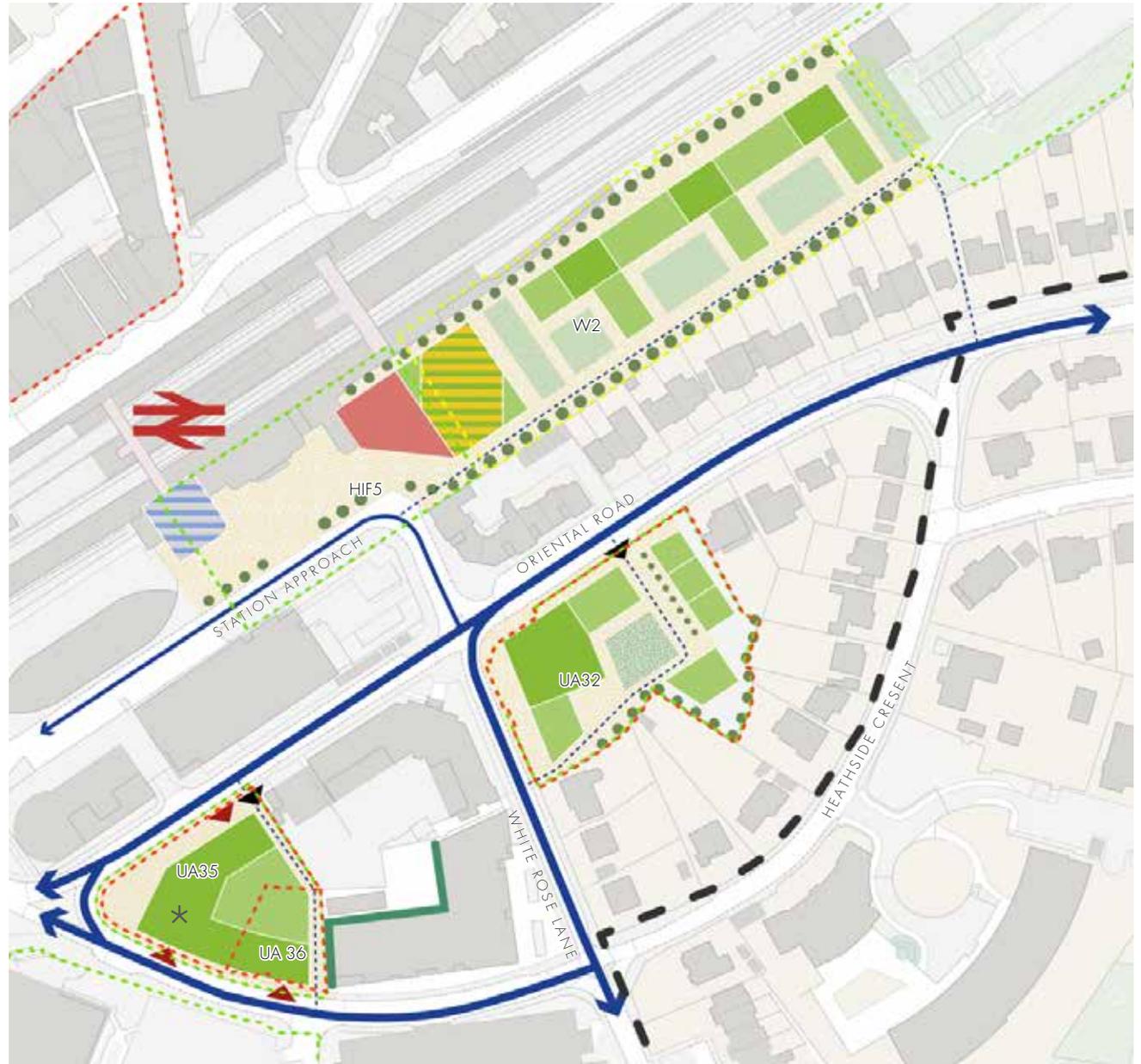
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ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 394



- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- Parking (surface)
- Parking (decked)
- Potential for taller building
- Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Vehicular access for UA32/35/36 should be provided from Oriental Road and White Rose Lane
- Servicing access for HIF5 should be provided off Station Approach
- Make off-site provision of car parking to offset the loss of spaces serving the railway station as a result of the site's development. In general, however, ways should be sought to reduce the demand for car parking by encouraging the use of other modes of transport and car sharing
- Pedestrian access for W2 may be provided from Station Approach and multiple points off Oriental Road
- Future pedestrian access to/from the station parallel to the railway lines should be considered

Land uses

- Sites W2/ UA32/35/36 are suited to pure residential development
- HIF5 presents opportunities for a mixed use infill development of commercial, community and retail space at ground floor with residential above

Form of development

- Taller elements should be situated to the north and adjacent to the railway line to limit overshadowing of and provide better daylight to existing properties
- The scale of buildings may rise towards the west as they approach the station

- Proposals for HIF5 should retain the original/distinctive station building and enhance it with minimal infill development or upwards extensions
- Developments for sites UA32/35/36 should seek to repair and complete existing blocks with C or L-shaped linear blocks consisting of mid-rise and taller elements to the north and lower elements to the south
- Private courtyards should be created as part of the developments for all sites
- Lower-scale mews housing would be appropriate towards the backlands of site UA32

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm south of the railways will be required as part of the development
- Extensive tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided across the length of W2 and around the new station square
- Car parking around the station should be consolidated and limited to the minimum

Relationship to surroundings

- A new station square and forecourt should be created in HIF5 with improved east-west movement to and from the station
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages along Oriental Way to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

Page 396



STATION PLAZA, HIF5

	Block A				
	1	2	3	4	5
25th					
24th					
23rd					
22nd					
21st					
20th					
19th					
18th					
17th					
16th					
15th					
14th					
13th					
12th					
11th					
10th					
9th					
8th					
7th	650				
6th	650				
5th	650				
4th	650				
3rd	650		58		
2nd	650		58		332
1st	650	58	58		332
Ground	650	58	58	457	

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 48
- Density (dph) 131
- Density (FAR) 1.79

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 664
- Community (sqm GEA) 650
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) 457
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal
Residential (dwellings)	48
Residential Upper (GEA)	4,782
Residential Ground (GEA)	58
Business (GEA)	664
Industrial (GEA)	-
Retail / F&B (GEA)	457
Community / leisure	650
Parking	-

TOTAL							
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH	
4,840	52,097	48	6,611	0.37	1.79	131	
664	7,147						
-	-						
457	4,919						
650	6,997						
-	-						

COAL & AGGREGATES YARD / HIF 3

COAL & AGGREGATES YARD / HIF 3

Site overview

- Within the Victoria Way South character area
- The prevailing height is 3.8 storeys
- The tall building threshold for this area is 6 storeys
- This site sits adjacent to the railway line, located just west of where the new bridge widening scheme is set to happen.

Page 402
The site sits at an intersection of development types with the site sitting between low rise residential areas to the south and the emerging tall building cluster sitting along Victoria Way to the north. Mid-rise residential blocks sit just east with an open aggregates yard to the west, where access should be retained.



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

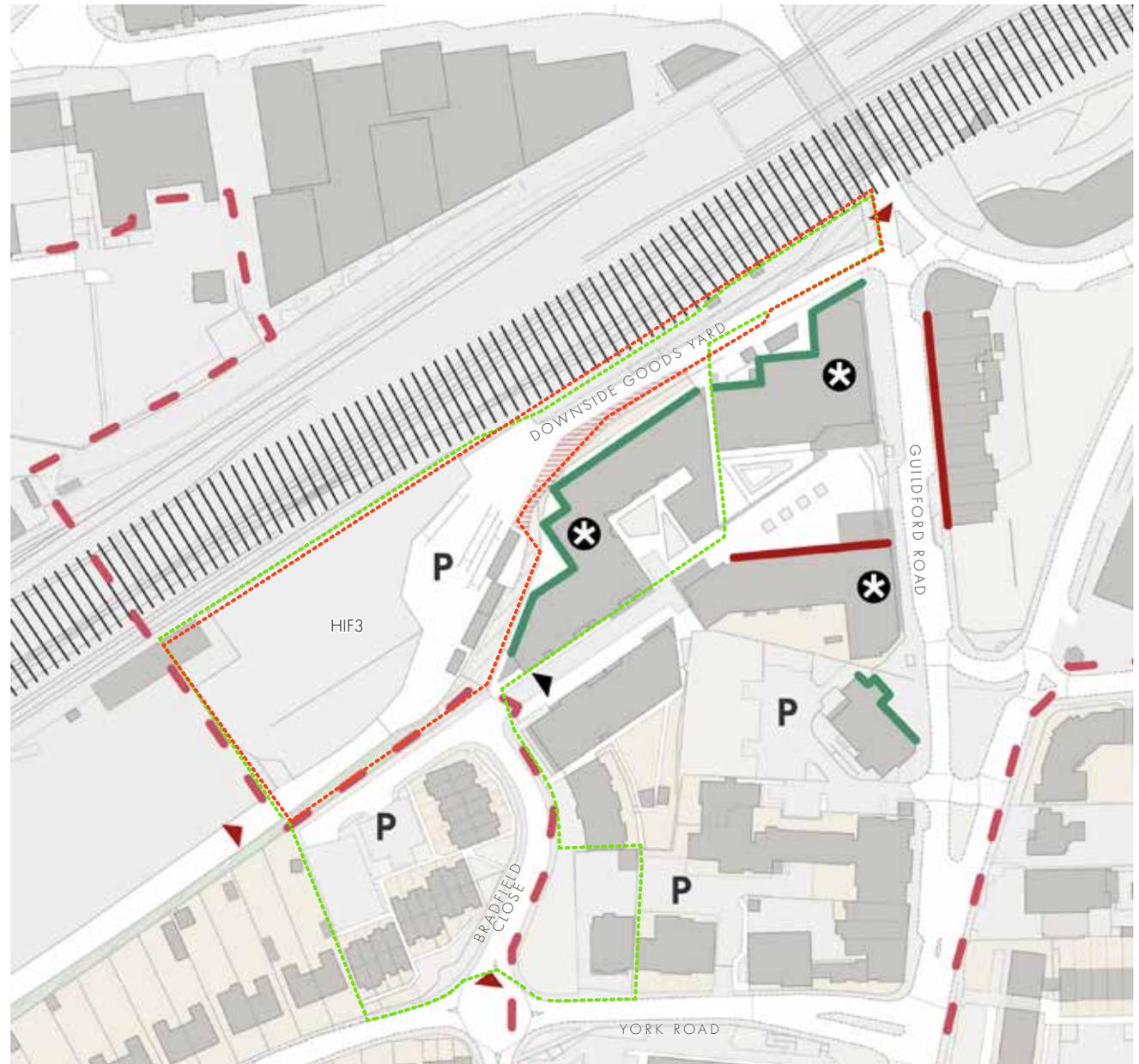
Issues and opportunities

- Context ranges in scale
- Tall building cluster emerging across the railway
- The site is already cleared
- Sensitive residential edges face onto the site from the east and south

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Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Page 404

Composite suitability



Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 405

-  Commercial / retail
-  Residential
-  Community / leisure
-  Business/office
-  Improved public realm
-  Parking (surface)
-  Parking (decked)
-  Potential for taller building
-  Existing taller building
-  Sensitive frontages
-  Commercial frontages
-  Secondary route
-  Primary route
-  Pedestrianised route
-  Busy road
-  Key access
-  Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Vehicular access should be provided from Bradfield Close and Downside Goods Yard
- These roads should be connected to allow for two-way movement
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the station
- Pedestrian entrances should be provided from the extension of Waverley Court and Bradfield Close

Land uses

- The northern buildings should be almost entirely residential with some ground floor workspace provision
- The southern building may accommodate community uses at ground floor with residential above

Form of development

- Two parallel linear blocks can make efficient use of the awkward geometry of the site to the north
- Each block would consist of a mid-rise 'shoulder' element and a taller 'head' element
- Shoulder elements should be positioned to the south to reflect the lower scale of nearby buildings
- Taller elements should be situated to the north to limit overshadowing and provide better daylight
- Lower-scale dual aspect apartments would be

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm south of the railways will be required as part of the development
- There is potential to improve the street environment along Waverley Court and Downside Goods Yard
- Development should provide new, hard-landscaped amenity and play space for residents
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided across northern and southern parts of the site
- Car parking around the station should be consolidated and limited to the minimum

Relationship to surroundings

- Active frontages should be provided along all street edges
- Proposals should take measure to mitigate noise pollution from the railways
- The new connection between Bradfield Close and Downside Goods Yard would create a two-sided street framed by new buildings to the west and existing ones to the east
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED
MASSING



PROPOSED MASSING

Page 408



UA34 QUADRANT HOUSE

Page 410

UA34 QUADRANT HOUSE

Site overview

- Sits on the edge of the town centre, outside a designated character area
- The prevailing height is N/A
- The tall building threshold for this area is N/A
- Before the south western approach to the town centre, this 4 storey detached office building presents itself. It is occupied by Surrey County Council.

Page 417
Although the building has a large footprint itself, the site as a whole is inefficient with much of the ground level being used for surface car parking.

It is bordered by residential buildings, varying between 2 and 4 storeys. Dense planting acts as a barrier between to dwellings to the east of the site, across Guildford Road.



Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

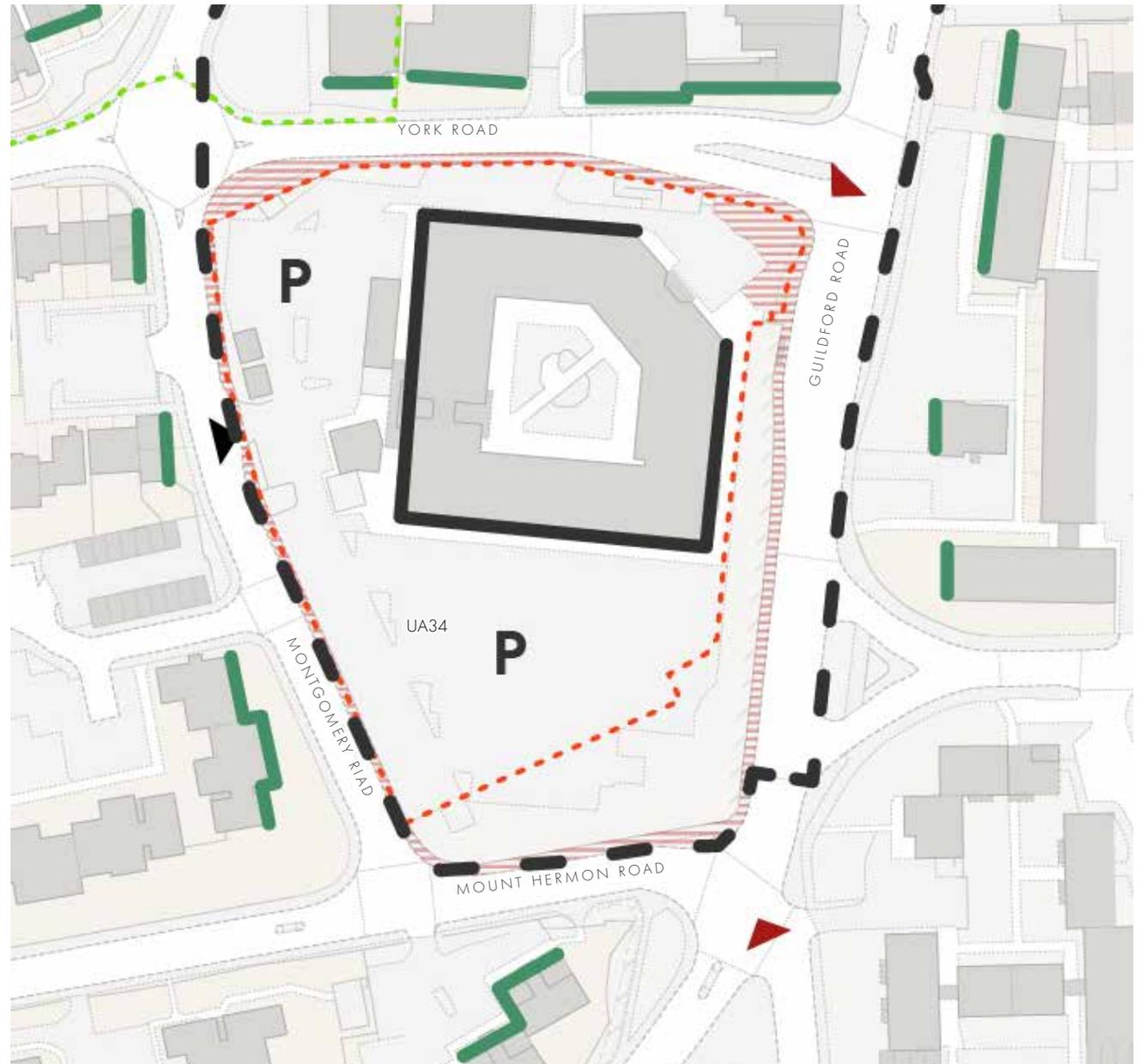
Issues and opportunities

- Bordered by sensitive frontages, more prominent along Montgomery Road where there is a lack of soft planting
- Existing level change at the north to enter the site
- The existing office building offers little to the street with no active frontages
- Largely surface car parking

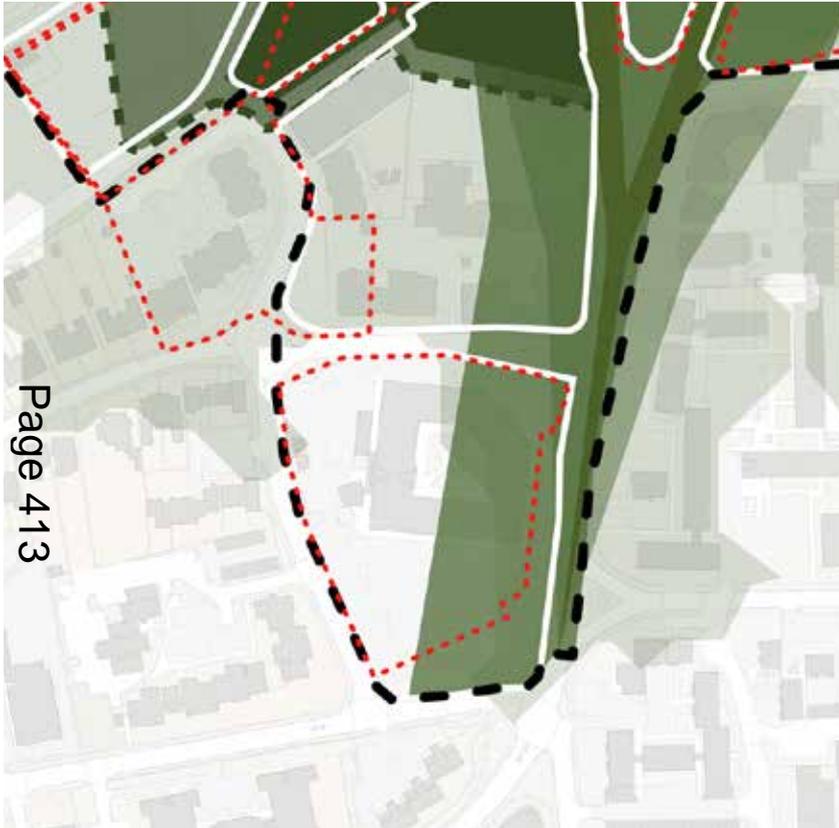
page 412

Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Page 413

Composite suitability



Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 414

Key

- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- P Parking (surface)
- P Parking (decked)
- X Potential for taller building
- X Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access for offices should be provided from York Road
- Vehicular access should be provided from York Road and Montgomery Road. However, vehicles accessing the aggregate yard should continue to use the current access only, and should be prevented from using Bradfield Close
- A new east-west passage across the site should be considered
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the station

Residential entrances should be provided from Guildford Road and Montgomery Road, as well as the new passage

Land uses

- The northern half of the site should be almost entirely commercial with some ground floor community space provision and offices above
- The southern half of the site should be almost entirely residential with some ground floor retail space towards the north-eastern corner

Form of development

- The northern block would comprise a modest scale office building with setbacks at upper levels
- The eastern corner of the office building could have a slightly taller element marking its address on Guildford Road
- An perimeter courtyard block would be appropriate on the southern part of the

site, arranged informally according to the geometry of the site.

- Taller elements should be situated to east, along Guildford Road and to the north to limit overshadowing and provide better daylight
- Low-scale stacked maisonettes would be appropriate along the northern and southern edges of the perimeter block

Public realm and movement

- Improvements to the quality of the public realm around the perimeter of the site will be required as part of the development
- There is potential to create a new, semi-private street with retail and community uses for residents and office occupants
- The development should provide a generous, soft-landscaped courtyard and play space for residents
- Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided within and around the site
- Existing mature trees should be retained where possible

Relationship to surroundings

- Active frontages should be provided along all street edges
- Building lines should be sufficiently set back from existing residential frontages to avoid overlooking and ensure privacy
- New developments should not exceed the recommended building heights set out in the townscape strategy nor disrupt the distinctive bell curve of the Woking skyline



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

Page 416



CAPACITIES

UA34 QUADRANT HOUSE

Page 417

25th
24th
23rd
22nd
21st
20th
19th
18th
17th
16th
15th
14th
13th
12th
11th
10th
9th
8th
7th
6th
5th
4th
3rd
2nd
1st
Ground

	Block A							Block B											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
25th																			
24th																			
23rd																			
22nd																			
21st																			
20th																			
19th																			
18th																			
17th																			
16th																			
15th																			
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13th																			
12th																			
11th																			
10th																			
9th																			
8th																			
7th																			
6th																			
5th							230												
4th							230												
3rd						53	230												
2nd			390		53	230	851			388		388		329		329			
1st			390		53	230	696	851		183	388	144	388	160	329	96	329	240	
Ground	80	390	80	53	230	696	851			183	388	144	388	160	329	96	329	240	1,954

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 69
- Density (dph) 76
- Density (FAR) 1.83

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 8,280
- Community (sqm GEA) 1,392
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

PROPOSED	Subtotal	
Residential (dwellings)	-	68
Residential Upper (GEA)	-	5,708
Residential Ground (GEA)	-	1,129
Business (GEA)	6,326	1,954
Industrial (GEA)	-	-
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-	-
Community / leisure	1,392	-
Parking	-	-

Subtotal	Subtotal	
		68
		5,708
		1,129
		1,954
		-
		-
		-
		-
		-

TOTAL							
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH	
6,837	73,587	68	16,509	0.90	1.83	76	
8,280	89,125						
-	-						
-	-						
1,392	14,983						
-	-						

HIF4 POLICE STATION / HIF7 THE TRIANGLE

HIF4 POLICE STATION

Site overview

- Within the Victoria Way South and Station Approach character areas
 - The prevailing heights are 5.3 and 3.8 respectively
 - The tall building thresholds for this area are 8 and 6 respectively
 - Both sites sit adjacent to one another and are located along the southern approach to the town centre, sitting either side of Station Approach.
- Within the site the buildings are low-rise, consisting of a small parade of shops and the police station.
- The context varies in scale with low-rise housing to the south with taller residential buildings creating a cluster around the station forecourt to the north.

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Aerial view facing north-west showing the scale of existing buildings and nearby developments

- Consented scheme
- Scheme under construction

EXISTING CONDITION

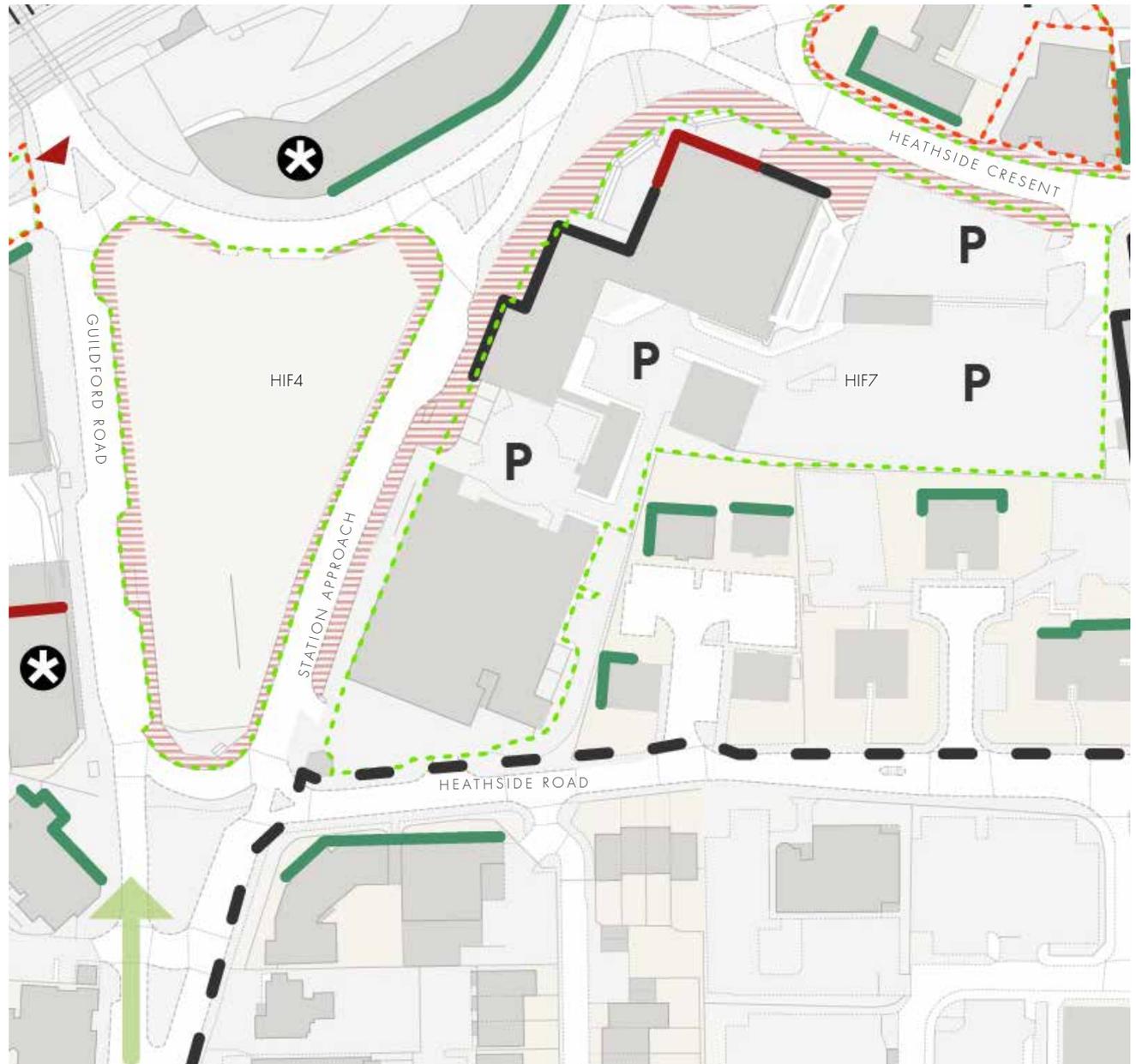
Issues and opportunities

- Finer grain along Guildford Road
- Large amounts of surface car parking surrounding the police station
- Sensitive residential frontages facing the police station from Heathside Road
- Scale of context increases to the north towards the station

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Location plan

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▬ Major route
- ▬ Railway line
- Commercial frontage
- Sensitive frontage
- ▲ Commercial access
- ▲ Servicing access
- P Parking (surface)
- ⊗ Tall building



SUITABILITY/SENSITIVITY



Page 421

Composite suitability

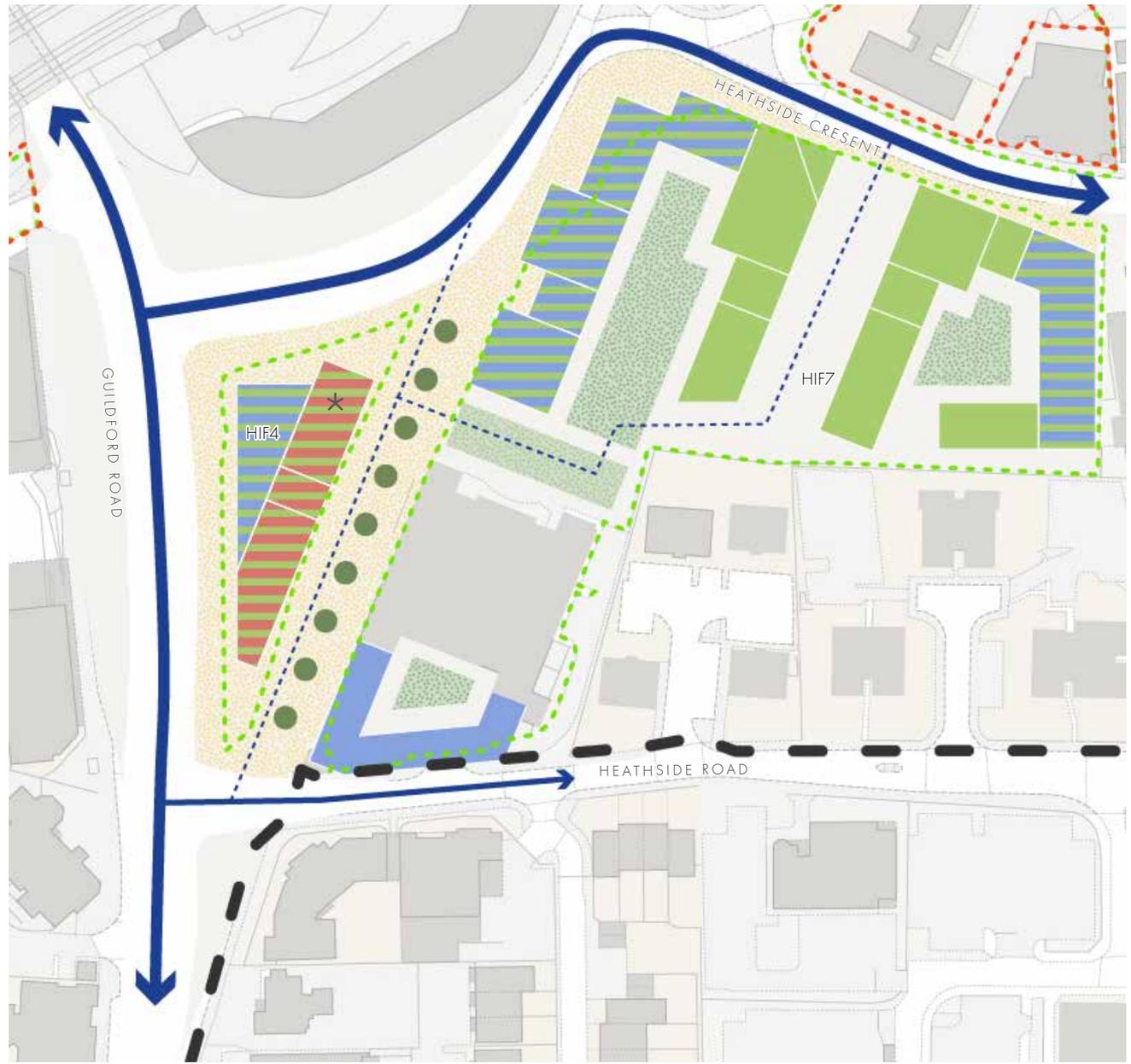


Composite sensitivity

ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Page 422

- Commercial / retail
- Residential
- Community / leisure
- Business/office
- Improved public realm
- P Parking (surface)
- P Parking (decked)
- X Potential for taller building
- X Existing taller building
- Sensitive frontages
- Commercial frontages
- Secondary route
- Primary route
- Pedestrianised route
- Busy road
- Key access
- Services access



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Access

- Servicing access should be provided along Heathside Crescent and Station Approach.
- Minimal parking should be provided due to the proximity to the town centre, bus routes and station.
- Pedestrianised routes should be introduced to improve permeability from Heathside Crescent to Station Approach.

Form of development

- Mixed-use perimeter blocks with mid-rise buildings and some tall elements are appropriate in this location.

Developments can rise to the north to respond to the emerging tall building cluster along Victoria Way.

- Soft landscaping should be provided on site where appropriate.
- Connecting the 'island' for a more holistic development, with improved pedestrianised connections along Station Approach.

Relationship to surroundings

- New developments should not exceed the upper limit recommendation or disrupt the 'tall building bell curve'.

Public realm and movement

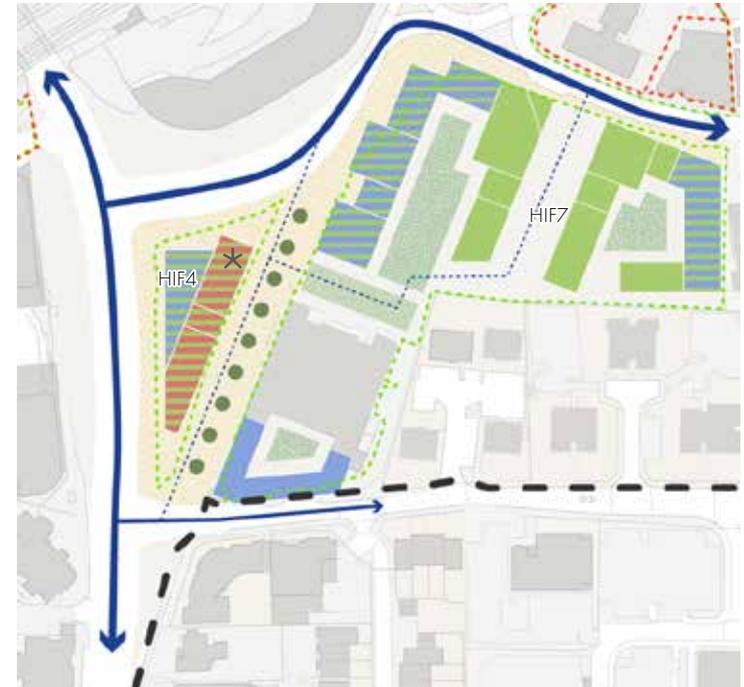
- Improvements to the quality of the public realm along Heathside Crescent, Guildford Road and Station Approach will be required as part of the development.
- Building lines should be set back to create wider pavements with better landscaping.

Land uses

- Ground floor retail uses are appropriate along the pedestrianised Station Approach.
- Residential uses are suitable to the east.

Street level experience

- Active frontages should be provided along the perimeter of the site.



Illustrative framework

PROPOSED MASSING

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POLICE STATION, HIF4

Page 425

	Block A	Block B								Block C						
	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	
25th																
24th																
23rd																
22nd																
21st																
20th																
19th																
18th																
17th																
16th																
15th																
14th																
13th																
12th																
11th							451									
10th							451									
9th							451									
8th							451									
7th							451									
6th							451									
5th			324		324		451	61		254				574		
4th			324		324		451	61		254				574		
3rd			324	125	324	485	451	61	125	254	340	125	324	96	211	
2nd			324	125	324	485	451	61	125	254	340	125	324	96	211	
1st	538		324	125	324	485	451	61	125	254	340	125	324	96	211	
Ground	538		324	125	324	485	451	61	125	254	340	125	324	96	574	211

PROPOSED	Subtotal	Subtotal								Subtotal					
Residential (dwellings)	-									87					
Residential Upper (GEA)	-									8,134					
Residential Ground (GEA)	0									446					
Business (GEA)	1,076									1,258					
Industrial (GEA)	-									-					
Retail / F&B (GEA)	-									-					
Community / leisure	-									-					
Parking	-									-					

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 211
- Density (dph) 192
- Density (FAR) 2.18

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 2,908
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) N/A
- Industrial N/A

TOTAL						
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
21,109	227,210	211	24,017	1.10	2.18	192
2,908	31,301					
-	-					
-	-					
-	-					

* Note that any minor discrepancies in capacity reporting is likely to be a result of rounding in spreadsheet calculations.

THE TRIANGLE, HIF7

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	Block A			
	1	2	3	4
25th				
24th				
23rd				
22nd				
21st				
20th				
19th				
18th				
17th				
16th				
15th				
14th				
13th				
12th				
11th				
10th				
9th	304			
8th	304			
7th	304			
6th	304			
5th	304		357	
4th	304		357	
3rd	304	96	357	
2nd	304	96	357	
1st	304	96	357	347
Ground	304	96	357	347

PROPOSED	Subtotal
Residential (dwellings)	41
Residential Upper (GEA)	4,052
Residential Ground (GEA)	0
Business (GEA)	694
Industrial (GEA)	-
Retail / F&B (GEA)	1,514
Community / leisure	-
Parking	-

TOTAL						
GEA m2	GEA sqft	Dwellings	GDA	Site area	FAR	DPH
4,052	43,615	41	6,260	0.17	3.68	238
694	7,470					
-	-					
1,514	16,297					
-	-					
-	-					

Residential

- Proposed dwellings 41
- Density (dph) 238
- Density (FAR) 3.68

Non-residential

- Business (sqm GEA) 694
- Community (sqm GEA) N/A
- Retail/F&B (sqm GEA) 1,514
- Industrial N/A

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Executive Summary

The Executive of the Council committed to prepare the Town Centre Masterplan at its meeting on 15 July 2021. In doing so, it placed public engagement at centre stage in the Masterplan preparation process. The Residents' Panel and key stakeholders were invited to give their views on what they envisage the Town Centre to be in 10 years' time. The following is the vision that residents and key stakeholders wish for the Town Centre:

Woking Town Centre will be:

- the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub and a location for inward investment with a flourishing diverse, innovative, and digitally enabled economy,
- a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities;
- undergoing a significant change to be shaped by the Town Centre Masterplan, this change includes the provision of a range of shops, homes, jobs, cultural, health and leisure facilities to meet the needs of residents and modern businesses whilst enhancing the heritage and environmental assets of the area;
- a place where it is expected that development will be of exemplary design within the framework of the Townscape Strategy for the Town Centre and with green infrastructure embedded as essential and integral part of the design;
- a place where development is accessible to the disabled and all other users; and
- a place where development will be informed by appropriate public engagement.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to provide an overarching framework to help guide development and investment decisions in the Town Centre to achieve the above vision.

The Masterplan covers a range of topics that residents and key stakeholders want the Masterplan to address. The Masterplan covers them in detail. Below is a summary of the headlines under each topic. However, all are encouraged to read the Masterplan in full to understand its detailed requirements and how they will apply to day to day planning and investment decisions.

Townscape strategy

What it is about

The design quality of new development in Woking town centre has a direct bearing on its success. In supporting relevant Local Plan policy, the masterplan promotes high quality design in new development. In doing so, it is important that a proper account is taken of the existing character of Woking town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan defines new character areas across the centre which will help developers to do just this.

The town centre has seen some new very tall buildings. Tall buildings in the right locations can bring significant benefits to Woking. High density developments in central locations takes pressure off releasing more sensitive land in less central locations. But the town centre has until now lacked a strategic approach to where new tall buildings should be located. The Woking

Town Centre masterplan presents an evidence-based building heights framework for the whole town centre, identifying areas that might be better or less-well suited to new tall buildings.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- Update and establish a new Woking town centre character framework to help ensure new development takes proper account of its local context.
- Establish a high-level public realm and movement framework which identifies where improvements can be made to the town centre in the context of major identified development sites.
- Establish a building heights and tall buildings strategy for Woking town centre, to help ensure the form and scale of new development is appropriate and tall buildings are located only in the most appropriate locations.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- New development will be assessed against the character area, public realm and movement framework, and building heights guidance outlined in the Townscape Strategy of this Masterplan.
- To help guide development and ensure the right balance is made between making the best and most efficient use of town centre land and respecting local context, a series of studies have been undertaken on each of the Local Plan site allocations and HIF sites. These studies, whilst not representing a blueprint for development, provide the Council and potential applicants with guidance on how developments could respond to their local context whilst delivering high density and high-quality developments. Please see Appendix 1.

Sustainable construction

What it is about

The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, pledging to accelerate its efforts to become carbon neutral across its own estate and operations by 2030, and by 2050 across the wider Borough. The Masterplan sets out clear policy requirements that development must achieve to be acceptable, to help ensure these targets are met. It highlights opportunities that exist to help achieve the requirements and provides good practice examples as guidance.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- A well-designed town centre and buildings that conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials.
- Design should respond to the impacts of climate change by maximising energy efficiency and minimising carbon emissions to contribute towards net zero targets
- by 2050.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will be required to follow the energy hierarchy by reducing demand for energy through integrated approach to solar gain, securing efficient supply of heat and power, considering feasibility of on-site renewable energy generation.
- Large scale non-residential or mixed-use proposals will be required to conduct a BREAM assessment and achieve at least a Very Good rating;



- New development should incorporate measures to reduce water demand and for residential development, this should not exceed 110 litres per person per day;
- Development should incorporate electric vehicle charging points.
- Unless otherwise justified to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, development will be required to connect to the existing network of CHP.

Flood risk and surface water drainage

What it is about

Water is a natural part of our environment. However, the Town Centre is highly urbanised, with little natural or permeable space to absorb rainwater. Development has the potential to adversely affect surface water runoff and flood risk, and measures should be taken at the earliest stage of development to avoid or minimise flood risk. The Masterplan sets out the sources of flooding and provides examples of practical measures that can be used to ensure that surface water flood risk is not increased. It sets out clear requirements for development to meet or consider to be acceptable.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- The inclusion of SuDS within all development in the TCMP area will help to reduce flood risk to the multiple catchments the area drains to as well as helping to improve water quality to our rivers as required by the Environment Act 2021. Our Plan to achieve the objectives
- Development will be required to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. This should be considered and incorporated from the start of the development process.

- Development creates green/ blue streets, meaning that highways are designed to drain via rain gardens and surface water tree pits, where appropriate. An example of this has begun at Chertsey Road.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

What it is about

Green infrastructure makes a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community. There are significant opportunities to enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity in the Town Centre. The Masterplan provides an overview of the current green infrastructure provision, good examples of what can be achieved and requirements that development will be expected to achieve to be policy compliant.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To take proactive steps to support 'bigger, better and joined up' habitats, green ways and spaces.
- To be tenacious in the long-term effort to reduce our impacts on the environment and to plan for sustainable growth.
- To increase people's access to enjoy greenspaces, recognising the well-being lift this gives, whilst protecting and enhancing our habitats.
- To ensure that planned development is supported by infrastructure including new natural and recreational assets.
- To increase the area of the overall tree, shrub and canopy cover of the Town Centre and ensure successful establishment and long-term growth potential as well as a diversity of suitable tree species.

- To work collaboratively with partners in all sectors to achieve the objectives.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will be required to provide on-site measures for new natural and formal spaces, greenways and habitats on-site. Where on-site provision is not feasible, developer contributions will be sought to meet the requirements off-site;
- Providing pocket parks to help enliven streets and public spaces. Informal and inclusive play should be part of this to create child-friendly space for all.
- Development should help create clear links between the urban core of Woking and its surrounding natural open spaces. One such link is the Basingstoke Canal, where integration with the town centre would be improved.
- Early consideration of green infrastructure and biodiversity requirements in the design of development and street-scene improvements, continuing throughout development, including during construction and future maintenance is encouraged.
- Development will be expected to meet national and/or local policy requirements for biodiversity net gain, for example through new trees, shrubs and hedges, increasing canopy cover over the town centre; green and eco-roofs and walls; bird nesting and bat/ bird roosting features to increase habitat provision.

General Infrastructure

What it is about

It is important for development to be supported by adequate and appropriate infrastructure in a timely manner. The Council has undertaken an Infrastructure Needs Assessment, which has informed the Masterplan. The Masterplan sets out infrastructure requirements that development should contribute to provide.

Objectives of what it seeks to achieve:

- To work in partnership with providers to ensure that development in the Town Centre is supported by the necessary physical, social and green infrastructure in a timely manner.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- Work in partnership to deliver Woking integrated transport project.
- Replacement of Victoria Arch and improvement to the road network in its vicinity.
- Work in partnership with Network Rail to deliver significant improvement to rail infrastructure, including the Woking Flyover.
- Deliver Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Heritage Assets

What it is about

Woking has a rich heritage that needs to be conserved as a distinct part of the town's development. Heritage assets include Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The Masterplan makes sure that development takes full account of the heritage assets of the area and their settings, with the aim of enhancing them.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To conserve heritage assets, and retain them as a valuable part of Woking's evolving built environment;
- Prevent inappropriate development and loss or damage to heritage assets.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development should conserve heritage assets as a valuable part of a dynamic town centre. Development will be required to assess its impacts on heritage assets and their



setting, including the Conservation Area and incorporate appropriate measures to enhance the assets.

- Preventing development that involves loss or damage to heritage assets and take steps to enhance and restore them where beneficial to the asset and its setting.
- Relocate Town Gate to enhance public realm in the area.

Leisure and Culture

What it is about

Woking has diverse and rich leisure and culture facilities, but there are also significant opportunities for enhancement, partnership working between the public sector and the development industry. The Masterplan sets out how this can be achieved.

Objective of what it seeks to achieve

- To ensure the town centre is a leisure and culture destination that provides for the needs of its residents, workers and visitors.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- To make better use of existing cultural and leisure spaces through co-location.
- To work with community groups and businesses to expand and maximise the benefits of performing arts
- To maximise the connection between culture and heritage.

Economy

What it is about

The Town Centre is the primary focus for economic growth in the Borough to maintain its status as an economic hub. The period of the pandemic has had an impact on the economy

of the town centre, particularly on retail and hospitality. For example, the way people shop and working patterns are changing, and measure should be put in place to respond to these changes. The Masterplan responds to these challenges by setting out measures to facilitate sustainable economic growth and how developers can work in partnership to deliver that.

Objectives that it seeks to achieve

- To deliver a balance mix of uses including residential, commercial, leisure, culture, green spaces, as well as health and other public services.
- To have a vibrant and dynamic town centre where people want to live, work and visit.
- To have a town centre that is agile to respond and adapt to changing economic circumstances.
- To create a Town Centre environment that is conducive for inward investment.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- To make sure the Town Centre continue to be the primary focus for sustainable growth. In particular, to accommodate new development on previously developed land
- To promote and market a positive vision for the Town Centre
- To provide housing at the Town Centre as key part of the mix of Town Centre uses to ensure it continue to be dynamic and vibrant

Housing

What it is about

The Council has a policy obligation and a statutory duty to meet several housing requirements, including planning to meet locally identified housing needs. The Masterplan

ensures that housing development that comes forward is sustainable, including appropriate green infrastructure, and design-led within the framework of a well-considered Townscape Strategy. It also sets out a Townscape Strategy that will help determine anticipated capacities for the HIF sites taking a design-led approach.

Objectives for housing include:

- Ensuring the comprehensive delivery of the housing requirement in the Core Strategy earmarked for the Town Centre.
- To use all endeavours to facilitate the delivery of the HIF housing ask.
- To provide housing at the Town Centre as key part of the mix of Town Centre uses
- Improving the delivery of affordable housing
- Ensuring that the design and location of new housing contributes to the Town Centre's vitality and viability
- Providing a mixture of housing tenures and sizes in every part of the Town Centre
- To make sure the Town Centre continue to be the focus of new development

Our Plan to achieve the objectives

- To work in partnership to seek the redevelopment of the Day's Aggregates Yard to unlock the site for development of town centre uses, including housing.
- To improve the delivery of Affordable Housing
- To make sure that all policy and statutory housing requirements are met
- To seek the provision of private outdoor amenity spaces in housing developments.
- To require development with access core serving four or more dwellings to provide an access control system with entry phone.
- Requiring dwellings entered at the seventh floor (eighth storey) and above should be served by at least two lifts.

Transport

What it is about

Congestion is a key concern of residents and key stakeholders that needs to be addressed. Development should be accessible to all transport modes, and given the location of the Town Centre, by walking, cycling and public transport in that order before car-based travel. The Masterplan has specific proposal to help achieve this goal.

Objectives it seeks to achieve

- To substantially improve movement within the town centre
- To reduced town centre highway congestion
- To improve cycling and walking facilities linking the town centre under the Victoria Arch to the southern part of Woking town and around the railway station
- To replace Victoria Arch. The project will support Network Rail objectives such as Woking Station redevelopment, and future Flyover.
- The Council will work with Surrey County Council to explore the feasibility of introducing Liveable Neighbourhoods where feasible.

Our Plan to achieve the objectives:

- Development will contribute to the delivery of the Woking Integrated Transport Project and the sustainable transport package;
- The Council will deliver the replacement of Victoria Arch as part of the HIF project
- Development will be required to contribute to recover part of the cost of Victoria Arch Widening Scheme;
- Development should facilitate the delivery of the Woking Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.



Town Centre Masterplan

Consultation and Communication Plan

July 2022 to October 2022

Summary

This appendix sets out the engagement, consultation and marketing arrangements for the draft Woking Town Centre Masterplan. A variety of **consultation methods will be employed, as set out in the table below, to ensure that the objectives set out within the Council's Woking for All 2022 – 2027 Corporate Strategy are met.**

Overview

Following approval by the Executive at its meeting on 14 July 2022, the draft Masterplan will be consulted on for a period of 12 weeks from 25 July 2022 – 16 October 2022. It is intended that the final Masterplan report will go to Executive on 19 January 2023.

Key dates

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Resident Panel feedback session | 12 July 2022 |
| • Consultation period | 25 July 2022 – 16 October 2022 |
| • Acknowledge and analyse feedback | October - December 2022 |
| • Member briefing | TBC |
| • Executive | 19 January 2023 |
| • Council | 9 February 2023 |
| • Publication | TBC |

Consultation and engagement

The consultation methods put forward are considered to go above and beyond both the actions set out within the Statement of Community Involvement and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) which provides guidance on consultation requirements for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.

Twelve week consultation period

Week 1: 25 July	Week 5: 22 August	Week 9: 19 September
Week 2: 1 August	Week 6: 29 August	Week 10: 26 September
Week 3: 8 August	Week 7: 5 September	Week 11: 3 October
Week 4: 15 August	Week 8: 12 September	Week 12: 10 October

Calendar of Events

Date	Activity	Specifics
12 July 7 – 8.00pm	Residents Panel Feedback Session	Session for residents who previously attended the Masterplan engagement sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on how residents' views have influenced the Masterplan • Details of consultation • Not a Q&A session – information given • 176 residents attended the previous sessions
Mon 25 July	Consultation launch	Consultation will sit as a hub on Woking Community Forum with each section set as an individual project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable construction • Green infrastructure and biodiversity • General infrastructure • Flood risk and surface water drainage • Leisure and culture • Transport • Housing • Heritage assets • Economy • The Townscape strategy
Week 1 and throughout consultation	Masterplan video	Showcasing details of the Masterplan plan that resident's will be interested in. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Masterplan • Summary of each section • How to take part
Thu 28 July 6 – 8.30pm	Roadshow: St Mary's Byfleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in event for residents to discuss the Masterplan with the planners • 15 per hour (plus extra £10 per hour for kitchen facilities) • Provisionally booked
Mon 1 Aug 7 – 8.30pm	Virtual Q&A session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on what the Masterplan is about, highlighting key points • Q&A section
Wed 3 Aug 6 – 8.30pm	Roadshow: Moorcroft Westfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in event for residents to discuss the Masterplan with the planners
Mon 8 Aug 6 – 8.30pm	Roadshow: St. Andrews Church Goldsworth Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in event for residents to discuss the Masterplan with the planners • Downstairs provisionally booked
Wed 10 Aug 6 – 8.30pm	Roadshow: Parkview Sheerwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in event for residents to discuss the Masterplan with the planners • £27 per hour • Provisionally booked
Wed 17 Aug 6 – 8.30pm	Roadshow: Christ Church Woking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in event for residents to discuss the Masterplan with the planners • Provisionally booked • £30 - £40 per hour depending on room. (Kitchen facilities extra)
Sat 20 Aug 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Townscape strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Mon 22 Aug 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing • General infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Woking Town Centre housing ○ New Town Centre wide residential development guidance ○ Affordable housing
Wed 24 Aug 3 – 7pm	Shop: Business Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A for businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3-5pm for hospitality ○ 5-7pm for other businesses ○ Invite previously interviewed
Fri 26 Aug 11 – 3pm	Shop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Sat 27 Aug 11 – 3pm	Shop: Greener Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and biodiversity • Flood risk and surface water drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Wed 31 Aug 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and culture • Heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general

Thu 1 Sep 7.00 – 8.30pm	Virtual Q&A session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on what the Masterplan is about, highlighting key points • Q&A section
Fri 2 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: Greener Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and biodiversity • Flood risk and surface water drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Sat 3 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General infrastructure • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Mon 5 Sep 2 – 5.00pm	Shop: Stakeholder event with Allies and Morrison	Stakeholders invited to private event with Allies and Morrison for an opportunity to discuss the Masterplan in detail.
Wed 7 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Fri 9 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: Greener Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and biodiversity • Flood risk and surface water drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Sat 10 Sept 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and culture • Heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Mon 12 Sept 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Townscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Wed 14 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General infrastructure • Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Fri 16 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and culture • Heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Sat 17 Sep 11 – 3pm	Shop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in session - open to all • Themed to allow people to discuss the topics in more detail • One planner available at every session to discuss the Masterplan in general
Sep date TBC	Woking Sixth Form College	Event held at Woking College to discuss the Masterplan.
19 Sep – 16 Oct Dates TBC	Outreach sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach sessions at community centres, churches etc • Dates dependent on centre
25 July – 16 Oct	Mobile exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moveable information boards with condensed Masterplan information designed to be left up in public spaces unmanned • Information on consultation and drop in events • Paper copies of consultation and SAE to be left on site • Sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parkview Sheerwater ○ Moorcroft Westfield ○ The Vyne Knaphill ○ St Mary's Centre Byfleet ○ Woking library ○ Asda Sheerwater ○ Leisure centre ○ Churches



**Report for Stakeholder Interviews as
part of Woking Town Centre
Masterplan Consultation**

On Behalf of Woking Borough Council

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Note: All the quotes which appear in the boxes throughout the report are taken directly from the conversations with stakeholders. They may not be everyone’s view but are there to tell the story from the stakeholder’s perspective.

*“Woking has changed, and there is more change to come. It used to be so embarrassing walking through Woking as it was so poor, now I am quite proud to live in Woking
It’s completely changed, much better”*

Background

Woking Borough Council (WBC) commissioned Halo to conduct a consultation/engagement project around the development of a Masterplan for Woking Town Centre. The project will involve several stages utilising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Before, engaging with local residents, WBC agreed with Halo’s recommendation to start by talking to stakeholders, and using their expertise drawn from both the public and private sector to articulate some ideas, thoughts and background about the future vision for Woking Town Centre. The output from this stage will be used to inform the design and writing of an initial draft Woking Town Centre Masterplan, at which point residents and stakeholders will be invited for their comments. These will then be used to inform and shape the final version of the Masterplan document.

This report sets out the main points discussed during each of the stakeholder interviews as well as the key themes highlighted from across all of the interviews. The stakeholders included significant landowners in Woking Town Centre, elected Councillors from most of the political parties, several statutory consultees, commercial interests such as developers, planning and design agencies and property agents as well as representatives from two local businesses.

To kick off the project, we held a virtual meeting with numerous people from across WBC to agree who the stakeholders should be, for contacting the organisation to identify the right person to talk to and to ascertain they were willing to take part. The process of identifying the right stakeholders, and at the same time ensuring we achieved a balance across both the commercial and public sector took much longer than had been envisaged and as a consequence the project timeline was extended.

The full listing of the eighteen stakeholders interviewed is:

Political	Commercial Developers
Leader of the Council	Eco World
Leader of the Liberal Democrats	Gateway 1
Leader of the Labour Party	
Independent Councillor	Commercial Other
Ward Councillors Mount Hermon	Curchod & Co
Ward Councillors Canalside	Motion Transport Consultants
	Surrey Developers Forum (Barton Willmore)
Other Town Centre Landowners	Design South East
Surrey County Council	
Network Rail	
Statutory	Local Businesses
Natural England	McLaren
Historic England	Petrofac
Enterprise M3	

Key Findings

- Woking Council have reached a pivotal point in their decision making about the development of Woking Town Centre. The change of leadership at both the Executive and Councillor level, and to the political balance of the council, and the impact of COVID-19 **means that a new conversation is required** around what the future vision will look like for the town. All the respondents interviewed for this project could see this need and bought into the process of re-examining the vision and ideas around the town centre.
- **All of the stakeholders interviewed agreed that Woking Town Centre has changed**, and that this change has been for the better. The environment and atmosphere in the town square have been transformed and the council and its partners should take great pride in their achievements.
- However, with the exception of the property developers, the **new towers divide opinions amongst stakeholders**. Some stakeholders were accepting of the new skyline over Woking describing the towers as a practical solution to meet a significant housing needs challenge, however others were more critical of the direction that the council were taking suggesting that the scale of development was wrong and questioning whether these were the right for Woking.
- The **lack of context, the absence of any guidelines as to where the tall buildings should be positioned and the seemingly uncoordinated approach** to the proposed town centre development is a concern shared by all stakeholders. A Masterplan was seen as an essential pre-requisite for any local authority contemplating any significant development in a town centre environment.
- Many of the stakeholders had **serious doubts whether there is or will be sufficient demand** for the type of housing units being proposed in the town centre, and at the prices being considered. These doubts have been heightened by the pandemic and the greater desire for outside space.
- On a similar theme, the new leadership team at WBC have repeatedly said that they want to attract new people to live in the town, but also to retain them within the borough when they are looking to move up the property ladder. **Respondents questioned whether just building flats would achieve this objective**.
- The **developers are frustrated by the planning decision making process at Woking**. They felt they were doing everything right, only to find that they are then thwarted by the decisions of the planning committee. They will be patient as they have invested significantly to get to this stage, but only up to a point. The planning agents we spoke to could understand this frustration, the reputation of Woking within their industry had taken a hit, and they warned that at some point, if this doesn't get resolved soon, developers will just walk away and go elsewhere.

Political Leaders of Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, Labour Party and Independent Councillor.

We interviewed each of the main political party’s leaders as well as the Independent Councillor. The interview with the Leader of the Labour Party who represents Canalside, the ward which covers much of the area representing Woking Town Centre, also included one of the two other Labour Councillors from this ward. All these interviews were very helpful, with positive, proactive and thoughtful insight.

The Planning Process	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>The Planning Committee have turned down a number of recent developments, despite the proposals being endorsed by Council Officers and the requirement to meet statutory housing targets. A number of different reasons has been given as to why, including the lack of affordable housing, insufficient parking provision or concerns about the height of the proposed development. The decisions have frustrated some Members of the Council as well as the developers involved.</p>	<p>The chief concerns are about the proposed heights of the new buildings, the type and quality of the housing units, and whether there is sufficient demand for one- or two-bedroom flats at the prices being proposed in Woking. There is a feeling that these properties may not be the right type that local people need or want. In the past, Woking was attracting commuters to/from London to live in the town, one leader questioned whether with the new ways of working this was still a sustainable model, and if they were not commuters who would be the future residents in Woking Town Centre.</p>	<p>There is broad agreement there is a need of an overarching document that provides the guidance and direction for future development in the town centre. Ideally, this will be a document that all parties can get behind and support, which gives clear direction to all stakeholders including residents. The other Labour Councillor from Canalside was insistent that any future development in the Town Centre must be sustainable.</p>

Mount Hermon’s Councillors

Mount Hermon is the town centre ward and therefore much of the current and proposed development is taking place in this ward. All three ward Councillors took part in the interview.

The Planning Process	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>There is a level of planning fatigue in this group and perhaps a thought that the work they need to do needs to move on from “turning down planning permissions”. These Councillors had mixed views as to whether high rise developments were the solution for Woking.</p>	<p>The height of the current tallest building should be the extent of the height acceptable in the town centre. There is a concern about the strength of the property market for flats/apartments in the town centre.</p>	<p>These Councillors would like a clear set of principles put forward by the council which would allow them and the democratic process to vote on. The lack of this and any form of consensus is damaging to both the town, its reputation and the work of the councillors who feel they are being asked to make ad hoc decisions. Schemes going to appeal cost too much money for the council and results in losses of value from the schemes to the council. This needs to be resolved.</p> <p>Everyone wants to see a finished town rather than a half-finished town or one where there are large numbers of vacant flats that don’t contribute to the local economy. As and when the development takes place, they want to see more green spaces in the town, for example ‘pocket parks.</p>

Developers

We interviewed two developers, CoPlan Estates (Gateway 1) and Eco World, the latter of whom have submitted plans to develop the land on and around Goldsworth Road. For both, the teams at the developers brought a number of people to the call, including architects, funders and those who have been involved since their inception.

The Planning Process	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>Both organisations have invested significantly in terms of their time, expertise as well as financially in developing their plans for Woking Town Centre. Only Eco World had to date formally submitted a planning application and they were very frustrated that despite complying with all the requirements and guidance set by the Council, including making changes to their original scheme, their application had been turned down by the Planning Committee.</p>	<p>There is a concern around the lack of alignment between the views of Council Officers towards future development and those of some of the Politicians at Woking. Trust is very important to the developers and there are issues around this from developers towards the council because of a lack of clear direction.</p>	<p>The developers would like to get on with developing. The stages before actual building has taken place has taken a long time. Both schemes feel they need the height and density planned to make the schemes viable. There is a concern that WBC is losing credibility among the developer community.</p>

Local Businesses

The two organisations we interviewed were Petrofac, an energy consultancy business who are based right in the centre of the town in Dukes Court. The other organisation McLaren are located at a site outside of Woking town centre.

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>Both organisations appreciate the connectivity that Woking delivers, both to London using the rail network as well as to London Heathrow via the road or coach network. For McLaren, many of their current employees live in London or on the rail network and commute to Woking by train where a shuttle bus takes them to/from their site.</p> <p>Petrofac have been based in Woking for almost twenty years, and over this period they have seen many changes in the town, all for the better. The client especially liked the new café culture and the much-improved appearance as well as atmosphere that now existed in the town. Unlike in the past, they were now happy to walk around the town centre and to invite clients to join them.</p>	<p>The view of the Woking skyline from the McLaren technology centre has changed, and it is not considered to be for the better.</p> <p>For McLaren, local affordable housing is important, currently there is not enough and they see the need as houses with gardens not flats as their staff are typically looking for family homes. This is less of an issue for Petrofac as many of their technical contractors were considered to be well paid. As these people were often required to work on an interim basis from their Woking offices, having a potential larger supply of good quality short term 'affordable' rental accommodation in close proximity to their offices was seen as being a considerable benefit.</p>	<p>What both businesses agreed was that the full implications of the way people will work in the future post COVID are yet to be fully understood. If Woking is to be successful in creating a place where people can live and work, there needs to be more joined up thinking to help employers encourage people to come back to work in the town, For example, if people are expected to travel to work in the town centre by car, but only work a few days a week, they need more flexible parking options for employees.</p>

Planning Experts and Retail Agents

There were four stakeholders included in this section These were:

- Curchod & Co
- Surrey Developers Forum (Motion Transport)
- Surrey Developers Forum (Barton Willmore)
- Design South-East Partnership

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>This group of stakeholders included several advocates of tall buildings describing them as an efficient use of land and if designed and built properly, they can make an area a good place to visit, work and live in. One stakeholder suggested that as online retail continues to grow, he saw building housing in the town centres as the key action councils and other authorities can take to get people back into the town centres to increase their vitality and viability.</p> <p>Whilst all of these ‘experts’ understood the challenge facing the council to meet their housing targets, they were uncomfortable by the lack of a coherent planning strategy, which could be used to guide future development. As one stakeholder put it, new development shouldn’t take place in a vacuum.</p>	<p>One stakeholder who was more critical of the tall buildings, told us that although he understood the politics of the action being taken to concentrate the new housing build in the town centre, he felt that there are many places in the town where the new towers were dominating your sense of place, and this is not good. In his view, the townscape and visual impact is wrong and the buildings were even dominating the skyline from other parts of Surrey. He also thought that twenty to thirty storeys is absolutely the highest that any buildings should be built</p> <p>Another stakeholder said that it reflected badly on them that their advice has had so little effect. Another has the view that “you can’t really build tall buildings without a Masterplan”.</p> <p>Another stakeholder advised that there needs to be a clear palate of materials, that are built to last. It must be quality and have longevity.</p>	<p>People we spoke to in this group were also concerned on a practical level, just how many people were wanting to live in high rise accommodation, and whether these were the right homes for people wanting to live in Woking. The absence of any outside living space, was also a major concern.</p> <p>The view is that people prefer a finished town than a half built one, where there are small areas that look good surrounded by areas that look dilapidated.</p> <p>When asked what a good Masterplan looks like, one stakeholder recommended that a good Masterplan doesn’t look too far ahead, or goes into too much detail. A high-level approach is best. A bad Masterplan evolves if too much over thinking takes place and it tries to focus on the minutiae. His advice was that what is considered an issue now sorts itself over time so don’t over plan.</p>

Network Rail

Network Rail are a significant landowners within Woking Town Centre. One of these sites is currently occupied by Days Aggregates.

There were three people from Network Rail on this call.

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>Network Rail are very interested in this consultation, because like WBC, they have statutory housing targets set by the Department of Transport to deliver across the UK, including a provision to supply affordable homes.</p> <p>When asked to describe Woking, the consensus was that the town was well connected, but appeared “a bit rough and ready around the edges”. The town lacked cohesiveness and appeared disjointed, and even the railway station did not naturally link in with the town centre. They also described the road layout as not very user friendly as it forced traffic to go through residential areas.</p>	<p>The initial response from Network Rail to the building of the new tower blocks in Woking Town Centre was fairly positive, however they were uncertain that the current ground level infrastructure and place would be able to support the proposed large numbers of people living in ‘expensive’ flats.</p>	<p>They were cautious that given Woking’s very close proximity to London by train, the town would ever be able to position itself as a separate hub, where people could live and work. They also questioned whether there would be a significant enough variation in the cost of the new housing between Woking and London to make this a point of difference for Woking. Network Rail are taking a “wait and see” approach to development in Woking. One respondent had been present in meetings where the aspiration to build numerous tall buildings was expressed but this is not something Network Rail do, so it was interesting but not engaging.</p>

Surrey County Council (SCC)

This interview was exceptionally well attended with six people from SCC taking part in the call.

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>Whilst SCC are a land owner, key stakeholder and service provider in the town their engagement in this project was very much one of observers rather than active participants</p> <p>The ability of those on the call to discuss Woking Town Centre, it's plans and needs was very limited, despite some of the people on the call nominally working in the town.</p>	<p>Each person on the call had their own area of interest and this was their focus for any responses to our questions. For example, the lead from the Library service talked only about the high-level plans across Surrey for the service, rather than focussing on the Woking library. This approach applied to most of the other respondents on the call who had the same very meta view of their role with no specific, Woking examples.</p>	<p>SCC say they will approach the requirements of WBC when required to do so once the new buildings are complete. There are some concerns about early years places if many young families move in and the library may expand but beyond this the County suggested it is for WBC to decide what they build.</p>

Statutory Consultees

The three organisations interviewed as part of this group of stakeholders were:

- Natural England
- Historic England
- Enterprise M3

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>For Historic England, Woking is not one of their high-profile towns, a place where they tend to focus their attention, as there are no Grade One listed buildings or Monuments of Specific Interest in the area defined as Woking Town Centre. Grade two buildings are less of a priority, of which only the Church and War Memorial are in the Town Centre. They are more interested in tangible, physical heritage assets of</p>	<p>The one building that is of prime interest to Historic England in Woking is the Mosque, but this is outside of the Town Centre. What does concern them is ensuring that the setting, approach and environment of either the Grade One or Grade Two buildings is respected. This respondent's view is that so much development has already taking place, the 'horse has bolted' and there was 'not much more they could do in terms of harm'</p> <p>Enterprise M3 are very aware of the housing targets set for Woking Town Centre, but was sceptical that there was sufficient requirement for the amount of high-rise accommodation being proposed for Woking. His view was that the council first need to prove there is the demand out there for this type of</p>	<p>Whilst there are no immediate needs/issues, Historic England are keen that the character, physical attributes and historic elements are protected and that access to any of these buildings is promoted and wherever possible enhanced through development and If there are positives to accentuate these. One thought for this respondent was as a major railway hub, should Woking be celebrating this aspect of their heritage?</p> <p>Natural England, who were not completely against building on the 'green belt', also commented that they thought WBC had been 'brave to go high'. When it comes to town centre redevelopment, they are</p>

Current Situation	Key Concerns	The Future
<p>which there are very few in Woking Borough. Brookwood Cemetery was one that was mentioned as being of national importance.</p>	<p>accommodation, before committing further to these plans.</p> <p>Another point raised by Enterprise M3 was that he doubted there would be the same amount of money available in the future to spend on infrastructure, particularly if this revolved around the use of the car. His view was that the aspirations of the council need to change, rather than relatively high-cost housing, perhaps the council need to be looking at providing lower cost housing for those who already work in Woking, or to help them attract people into the area in the first place.</p>	<p>realistic that town centres cannot be completely green, however by planting trees, having small areas of green space, it can make a town centre a better place, both for ecological reasons and for mental health and well-being and they would expect the Woking Masterplan to reflect these ideas.</p> <p>Enterprise M3 are also concerned that the council were now in a difficult place, where any decision they take was likely to have negative repercussions for one group or another and did not envy their position.</p> <p>Enterprise M3's vision for Woking was to lower the cost of any future housing and to pull back on the level of intensity of housing being considered. At the same time, he felt Woking needed to differentiate it from other towns, one way they could do this was make it low carbon, an attractive place to live and work in, with and were moving around on foot or by cycling was the norm rather than the exception.</p> <p>It was apparent Natural England already feel that WBC are very supportive of the green agenda, and their environmental responsibilities and they are confident this will continue as Woking develops.</p>

Residents Panel Masterplan Meetings: Combined Notes

August - September 2021

Positive Points:

In approximate order of frequency, panel members said that they:

- Like Woking's good connectivity, in particular: by rail; access to London; proximity to airports; proximity to motorways; access to Guildford. (However, some panel members said these factors felt less or no longer relevant to them due to working from home and not flying so much).
- Like the green/natural spaces in and around the town. Specific ones mentioned include Horsell Common, Basingstoke Canal (positive references made to recent developments there), Woking Park, green walls/landscaping in the Town Centre, Heather Farm, Chobham Common, Surrey Hills. Other people just referred to Woking's proximity to the countryside / Green Belt as a positive feature.
- Like Jubilee Square and the activities that take place there, and various other town centre events.
- Like the town centre cultural / social facilities; specific ones mentioned include the Lightbox; Victoria Theatre and Cinema; the library; choirs and orchestras.
- Like the cafés and restaurants in the town centre, and the atmosphere they create; like the pedestrianised areas / public realm; the town centre is much improved from the past.
- Like the multicultural nature / diversity of Woking, especially compared to other parts of Surrey.
- Like the availability of shops in the town centre; the shopping centres (and being able to walk between them without getting wet). Looking forward to the opening of shops in Victoria Square.
- Various panel members live within walking distance of the town centre and like that fact.
- Support was widespread for the general principle of residential development in the town centre.
- Like the community spirit / village atmosphere / facilities in their local area.
- Like that the council is ambitious, willing to innovate and redevelop, but need to ensure things are thought through. Appreciate the Council's work in providing affordable housing and on climate change.
- Like living in a leafy / low density area
- Woking is very entrepreneurial.
- Woking is a great place for families.
- Like that the town centre is compact, flat and easy to navigate
- Good schools
- A small minority of people actively liked Victoria Square; others had grown accustomed to it. A much more frequently expressed sentiment was along the lines of: "I reluctantly accept the towers as the lesser of two evils compared to Green Belt development."

Negative Points:

Infrastructure and economy

- The most commonly expressed concern related to stretched/inadequate community infrastructure (in particular education, healthcare and the road network, and to a lesser extent flood prevention, road/pavement maintenance, railway capacity and emergency services). For example, roads are congested, and it is difficult to get a doctor's appointment. Concern was expressed about the impact of new housing on the capacity of this infrastructure, and on whether the proposals for new housing are accompanied to a sufficient degree by proposals to expand that capacity.
- Many people considered the retail, entertainment and cultural provision in the town centre to be insufficient or were worried about its decline. Also: "Why live in a flat in Woking, when you can live in one in London and reap the benefits of having the London offerings on your doorstep".
- Concern about pressure on utilities in the Town Centre arising from a large volume of development there (especially in the context of climate change).
- Concern that the pavements are not suitable for disabled people.
- Perception that the bus network is very poor, that should be bringing people into the centre. Very few 'proper' i.e. frequent bus services.
- Air pollution is a big problem, so we need to get people out of their car.
- Concern for the provision of parking spaces for flats, and the cost of parking permits. Some people were sceptical about the idea of car free development, while others were keen to promote the concept (but noting that it required improvements in public transport).
- Opposition to the proposals to re-route the access to Day Aggregates
- Several people mentioned that they rarely visit the town centre, due to congestion/parking costs/lack of desired shops.

Housing issues

- Many people were worried about the high cost of housing in Woking, and in particular the implications for their children and key workers being able to live here.
- Many people were concerned about dwelling mix, i.e. that recent proposals for new flats are largely considered not to provide family dwellings, but to be aimed at young people. Some participants thought that developers should be required to provide more flats suitable for families, e.g. with more bedrooms and balcony space, while others thought that flats were in principle not suitable for families. There is a lot of concern about where young residents of the proposed flats will go if they later decide to start a family; and the implications for Woking as a community if those residents do not see the town as a place to settle for the long term.
- Concern that there is too much focus on delivering rented accommodation.
- Concern that the type of new housing provision was being tailored to the demands of incomers from London/international property investors, rather than to needs generated within Woking borough.

- Concern about the impacts of high density living on mental health and anti-social behaviour. A resident of the town centre described a very negative experience of being confined in their flat during Covid lockdowns and suffering from noise and anti-social behaviour.
- Concern that there will not be enough demand for flats to fill the proposed tall buildings. In particular changes to working patterns caused by Covid mean that the previous plans are no longer relevant, there will no longer be the demand for such buildings.
- Concern that a low proportion of the proposed new dwellings will be Affordable Housing; that Affordable Housing as officially defined is not actually affordable; that the Council's target of 35% is too low, or that it is unlikely to be met. If affordable housing was not viable on Victoria Square, why should it be viable on other town centre sites?
- Perception that high-rise flats are not suitable for many disabled people, and for older people.

Design issues

- Many people dislike the appearance of Victoria Square, saying that it is too high, or 'like 1960s blocks'.
- Some respondents expressed dislike for the sight of tall buildings in principle; some said they were depressing, reminded them of Croydon or Singapore, or even put them off living in Woking.
- Concern that climate change has not been given enough consideration.
- Many people were concerned about a perceived lack of balcony and/or communal amenity space for residents of new flats more generally. Some expressed this in terms of a 'two tier society', with town centre residents having worse living conditions than other Woking residents.
- Worries about fire safety in relation to tall buildings, and the potential for 'another Grenfell Tower'.
- Some people said that Woking is less characterful than other Surrey towns (e.g. Guildford). Others said that Woking did have character and heritage but that it was insufficiently acknowledged and capitalised upon.
- Dislike that old buildings are being lost, and replaced by buildings that will never be as distinctive. One panel member felt that she was being 'eliminated'.

Broader concerns

- Discontent with the process of the HIF bid, in particular around a lack of consultation and concerns that it is focussed on residential development to an unbalanced degree. A view that WBC should be putting up more resistance to Government demands on housebuilding.
- Concern about the Council getting into debt to support town centre development.
- Some people were also sceptical if there is a need for Woking to grow at all, saying they and people they knew were happy with the town as it is. Others accepted some growth but considered that the Council was encouraging too much growth, or taking a 'free-for-all' approach. Covid and its effects were also cited by some of these panel members.
- People in outlying areas are often not aware what is happening in the town centre; the town centre should sell itself more. Sad that the information centre has been lost.
- Basingstoke Canal is a valuable asset; however, it is underutilised.
- A popular view was that development should be focussed on regenerating brownfield sites elsewhere in the town, local centres, or the more deprived areas of the Borough, rather than

on the town centre. We should not be forced to choose between town centre high-rises and green belt loss.

- The various communities around Woking are too cut off from one another, and facilities in the local centres are declining.

Aspirations for the Town Centre:

Comments included that:

Infrastructure and economy

- Infrastructure provision should be increased in parallel with the growth of housing in the town centre.
- We should shift the balance of town centre development from housing to a mix of uses, especially services to bring people into the centre.
- The council should promote and assist local/small/independent businesses and grassroots community facilities /groups to stay in/come to the town centre, to give Woking a distinctive character; this will also be attractive for new residents.
- The council should support existing Town Centre businesses in general.
- We need more town centre housing to increase footfall in the town centre and protect businesses there.
- There should be more flexible office space.
- Growth is inevitable but need to ensure that it produces a characterful town. Look at specific schemes in Preston and in Stratford (London) to ensure that benefits go into the local community, and more broadly at the kind of local character that will make us competitive with central London. Another comment urged us, 'do not lose the pleasant small town feel'.
- Transport infrastructure is not up to scratch, and as Woking becomes effectively a suburb of London, the Council needs to look more to London style approaches to the issue, focussing more on improving cycling, walking and public transport investment, not on car parking and roads. Improving bus connections was mentioned several times; this should be both around the town and with neighbouring towns.
- A rail connection should be built with Heathrow.
- Make provision for car ownership.

Housing issues

- Developers should be required to provide more flats suitable for families, e.g. with more bedrooms (3/4) and balcony space, or more houses with gardens rather than flats.
- Make sure that "affordable housing" is truly affordable, and encourage longer tenancy periods to help people feel settled in the area. Greater scrutiny of developer claims that affordable housing is unviable.

Design issues

- Would like to see a proper masterplan / tall buildings strategy, not just a statement that 'tall buildings are allowed in the town centre' or a case-by-case approach.
- There should be a height limit of: 25 / 20 storeys / 'how high the fire service ladder can reach'
- We need light in the town centre.

- Tall buildings should be better / more sensitively / interestingly designed, with care for materials; use a design review panel.
- Victoria Square should remain the tallest / the only tall building in the town centre.
- The carbon emissions / environmental standards of new buildings should be given greater consideration. There should be stronger policies on sustainability. Has Thamesway got a plan to use zero carbon?
- Tall buildings should use renewable energy (e.g. rooftop solar panels, and rain/waste water mitigation systems. Learn from the WWF building.
- Refurbishing and retrofitting existing buildings would be better for the environment than redevelopment. One person suggested adding a few storeys to existing properties.
- Medium rise buildings are better for the environment than high or low rise; should focus more on medium rise.
- Support more living walls, including on tall buildings.
- More green / community spaces should be provided; an area like Sparrow Park used to be, with trees and seats; more child friendly spaces in the public realm, including pocket parks with decent play elements.
- Provide communal areas within high rise developments, where people can (and want to) spend time and get to know each other.
- Woking should become a cleaner and more accessible place for disabled people. Involve people from all communities and with all types of physical and mental disability.

Location specific suggestions

- Keep the characterful areas like Chertsey Road.
- Could redevelop Woking station with a tall building above it.
- Better connectivity is needed across the canal, railway and Victoria Way.
- Bring the canal into the town centre more.
- Need a height limit; but also to avoid a huge raft of 15-storey blocks in the town centre. How about more 4/5 storey buildings in the village centres, which currently look tired and outdated. Or 'growth should be low and wide instead of tall and confined to the town centre'.
- Protect green areas around the town.

EXECUTIVE – 14 JULY 2022

HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (HIF) - UPDATE

Executive Summary

The Victoria Arch widening scheme is mainly funded by the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and is project managed by Woking Borough Council with support from Surrey County Council, Network Rail and Homes England. The replacement bridge and improved infrastructure would secure an objective to provide additional road capacity, reduce air pollution, secure safer access for pedestrian and cycle journeys, provide more reliable bus journeys and secure the vitality of the rail network.

This report updates on the project and identifies a number of key issues and actions in relation to the delivery of the project including:

- Land Acquisitions
- Utility Diversions
- Bridge Replacement
- Highway Works

The report also updates on the need for further sharing of risk with partners, currently being explored, and provides a programme update.

The Executive received an update on the Housing Infrastructure Fund at its meeting on 7 October 2021 and agreed to a revised timetable for the project given a number of key issues. Work since that date has culminated in a revised cost position for the current project and if proceeded with, a significant forecast budget requirement of an additional £53-54m to complete the project, above the current £115m budget.

The new administration is concerned about the scale of the budget deficit, risks to the Council and potential significant road closure involved in the proposed Victoria Arch widening scheme. Therefore, this report seeks approval to undertake a fundamental review and pause on certain workstreams until there is a viable project that can be delivered without additional expense to Woking Borough Council.

The scale of the budget requirement has been communicated to Homes England alongside a request for greater project risk sharing with both Network Rail and Surrey County Council.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the commitment made by the Council and its partners to deliver a replacement bridge project and the risks accepted by the Council in its agreement with Homes England and that significant work has been progressed to date on the project, be noted;
- (ii) the additional costs associated with the current designed project based on land acquisitions, utility costs, bridge and highway costs and inflation meaning that further and substantial Government

funding is needed before further significant expenditure can be undertaken which would be at the Council's risk, be noted;

- (iii) the need for the continuation of high level meetings with Homes England and through them with key partners at the Department for Transport and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in order to secure additional funding for the project be supported;
- (iv) given the likely exposure and scale of risk in committing to further expenditure at this stage, a fundamental review of the project be undertaken in order to:
 - a. Conclude discussions on the availability of additional funding to meet the current project design;
 - b. Review with partners other design options to reduce the overall costs of the project including any proposals which remove the need to lower the road and / or reduce the road from a dual carriageway to a single carriageway;
 - c. Ensure that any redesigned options meet with value for money requirements and achieve sufficient environmental and community benefits envisaged from the project;
 - d. To support a project review to be undertaken by Surrey County Council on our behalf. The scope is to consider the appropriateness of current budget, risks inherent with works cost estimate and delivery strategy given current project uncertainties and identified funding shortfall. The review is envisaged as an activity that will add value to the project's delivery strategy. Where cost and budget pressures are identified possible mitigations will be suggested where practical.
- (v) in order to fully understand more about the project costs, the results from the investigatory works following the closure of the bridge in June be reviewed in detail alongside outcomes from the closure, including impact on traffic movements;
- (vi) the planning applications be submitted which seeks to secure a temporary access to the aggregates yard from York Road and the use of the current access to the yard from Guildford Road as a permanent access; and
- (vii) an update on the review of the project be presented to the Executive by the end of the calendar year.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: In order to undertake a review of the project to assess financial risks and opportunities to the Council in progressing with delivering the Housing Infrastructure Fund project, considering whether there are any alternatives and seek risk sharing with project partners.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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Date Published: 6 July 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 13 February 2020, Woking Borough Council accepted a £95m grant administered by Homes England, to complete the acquisition of the Triangle site on the south side of the town, deliver the significant improvements to the town centre's road network and widening the out of date Victoria Arch by 2024. The total project cost was envisaged as £115m with the funding gap being met by support from Network Rail and developer contributions.
- 1.2 The original budget is broadly profiled as below:
 - Acquisition and demolition of the triangle site (£32.5m)
 - A320 highway widening, improvements and utility diversions (£17.5m)
 - Replacement of the Victoria Arch bridge by Network Rail (£55-65m)
- 1.3 The project is complex not least due to its town centre location and resulting impacts on public, businesses, and residents, but also the interdependencies on adjacent infrastructure and stakeholders.
- 1.4 The earliest completion date for the project is currently early 2027, subject to funding, with alternative programmes securing a later completion date depending on the need to complete the compulsory purchase of land required for the development.

2.0 Project Update

- 2.1 The Executive received an update on the Housing Infrastructure Fund at its meeting on 7 October 2021 and agreed that a revised timetable be agreed for the project given a number of key issues. Three main issues were reported:
 - The need to submit and have determined two planning applications for a temporary and permanent access to the aggregates site from York Road.
 - Further work in relation to the project dependencies of the land at the junction of Goldsworth Road and Church Street West with Victoria Way to secure sufficient land for the proposed highway widening of Victoria Way and sufficient land for the construction and positioning of the new bridge platform.
 - The commencement of engagement with the residents' panel on the Woking Town Centre Masterplan and the commitment from the Executive to consult on the housing numbers proposed by Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) as part of the masterplan process.
- 2.2 Since October, the planning proposals for the permanent access to the yard have changed with a commitment to revisit the reuse of the current access from Guildford Road as a permanent access. Temporary access to the yard, during the construction of the bridge, would however be needed from York Road. The planning applications for the accesses are due to be submitted in July and a commitment has been made to update residents prior to the formal planning application consultation.
- 2.3 In addition, the design of Victoria Way (between Goldsworth Rd & Lockfield Drive) has been modified to reduce and remove the design's dependency on land not currently part of the highway and outside of the ownership of both Woking and Surrey County Council.
- 2.4 Finally, a draft masterplan has been developed and is presented to the Executive as part of this same Executive agenda. The masterplan for the town centre is formed, in part, by a detailed, site by site 'design led' analysis which informs both the overall potential height of new buildings and the quantum of housing that could come forward. The Executive will be aware that the justification for the HIF grant was that the objectives of replacing the arch would unlock

housing sites in the town centre. A potential 4,555 homes would be constructed across thirteen sites. Of that total, 1,251 homes are within sites currently allocated for development in the adopted Site Allocations Development Plan Document. This leaves a further 3,304 additional dwellings to be built in the Town Centre over-and-above what has been committed to in terms of planning in the Core Strategy.

- 2.5 The masterplan will undergo extensive public consultation with a target date to present a final masterplan to the Executive in January 2023 for endorsement and Council in February 2023 for approval as supplementary planning guidance.
- 2.6 The masterplan will inform the review of the project.

Project Costs

- 2.7 The costs of the project have been continuously reviewed since the successful bid application to Homes England and these have increased significantly for various reasons, including:
 - the original scope of the project (and its budget) did not foresee the full requirements and implications of the bridge replacement requiring further land acquisitions, utilities work, highway works and the need for a temporary and permanent redesigned access for Days Aggregates;
 - rises in inflation and increased costs of material and labour, driven by the pandemic and the more recent conflict in Ukraine.
- 2.8 Further assessment work undertaken in the Spring with the Council's cost consultants has highlighted significant additional budget requirements. In summary, the cost increases are attributable to each of the elements of the project:
- 2.9 Land acquisitions - Using the grant funding, the Council has acquired a significant proportion of the properties on the Triangle site and demolition has been underway. There are some remaining third-party properties on the Triangle site and adjacent required to deliver the project, which the Council is exercising its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to acquire. The Council continues to discuss the purchase of the remaining sites or where appropriate a lease to secure the land necessary for the project accepting that it ideally would prefer to reach an agreement rather than use CPO powers.
- 2.10 Notwithstanding ongoing negotiations, given the potential increased costs of land and the need for land outside the original scope of the project the total additional costs could be in the order of £18.1m.
- 2.11 Utility diversions - A Multi Utility contractor was employed by the Council to coordinate the complex underground utility diversions, which has been successful to date. To inform the next stage of the work, trial holes took place for 3 weeks from 6th June, involving the closure of Victoria Arch for traffic.
- 2.12 Openreach are the key utility company involved in the project due to their large underground chambers and the unforeseen complex nature of their diversions, which have meant costs for their work have come in considerably higher than budgeted for. The Council have been working closely with them, however due to resource issues, Openreach have not been able to confirm a justifiable breakdown in costs of the works and have not been able to accept partial payments from the Council. Openreach alone are seeking an increase of charges £2m over the original budgeted cost for all utility works.
- 2.13 The total costs associated with the utility diversions would be £18m, £10.9m above the budgeted £7.1m.

- 2.14 Bridge replacement - Increases in inflation, labour and material cost as well as changes to the bridge construction methodology and previous programme rescheduling aimed at reducing risk to the Council in other areas of the project, such as the Day Aggregates access and the Goldsworth Road Crescent site, has all led to cost increases in this element of the project. Including contingency, the total additional costs associated with the bridge itself would be £5m.
- 2.15 Highway works (including Days Aggregates Access) – The need for a temporary and re-engineered permanent access from Guildford Road was not envisaged as part of the original bid. This element of the project is also experiencing cost increases associated with inflation, labour and material cost increases. Other cost increases have been through the need to incorporate the Day Aggregates temporary access relocation. Road layout redesign as a result of road lowering under the bridge to increase the headroom and reduce impact of bridge strikes as well as the need to amend the scheme to allow for the publishing of the Cycle Infrastructure Design by the Department for Transport in July 2020 (post bid) have all led to increased costs.
- 2.16 Another factor is the Surrey County Council Lane Rental Scheme which was introduced in 2020 (post bid) and which requires up to £2,500 per day for road closures. A significant sum in a project such as this. And finally, as the construction methodology for the utility diversions and the bridge construction have been worked up, this has required a lengthier bridge closure than was originally envisaged, which comes with wider mitigation measures, such as ensuring the adjacent fire station can meet response times and highway users under the bridge have an alternative route for a longer length of time during diversions.
- 2.17 The total costs associated with the highway works is circa £19.4m, £11.8m above the budgeted £7.6m.
- 2.18 Additional costs - In addition to the costs shown above, there will be costs incurred (inflation) as a result of pausing the project and moving to a later completion date. There are acquisition costs which are still unknown for the additional small parcels of land to the south of Guildford Road. There are also costs associated with mitigation works required during the main road closure when the bridge works are under construction. These are currently to be confirmed but could involve high costs associated with the possible emergency services temporary site on the south side of the bridge.
- 2.19 Taking all factors into account the total required budget for the project is now circa £53/54m over the original £115m budget. Given the scale of the budget requirement and risks to the Council the recommendation is to undertake a fundamental review and pause on certain workstreams until there is greater certainty that the project can be delivered without additional expense to Woking Borough Council.

3.0 Risk Sharing

- 3.1 The current agreement with Homes England allocates the full risk of the project with Woking Borough Council. The scale of the potential budget requirement means that the Council would not be in a position to fund the project from its own resources. Notwithstanding this, and despite the current agreement with Homes England, the magnitude and scale of this major infrastructure project should ideally not fall solely on this Council in terms of risk. Key partners, Network Rail and Surrey County Council have been active in supporting the Council with this project but it is hoped that further risk sharing can be agreed to limit the risk to Woking Borough Council.
- 3.2 Further conversations with partners should continue on how the risks associated with the project can be shared.

4.0 Town Centre Masterplan

- 4.1 The town centre masterplan has been developed with the aim of reviewing the housing delivery needs within the town post pandemic and to develop a more certain future for development. The Masterplan is due to come to Executive in July 2022 for approval to consult, and then adoption estimated to be early 2023.
- 4.2 The consequence of this may mean that the total housing numbers in the town centre and the sites that would deliver additional housing above the local plan sites may need to be reviewed. If so, the contract with Homes England would need to be revisited, as the grant for this infrastructure is dependent on a certain number of residential units being delivered from a number of sites including Council 'owned' site. Homes England have been fully briefed on the Council's position to secure a masterplan which they view as important to guide future development and attract investment and provide certainty.
- 4.3 A recent Overview and Scrutiny Task Group reviewed the relationship between HIF and Housing and Delivery with an interim report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 July 2022.

5.0 Work Streams to be continued

- 5.1 The project team are currently working to a programme which at its earliest would see the completion of the project in early 2027, subject to funding, with alternative programmes securing a later completion date depending on the need to complete the compulsory purchase of land required for the development.
- 5.2 Later programmes are linked to the use of and completion of the CPO process. Early discussions have been held with project partners, Network Rail included, which would inevitably incur additional delay costs with each of these alternative programmes not least due to inflation. There are added risks reliant on whether Network Rail can reprogramme track possessions to meet the new programme.
- 5.3 The CPO package is ready to be submitted and the timescales associated with this are that an inquiry is likely to be heard at the end of 2022 with the completion of the CPO by end of 2023. This is subject to change depending on the Secretary of State timescales.
- 5.4 This new programme revision does not impact on the previously communicated dates for the submission of the Day Aggregate temporary and permanent access route planning applications which are imminent. Once the submission package is ready, this will be circulated to Members prior to the applications being submitted.
- 5.5 The demolition, clearance and development options of the Triangle site on the south side of Victoria Arch will continue. A development proposal is currently being prepared and will be ready by the end of 2022. The existing Council owned Triangle site properties which cannot be demolished until further acquisitions are progressed will be made safe for the public.
- 5.6 The highways and bridge designs are close to conclusion and will continue to completion.
- 5.7 The Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Skanska for utility diversions is nearing conclusion and will be completed following review of the trial hole findings report. Physical utility diversion works for which an order and payment has already been made will continue where applicable.
- 5.8 Homes England have been kept informed as have Surrey County Council. A joint meeting was held in May at Woking where the Council's headline position was explained:

- The revised budget requirement for the project cannot be funded from the Council and that, should the project continue in its current form, further (grant) funding would be needed.
- That while understanding the terms of the current agreement, the Council's exposure to risk was something that needed to be reconsidered with both Network Rail and Surrey County Council given that the overall project benefits of which are more regional than local in terms of increasing capacity on the rail network to the south coast (etc).

5.9 Homes England have committed to raise both issues internally and with Network Rail.

5.10 The recent trial hole work which involved the closure of the bridge to traffic (open to pedestrians and cyclists) commenced on 6 June for 3 weeks and the bridge was opened on Saturday 25 June. These detailed investigatory works will inform the future statutory undertaker diversion work for the main closure of the bridge and have also provided essential evidence of road diversion impacts during the road closure. This information will be used in programming the main project road closure timescales, as well as mitigating the impacts during the main closure. The current programme requires the closure of the bridge for two and a half years for vehicular traffic and 7 months for vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. The Council conducted extensive public communications and widescale road signing informing of the bridge closure and road diversions which assisted managing traffic impacts during the 3 week closure.

5.11 Following discussions with Surrey County Council on the matters raised in this report, the County have commissioned a review of the project focused on considering the appropriateness of current budget, risks inherent with works cost estimate and delivery strategy given current project uncertainties and identified funding shortfall. The review is envisaged as an activity that will add value to the project's delivery strategy. Where cost and budget pressures are identified possible mitigations will be suggested where practical.

6.0 Corporate Strategy

6.1 The Woking for all Strategy 2022-27 Supplementary and Amended Priorities 2022-23 sets the strategic priorities for the Council against the current overarching strategic themes of: Healthier Communities, Engaged Communities, Greener Communities, Prospering Communities and High Performing Council.

6.2 The Woking for all Strategy 2022-27 commits to the Council to work in partnership with Homes England and Network Rail to deliver a replacement for the Victoria Arch bridge and transport connectivity within Woking Town Centre.

6.3 The Executive's Amended Priorities 2022-23 sets out the intention to review the Victoria Arch project and the recommendation set out in this report accords with that priority.

6.4 Further to the above, the objectives of the project would secure environmental enhancements and promote active travel supporting other key green and healthier community themes.

7.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

7.1 The Council's further assessment work undertaken in the Spring has highlighted significant additional budget requirements. Given the scale of the budget requirement and risks to the Council the recommendation is to undertake a fundamental review and pause on certain workstreams until there is greater certainty that the project can be delivered without additional expense to Woking Borough Council.

- 7.2 The impacts of time required to review the project is likely to add additional delay costs to the project.
- 7.3 The risk if this review is not carried out is that the additional project cost increases set out within this report are solely at risk to this Council and the financial risks are not shared or met by other project partners.
- 7.4 Risks are partially mitigated by the continuation of certain workstreams including the discussion with land owners to acquire the land necessary to complete the project and the submission and determination of the planning applications for the access road to Days Aggregates.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 7.5 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the project originally in 2021 and was reviewed again in 2022.

Legal

- 7.6 Legal Services have been consulted on this report. The Compulsory Purchase Order is being submitted as part of the project in order to progress the acquisition of the outstanding areas of land which are required for the project to be delivered successfully and cannot reasonably be acquired by mutual agreement.

8.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 8.1 The Council has made a commitment to consult on the HIF housing numbers as part of the town centre masterplan. In accepting the HIF grant, the Council made a commitment to deliver housing on a number of its own sites (including land owned by wholly owned companies) and a further commitment to use 'best endeavours' to secure the delivery of other housing sites in order to secure around 3,300 new homes in the town centre above the housing numbers set out in the Council's Local Plan.
- 8.2 A 12 week consultation programme on the masterplan is planned for the Summer.

REPORT ENDS

EXECUTIVE – 14 JULY 2022

EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT - 2022

Executive Summary

This annual report seeks to inform the Executive of progress on the equalities agenda. It covers the period April 2021 to March 2022. The Equality Act 2010 brought together, harmonised and in some cases extended previous equality law. The aim of the legislation is to make it more consistent, clearer and easier to follow in order to make society fairer. The Act also sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies, including local authorities, play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the Council, e.g. how it acts as an employer, how it develops, evaluates and reviews policies, how it designs, delivers and evaluates services and how it commissions and procures from others.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

the report be received.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To meet the requirement to report on annual progress on the equality agenda.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: [Corporate Equality Scheme](#)
Sustainability Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

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Date Published: 6 July 2022

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council believes that the diversity of its population and workforce is one of its greatest strengths. Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right and this Council has a duty to exercise leadership to promote this right. The Council intends to promote equality and prevent discrimination through its roles as service provider, employer and community leader.
- 1.2 The Council will follow best practice in all equality areas and work to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.3 From April 2011 the Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation and gave full protection to eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Some aspect of the legislation also covers marriage and civil partnership.
- 1.4 Success in mainstreaming equalities in the organisation is measured by The Equality Framework for Local Government, which was adopted by the authority in March 2009. The Framework is based on three levels of achievement, developing, achieving and excellent. The Council has been successfully verified by external assessment at 'Achieving' level.
- 1.5 With a new CLT, and going forward a new administration, it is a good opportunity to review the priorities of the equality and wellbeing agenda and ensure focus going forward enables the Council to fulfil its Woking for all priorities, including being a modern employer with a progressive workforce.

2.0 Progress

- 2.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duties) requires all public bodies to:
 - Annually publish information that shows how they have complied with the Equality Duty. This report forms part of information.
 - Set equality objectives for the organisation. Overarching objectives have been developed which are relevant to each of the equality groups covered by the Equality Act. They relate back to the General Duty and are designed to ensure a holistic approach to tackling inequality and promoting equality through the organisation and Borough. (attached Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Meetings of the Equality & Wellbeing Working group resumed following the pandemic. The Chief Executive has joined the group and we will be reviewing how the group works, priorities and membership going forward.
- 2.3 A programme of equality and wellbeing awareness took place over the year, including mental health, homophobia, gender equality, men's health and carers. This included information on ewokplus, webinars and face to face activities where appropriate. Resilience work has been done with several front-line teams, ensuring individuals and teams have the skills and knowledge to look after their own health and wellbeing, cope with their work and that of their teams and ensure a healthy work-life balance.

- 2.4 Monthly health and wellbeing themes have also been highlighted on ewokplus, offering helpful advice and tips on how to look after yourself and effectively manage life and work, especially with the transition back into the office and hybrid working. Themes have included healthy heart, benefits of walking, diabetes awareness and men's health. Advice is also provided on how to achieve good mental health and wellbeing, including dealing with stress and obtaining a better work-life balance. The organisation has 8 trained Mental Health First Aiders and another cohort are currently being trained. The Employee Assistance Programme is promoted regularly.
- 2.5 The equality agenda has been successfully mainstreamed throughout the organisation and the Council's priority is to ensure accessible services are available to the vulnerable sections of the local communities. Achievements over the last year are highlighted in Appendix 2.
- 2.6 Working relationships with community groups, providing support to those protected by equality legislation, continue to be developed. These groups provided invaluable services and support to their members/users during the pandemic and play an essential role in the lives of many of the most vulnerable members of our community. It is important to ensure this support continues in a sustainable manner going forward.
- 2.7 Equality monitoring figures are produced annually for employment, looking at areas such as workforce profile, appointments, training, promotion and discipline and grievance issues. These are broken down according to race, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion and belief. These are detailed in Appendix 3.
- 2.8 From 6 April 2017 employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff are required by law to publish annually its gender pay gap (mean and median averages) and the proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.
- 2.9 This year's report, covering the 12 months up to 31st March 2021, showed that the Council has a mean gender pay gap of 19.76% (19.28% for 2020) and a median gender pay gap of 13.63% (10.24% for 2020). The mean gender pay gap nationally is now 15.4% (15.5% for 2020) according to the October 2021 Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures. The main reason for Woking's gap is an imbalance of male and female colleagues across the organisation, the roles in which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries that these roles attract.
- 2.10 The 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.

The full report and action plan can be accessed at,

<https://www.woking.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Jobs/Pay%20Policy%20Statement%202022-23%20and%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20Data.pdf>

3.0 Future Plans

- 3.1 Across the organisation a huge amount of work is done to address the needs of the most vulnerable sections of the local communities and the equalities agenda has successfully been mainstreamed into directorate plans. In the current climate of scarce resources, partnership working with the statutory and voluntary sectors is increasingly important.
- 3.2 Building the capacity of local voluntary and community organisations to support this is an essential part of ensuring this happens. The pandemic highlighted the excellent work that can be done with partnership working to ensure the most vulnerable in our community are supported and this will need to be developed further to address the priorities in the Working for all strategy. Opportunities have been created on how to work more effectively and efficiently going forward, including becoming a modern employer with a progressive workforce.
- 3.3 In consultation with CLT the areas of focus for the next 12 months will include:
- Developing our role as local employer of choice and raising awareness about the employment opportunities available within the Council. This included expanding the current work experience programme, covering local schools and colleges, especially amongst our less affluent communities.
 - Ensuring we grow our own modern and appropriately skilled workforce for the future, reviewing development opportunities, barriers to progression and utilising traineeships, internships and the Apprenticeship Levy.
 - Meet with the new Leader of the Council /administration to get a steer on their priorities for this agenda.

4.0 Corporate Strategy

- 4.1 The equalities and well-being agenda ensures we meet our legal obligations under Equality legislation. Ensuring we have a healthy and flexible workforce which is able to meet the demands of service provision to some of the most vulnerable sections of our communities, including improving the health and wellbeing of all residents, reducing social inequality and engaging our communities. Strengthening partnership working is essential to this process, ensuring scarce resources are used to maximum effect and future sustainability ensured.

5.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 5.1 Equality work is mainstreamed into annual Directorate Plans and budgets allocated accordingly. In addition, external funding is identified for specific projects as and when required.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 5.2 Equality and Wellbeing Training is provided through Surrey Learn, a partnership of all Surrey local authorities. Internal awareness campaigns and training take place throughout the year. A Member awareness session is held annually.

Legal

- 5.3 The report ensures the organisation meets its legislative requirements under equalities legislation, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and outlines annual progress on the equality and wellbeing agenda.

6.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 6.1 Recovering from the pandemic, narrowing equality gaps and improving the life chances of vulnerable groups in the borough will require a pooling of evidence, resources and action planning. Working in partnership with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors will become increasingly important to ensure long term sustainability. Building and supporting the capacity of the voluntary/community sectors to enable this will be essential. The Council will have to become smarter at engaging and involving communities of interest in decision making, service and workforce planning, particularly groups who may experience disadvantage and inequality.

REPORT ENDS

Equality Objectives:

Overarching objectives that have been developed for the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme which are relevant to each of the nine equality groups covered by the Equality Act, relate back to the General Duty and are designed to ensure a holistic approach to tackling inequality and promoting equality through the organisation. The overarching objectives are to:

Tackle victimisation, harassment and discrimination

Take reasonable steps to ensure that residents, service users and employees are not unlawfully discriminated against and take appropriate action to prevent & tackle victimisation and harassment.

Improve access to services

Take reasonable steps to ensure that services are inclusive, responsive to risk, physically accessible and provided through the most efficient and effective channels available.

Close the gap in outcomes for citizens

Take reasonable steps to improve life chances for citizens by reducing outcome gaps that may exist within the Borough as well as those that may exist between the Borough and elsewhere.

Increase understanding and mutual respect between communities

Take reasonable steps to build stronger communities and promote good relations, both within and between communities.

Increase participation and engagement

Take reasonable steps to remove barriers that may exist to engagement and help residents (especially those who are under-represented) to participate in local decision making and influence local decisions.

Ensure equitable employment policies and practices

Provide equality of opportunity for all Council staff by ensuring all employment policies and practices, (concerning recruitment, retention, promotion, training and discipline), are designed to reflect and attract the communities that Woking serves.

Equality actions/achievements: 2021/22:

Hale End Court – Oct 21 saw the opening of Hale End Court in Old Woking. A 48 apartment independent living scheme with extra care to help our elderly and vulnerable tenants. Already fully occupied and a great success to encourage independent living at home as long as possible before a care home is considered.

Sheerwater Wrap Around the resident Multi Disciplinary Team - partnership working with health, social care and voluntary sector partners to wrap support around the most challenging cases in Sheerwater to ensure of the revolving door is not repeated and the resident only has to tell their story once. A really empowered team designed to make a difference to residents' lives.

Woking Hoarding Protocol – Woking is the first Council in Surrey to introduce the Hoarding Protocol to support residents with complex Hoarding issues. Hoarding is classified as a mental health issue and this multi partnership approach will speed up and improve outcomes for our residents.

Housing Assistance Policy – The Council approved changes to the policy to enable a more flexible approach to help fund hospital discharge, hoarding and provision of smart tec equipment in the home. The policy changes are designed to improve the health and wellbeing of elderly and vulnerable residents and enable them to remain independent at home.

The Council employs two Borough Discharge Support Officers who are embedded at Ashford and St Peters Hospital in the discharge team and Critical Assessment Unit. Their role is to assist health partners by wrapping around support to residents when they return home after hospital. They ensure all services like community meals, Careline, handyperson service are available immediately on discharge and to help prevent readmission.

30 employees have qualified as Tech Angels through the Surrey Coalition scheme to assist residents who are digitally excluded. The scheme arranges buddying up with a resident to help them learn how to use smart technology from face timing a grandchild to online shopping and banking. This helps prevent loneliness and isolation, a Council Health and Wellbeing Priority.

Volunteer Woking hosted a networking event with Christian Agency Network - 55 charities attended, including NW Surrey Short Stay School and Skill Mill which works with disengaged young people teaching them skills to help them into employment, which we were subsequently advised had benefitted both charities. Feedback was positive and a larger event is planned for this year.

Woking Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) provides translators and interpreters to enable those with little or no English to access support services, particularly medical and mental health services. In the last year 1,304 interpretation assignments and 41 translations were provided in a wide range of languages including Arabic, Urdu, Nepalese, Farsi, Portuguese and Romanian.

All Centres for the Community centres are currently offering services that tackle isolation, eg. day service users attend well-being classes where users are encouraged to socialise and meet in a safe environment. A working relationship has developed with Wisley Gardens who have helped to advise on sociable garden spaces and planting that encourages conservation as well as creating a well-being or therapeutic environment.

The Centres for the Community are also exploring some intergenerational work with the local schools this is with the intention of inviting them in to have conversations with the day guests and participate in some activities such as games and quizzes. For the younger community, the centres are welcoming parent and toddler groups, midwife teams and health visitor clinics along with youth counselling services and employment support. Staff at the centres are continuing to expand their knowledge with training in areas such as Tech Angels and Dementia. Support cafes are being planned to encourage engagement with the Ukrainian community.

Freedom Leisure opened a new leisure centre in Sheerwater. The design and build were managed with cultural diversity and disability access at its core. The spaces are designed to allow for women to be able to access sessions separate from men. Specific sessions, with tuition and mentoring, are being run to aid access and encourage women, especially those from minority groups, to participate in sport and wellbeing activities.

Sport and wellbeing sessions continue to be run in ward across the borough. These are tailored to the local need to enable wider participation. The Holiday Activity Fund was utilised to offer thousands of children free access to food and physical activity across the school holidays. Disability cycling was facilitated through Wheels for All at Sportsbox and has been extended to Goldsworth Park.

Explorer orienteering - a free to access event in local parks aimed at getting families out into the green spaces near them and explore the natural environment.

Signed up to a partnership with "Sport in Mind" to run some Free to Access exercise classes specifically developed for those with mental health concerns.

Successful Art Project with the Lightbox where young people have participated in a variety of art workshops including Multimedia, Lino Cutting, Sculpture, Special effects (make up) and screen printing.

Young Carers successfully delivered a Bingo session at Brockhill. A lovely evening which the young carers really enjoyed, it was fun, entertaining and all would like to do this again including inviting the residents to Lakeview one evening for an entertainment evening. 7 young carers have been supported in completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award at Bronze and Silver level.

Young Carers week – staff supported the young carers event at the Maltings, Farnham. Young carers from several schools came together to enjoy a day of wellbeing dance, exploring poetry and trying different forms of art using paint.

Work Experience and SEND support.

HEON (Higher Education Outreach Network, Surrey University) – delivered wellbeing boxes and workshops to all youth projects ensuring that the young people had something to look forward to each month to support their health and wellbeing during the pandemic. This took place throughout 2021 with the last box being delivered at Christmas. Activities included making bath bombs, forensics workshop and arts and crafts. Boxes included books for young people to read, puzzles and quizzes, hot chocolate and marshmallows, fruit flavoured teas and wellbeing activities.

Twister – successful received funding from a local councillor to set up their tuck shop at the Junction Café as well as a donation from a parent which has enabled resources to be purchased for the project including additional books around LGBT+ history and support.

A box of wellbeing books was received from Surrey Libraries with which small library has been set up enabling young people to borrow the books to read.

The juniors and seniors' youth projects re-opened at Moorcroft providing activities to positively support and engage to young people.

Woking Works work in partnership with local charities that provide health and wellbeing support to ensure all members in our local business community have access to their services and managers have support to ensure they have a workplace wellbeing plan in place for their organisations. One to one sessions have been offered to employees over the year.

A number of roadshows took place to ensure local engagement on Council priorities and resident feedback was core to the creation of the Corporate Strategy.

An engagement session with residents focused on the Victoria Arch improvements took place to inform residents about future plans.

Disabled access electric vehicle charging bays included on each floor of the new Red Shoppers Car Park.

Refurbished Loop Road play area with accessible equipment for children of all ages and abilities.

20 on-street charging bays installed as part of Surrey County Council led pilot (for EV charging access for all including those without private land on which to install their own charger).

Fully funded home energy efficiency improvements delivered to households across the borough as part of a Surrey consortium and delivered by Action Surrey (Green Jump Surrey).

5 Kickstart positions provided throughout the organisation. This was the Government's programme aimed at 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit following the pandemic. All went on to successful study or employment following the 6 month placement with the Council.

26 employees currently completing or have completed a formal work based qualification via the Apprenticeship Levy, including Senior Leadership MBA's and Social Work qualifications.

Equalities Monitoring Data for the period 1/4/2021 – 31/3/2022

(Figures in brackets for 2020/1)

1. *Breakdown of all employees by:

*These figures are based on 458 employees (447 for 2020/21); this includes all employees all on the payroll including casual employees who may only work very occasionally.

a) Ethnic background

	Actual	%	Census 2011 (where available)
Asian/ Asian British	38 (40)	8.30% (8.95%)	10.68%
Black/Black British	19 (14)	4.15% (3.13%)	1.39%
Chinese/Other	4 (4)	0.87% (0.89%)	0.88%
Mixed	6 (4)	1.31% (0.89%)	2.35%
White	347 (341)	75.76% (76.29%)	83.60%
Gypsy/Traveller	1 (1)	0.22% (0.22%)	0.15%
Romany Gypsy	0 (0)	0 (0)	
Irish Traveller	0 (0)	0 (0)	
Other (please specify)	33 (31)	7.21% (6.94%)	0.55%
Not Known	6(8)	1.31% (1.79%)	
Prefer not to say	4 (4)	0.87% (0.89%)	

b) Gender

	Actual	%
Male	159 (155)	34.72% (34.68%)
Female	299 (292)	65.28% (65.32%)
Transgender	(0)	
Prefer not to say	(0)	

c) Declaration of Disability

	Actual	%	Census 2011 (where available)
Yes	23 (21)	5.02% (4.70%)	12.99%
No	415 (407)	90.61% (91.05%)	
Prefer not to say	14 (14)	3.06% (3.13%)	
Not known	5 (5)	1.31% (1.12%)	

d) Age

	Actual	%
Under 25	21 (20)	4.59% (4.47%)
25 - 34	77 (69)	16.81% (15.44%)
35 - 44	108 (109)	23.58% (24.38%)
45 - 54	114 (115)	24.89% (25.73%)
55 - 64	110 (109)	24.02% (24.38%)
Over 65	28 (25)	6.11% (5.59%)

e) Sexual orientation

	Actual	%
Heterosexual/Straight	311 (294)	67.90% (65.77%)
Bisexual	3 (3)	0.66% (0.67%)
Gay or Lesbian	5 (5)	1.09% (1.12%)
Prefer not to say	20 (16)	4.37% (3.58%)
Not Known	119 (129)	25.98% (28.86%)

NB: LGBT figures not available from census 2011. ONS = 2.3% (2018)

f) Religion

	Actual	%	Census 2011 (where available)
Christian	220 (218)	48.03% (48.77%)	58.82%
Buddhist	2 (2)	1.26% (1.29%)	0.68%
Hindu	8 (8)	2.68% (2.74%)	1.97%
Jewish	3 (2)	0.01% (0.01%)	0.22%
Muslim	30 (34)	6.55% (7.61%)	7.38%
Sikh	3 (2)	0.66% (0.45%)	0.15%
No Religion	156 (147)	34.06% (32.89%)	23.12%
Other (Please specify)	3 (4)	0.66% (0.89%)	0.34%
Not Known	6 (7)		7.33%
Prefer not to say	26 (23)		

2. How many people belonging to each group applied to the Council for employment during the period?

a) Ethnic background

	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 %	2020/21 Actual	2020/21 %
Asian/ Asian British	229	23.66%	202	17.89%
Black/Black British	102	10.53%	91	8.06%
Chinese	0	0	11	0.97%
Mixed	37	3.82%	42	3.72%
White	507	52.38%	704	62.36%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0	0	0
Romany Gypsy	0	0	0	0
Irish Traveller	0	0	0	0
Other (please specify)	40	4.13%	28	2.48%
Not Known	32	3.31%	31	2.75%
Prefer not to say	21	2.17%	20	1.77%

b) Gender

	2021/22 Actual	2021/22 %	2020/21 Actual	2020/21 %
Male	400	41.32%	420	37.2%
Female	553	57.12%	670	59.35%
Transgender	0	0	2	0.18%
Prefer not to say	14	1.45%	8	0.7%
Not known	1	0.10%	29	2.57%

c) Declaration of Disability

	2021/22	2021/22 %	2020/21	2020/21 %
Yes	41	4.24%	32	2.83%
No	910	94.01%	1093	96.81%
Not known	1	0.10%	1	0.09%
Prefer not to say	16	1.85%	3	0.27%

d) Age

	2021/22	2021/22 %	2020/21	2020/21 %
Under 25	140	14.46%	213	18.87%
25 - 34	269	27.79%	380	33.66%
35 - 44	251	25.93%	265	23.47%
45 - 54	173	17.87%	164	14.53%
55 - 64	104	10.74%	77	6.82%
Over 65	13	1.34%	6	0.53%
Not Known	18	1.86%	24	2.13%

e) Sexual orientation

	2021/22	2021/22 %	2020/21	2020/21 %
Heterosexual/Straight	845	87.29%	976	86.45%
Bisexual	16	1.65%	21	1.86%
Gay or Lesbian	26	2.68%	35	3.10%
Prefer not to say	51	5.27%	59	5.23%
Not Known	30	3.10%	38	3.37%

f) Religion

	2021/22	2021/22 %	2020/21	2020/21 %
Christian	373	38.53%	412	36.49%
Buddhist	17	1.76%	22	1.95%
Hindu	38	3.93%	42	3.72%
Jewish	1	0.10%	3	0.27%
Muslim	131	13.53%	119	10.54%
Sikh	12	1.24%	24	2.13%
No Religion	297	30.68%	400	35.43%
Other (Please specify)	19	1.96%	27	2.39%
Not Known	60	6.20%	18	1.59%
Prefer not to say	20	2.07%	62	5.49%

3. How many people belonging to each group applied for/received training during the period?

a) Ethnic background

	2021/22	2020/21
BME	18	20
White	56	78

b) Gender

	2021/22	2020/21
Male	26	30
Female	48	48
Transgender	0	0

c) Declaration of Disability

	2021/22	2020/21
Yes	2	3
No	72	75

d) Age

	2021/22	2020/21
Under 25	6	4
25 - 34	22	24
35 - 44	21	28
45 - 54	15	21
55 - 64	9	20
Over 65	1	1

4. How many people belonging to each group were promoted during the period?

a) Ethnic background

	2021/22	2020/21
BME	0	1
White	5	8

b) Gender

	2021/22	2020/21
Male	3	4
Female	2	5
Transgender	0	0

c) Declaration of Disability

	2021/22	2020/21
Yes	0	0
No	5	9

d) Age

	2021/22	2020/21
Under 25	0	0
25 - 34	1	0
35 - 44	4	5
45 - 54	0	3
55 - 64	0	1
Over 65	0	0

5. How many people belonging to each group "benefited or suffered detriment as a result of formal performance assessment procedures"?

There were no formal assessment procedures carried out during the period.

6. How many people belonging to each group were involved in grievance procedures?

a) Ethnic background

	2021/22	2020/21
BME	0	0
White	1	0

b) Gender

	2021/22	2020/21
Male	0	0
Female	1	0
Transgender	0	0

c) Declaration of Disability

	2021/22	2020/21
Yes	1	0
No	0	0

d) Age

	2021/22	2020/21
Under 25	0	0
25 - 34	0	0
35 - 44	0	0
45 - 54	0	0
55 - 64	1	0
Over 65	0	0

7. How many people belonging to each group were the subjects of disciplinary procedures?

There were no formal disciplinary procedures during the period.

8. How many people belonging to each group ceased employment with the Council during the period?

a) Ethnic background

	2021/22	2020/21
Asian/ Asian British	4	11
Black/Black British	2	1
Chinese/Other	0	0
Mixed	0	1
White	43	52
Gypsy/Traveller	0	1
Romany Gypsy	0	0
Irish Traveller	0	0
Other (please specify)	3	0
Prefer not to say	0	0
Not Known	1	1

b) Gender

	2021/22	2020/21
Male	18	25
Female	35	42
Transgender	0	0

c) Declaration of Disability

	2021/22	2020/21
Yes	0	4
No	49	60
Prefer not to say	2	3
Not Known	2	0

d) Age

	2021/22	2020/21
Under 25	7	6
25 - 34	7	15
35 - 44	13	14
45 - 54	5	8
55 - 64	10	15
Over 65	11	9

9. Flexible Working Requests:

	2021/22	2020/21
Number received	19	14
Number agreed	19	14
Success rate	100	100

10. Return to work from maternity

	2021/22	2020/21
Number taking maternity leave	4	9
Number returned to work	4	7
Success rate	100%	77%