

Woking Borough Council
Woking for all

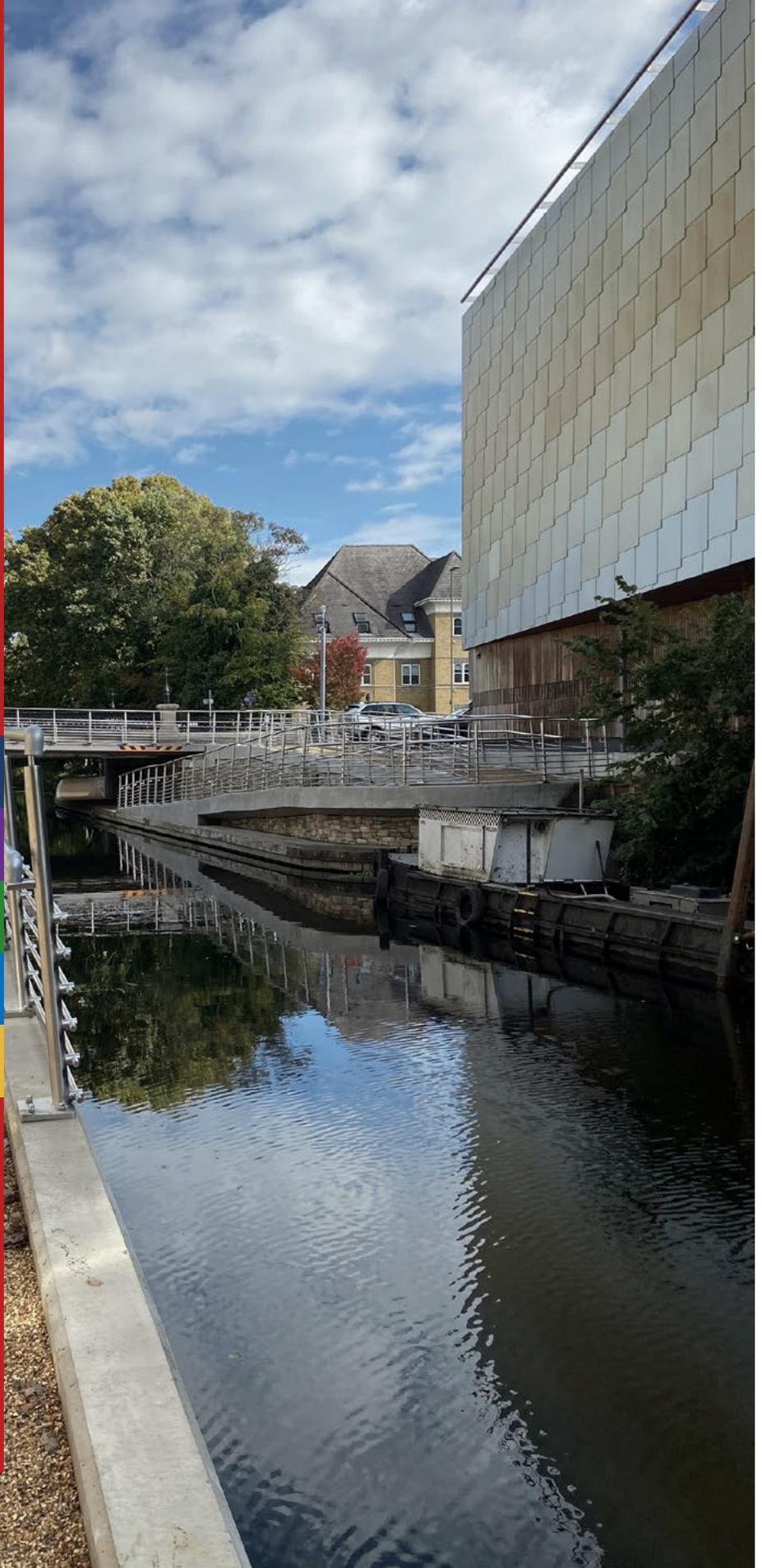
2022-2027

Shaping the *future*
of our borough



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A council that works for all



Cllr Ayesha Azad

Leader of Woking Borough Council and elected member for Heathlands

I am delighted that Woking Borough Council has produced the Woking for all strategy 2022–2027 which follows the one year Corporate Plan that I established for 2021-2022.

I am proud to have this strategy and to commit to the objectives that we have set out in it. I am however even prouder about the way we have gone about developing the strategy and how it has been shaped by the voices in the borough.

I committed to this Woking for all strategy reflecting the voice of residents and businesses. Since the summer of 2021, the council has been in constant communication with residents. We have created the Woking Community Forum where we consult with residents on our key plans and policies. We established a residents panel, held an online engagement event and ran eight roadshow events in communities over October to December in order to hear views about how well the council is doing in meeting the needs of communities and what our priorities should focus on over the coming years.

I heard about areas where we are doing well and also areas where we need to improve. I can't promise to get all of the things right, all of the time. I can however commit to listening, an ongoing conversation between the council and its residents and communities, to continually seek to improve and modernise and to continue to work in the best interests of our borough.

Last year I said the Corporate Plan was about values and how they shape the future of the borough. In the Woking for all strategy 2022-2027, I have maintained my commitment to it being a document about values and I have strengthened both the focus on the future and the actions that we will take and commit to now, in order to deliver the vision for the future.

So, our values within this strategy I hope will reflect optimism, ambition, trust, openness, communication, compassion and a positive culture for our residents, staff and partners.

Setting the future course



Julie Fisher

Chief Executive

Woking is no ordinary borough council.

It is a council that is extremely ambitious for its residents and businesses, providing services that support the wellbeing of residents and driving the economic growth within the borough through significant investment projects. Whilst these characteristics are numerous, they are typified by:

- strong, consistent and continuous senior officer leadership which has supported councillors to develop a vision for the borough and put in place key investment strategies and strategic partnership arrangements
- a strong reputation and profile for being forward thinking, ambitious and innovative
- significant investment in the regeneration of our borough, largely evidenced by the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme; Victoria Arch Widening Scheme and Victoria Place residential, retail, office and leisure scheme.
- the council establishing itself as the key investor in the borough, focused on regeneration, place making and enhancing the prospects for the communities of the borough
- investing and accepting the level of risk required to establish a borough where communities and businesses can prosper, whilst rethinking the sustainable future of high streets
- developing a large commercial property portfolio, which generates three times the level of annual income generated from Council Tax, used to enhance and broaden council service and support to local communities.

These characteristics evidence the level of ambition for the borough. However, what is more important to me is to be able to lead this council on its journey.

Whilst investments have been made, the bigger challenge is to deliver the outcomes from these investments and see the council deliver on its vision in a time when it has never been more challenging to run public services.

This Woking for all strategy is pivotal to navigating the critical times ahead and is crucial in delivering my ambition to provide leadership to the council's workforce and oversee a programme of continual change and modernisation.

Our borough

Facts & Figures



60%
of the borough
is designated
green belt land



43,000
households
(approximately)



20%
increase in the over
65 population in the
next 10 years



5 years
Life expectancy is
five years lower in
some areas than
others



84.7%
of our workforce
is economically
active

Woking is one of 11 borough and districts in the county of Surrey. It is a modern and diverse town born out of the railway and communication revolution.

Comprising 6,357 hectares, the borough is the very definition of a 'green and leafy' suburb. 60 per cent of the borough is designated green belt land and large swathes of the borough's open space is protected.

Approximately 100,000 people live in the borough and we provide services to around 43,000 homes. Woking, West Byfleet and Knaphill are the borough's main urban and economic centres followed by Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Kingfield, Old Woking, Sheerwater, St Johns and Westfield, which have their own identities and local interests.

Woking is the third most densely populated borough in Surrey. The average household size is 2.49 persons, slightly above both the regional and national average. Compared to the rest of Surrey, Woking has a fairly young population, with the second highest proportion of under 16s and the second lowest number of over 65s in the county. However, in common with the rest of the country, the borough has an ageing population, with the over 65s expected to increase by 3,900, more than 20 per cent in the next 10 years.

The borough's defining characteristic is its diverse and multi-cultural community. It is the most ethnically diverse borough in Surrey, with a large Pakistani community (5.7 per cent). In 2011, 83.6 per cent of the borough's population identified themselves as white, 11.6 per cent as Asian or Asian British, 1.4 per cent as black or black British, 2.4 per cent as mixed and 1.1 per cent as other ethnic group.

Local residents are generally healthier than the English average. However, health inequalities remain. In the most deprived areas of the borough, life expectancy is approximately five years lower than in the least deprived areas. The borough has the highest percentage of adults claiming Disability Living Allowance in Surrey.

The borough's excellent transport links and proximity to London makes it an important regional hub with enormous potential for growth. It has a large economic workforce. 84.7 per cent of the working-age population is economically active, the second highest proportion in Surrey and well above both regional and national averages.

In 2021, Woking powered its way to the top of Lambert Smith Hampton's UK Vitality Index for the country's best performing location across a range of indicators including economy, business, health outcomes and the environment. The definitive health check on the UK's towns and cities assesses locations outside London to identify the best places to live, work and do business, in addition to those with the highest growth potential.

Woking for all

A strategy built on the principles of community

The role of Woking Borough Council is to build and maintain the borough as a place that has great communities and quality of life for residents and to contribute to the Surrey region having these same characteristics.

Our Vision

Our vision of what we mean by great communities and quality of life is the things that makes a place somewhere:

01 to call home for ourselves and our families

02 we want to stay and spend our time and energy in

03 people want to visit and enjoy their leisure time.

The people that are part of the communities of the borough will live, work and enjoy their lives in the borough for different reasons, but quality of life is a common feature of why people stay in and come back to visit the borough.

We recognise that the council has a key and pivotal role in establishing great communities and quality of life through listening to and understanding its residents and acting on their feedback.

Clearly, not all of the factors that affect communities are within the borough council's responsibilities or ability to control. The council will however work with other statutory and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations in partnership to represent the borough. It will act as the voice for Woking communities and lever our influences to provide the best joined up response to the factors that influence the quality of life in the borough.

The council held a programme of community engagement roadshows and consultation between October and December 2021 in order to hear about the issues that are important to communities. The feedback from this engagement has informed this Woking for all strategy and the priorities for the next five years.

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This strategy has four service facing community themes that target the approach to build and maintain a borough that has great communities and quality of life for residents:

- Healthier Communities

- Engaged Communities

- Greener Communities

- Prospering Communities.

These are underpinned by a theme that runs through our service-facing activity which is a high performing council that delivers value for money and effective services for the communities of the borough.

This is a five year strategy with an annual refresh. This approach is to ensure that the strategy always remains current, representative of the voice of residents and communities, and in touch with the matters that are important for our borough so that we can measure and report on our performance.

Community engagement

We recently held a programme of community engagement roadshows and issued a consultation questionnaire. We asked ‘what matters to you?’.

Through these roadshows and survey, borough residents and communities told us that you want us to:

- 01** make the borough a safe place for everyone

- 02** listen more and give you the chance to have your say

- 03** support older and vulnerable people in our community

- 04** improve traffic flow and make it easier to travel around the borough

- 05** ensure that all of our towns and villages are thriving places.

Residents also said that we should continue our work to tackle climate change, prevent homelessness, nurture start-ups and build more affordable homes.

This feedback has helped shape our priorities for the next five years. We have grouped all of your feedback into four key themes and used these to develop the Woking for all strategy 2022-2027.

Residents also gave feedback on the performance of the council, so we also have a set of priorities that will support the council continue to be high performing.

Theme 1: Healthier Communities

85% of residents told us that it is important that Woking is a safe place to live.

We agree. We think everyone should be able to go about their lives confidently, independently and be able to live comfortably in their homes.

Theme 2: Engaged Communities

71% of residents told us that having a council that listens and where everyone can ‘have their say’ is important.

We believe thriving communities are engaged communities, where people feel valued and included, everyone does their bit, and everyone feels they can have their say.

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Theme 3: Greener Communities

If the council had more money to invest, 41% of people said that environmental initiatives such as climate change, sustainability and flooding were important to them.

We take climate change and finding greener sustainable solutions very seriously. We aim to be a carbon neutral council by 2030 and will continue to encourage and support others to follow our lead.

Theme 4: Prospering Communities

56% of residents said that it was very important to encourage vibrant village high streets by supporting local businesses.

We will continue to make our borough one of the best places to live, work and do business outside of London.

A high performing council

44% of residents said they supported the council to take appropriate action that will benefit local communities in a timely manner.

Our aim is to deliver best value for the communities of the borough, to be a high-performing council that you trust to make the right decisions for you and the borough.

The details of the outcomes the council are committed to and the priorities are set out in the following pages. The link between resident feedback and the council priorities for the next five years responds to the commitment made in 2021 that:

“Only once residents have had their say will the council put together a five-year strategy for 2022-2027, which takes us to the beginning of the next Local Development Framework Core Strategy period.”

We recognise your priorities might change over time, so we see this as the start of an ongoing conversation and programme of engagement between you, us and the borough's communities.

Our online community engagement platform, Woking Community Forum, forms the hub of our engagement activity. We will continue to build on the content of this site so that it becomes the one stop place for residents to engage with the council, see what is happening and represent your voice.



Priorities and delivery outcomes

The priority outcomes

The council has four community facing priority outcomes: **Healthier communities; Engaged communities; Greener communities; Prospering communities** and one cross cutting, **High performing council**, priority.

The community facing priority outcomes shape our activities and resourcing decisions and provide the framework for the management of the council’s business in an environment where funding and resources is under greater restraint.

The high performing council priority is the gateway priority through which any activity must pass to ensure the council delivers the best outcomes for communities with its fund and assets.

Sitting below this Woking for all strategy is a medium term financial strategy, a suite of strategic and directorate plans and a performance management system that collectively define our approach to integrated service and financial planning and management.



High performing council

- A transparent, listening and learning council
- A high performing council
- A modern employer with a progressive workforce

<p>Priority actions for 2022-2023</p> <p>Page 14</p>	<p>Priority actions for 2022-2023</p> <p>Page 20</p>	<p>Priority actions for 2022-2023</p> <p>Page 25</p>	<p>Priority actions for 2022-2023</p> <p>Page 31</p>
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Healthier communities



Outcomes and how we will achieve them

Safe, thriving and sustainable communities

- Recognise the distinctive identity of our towns, villages and neighbourhoods, ensuring they have vibrant centres that support community life, wellbeing, pride and identity.
- Create safe and accessible public spaces through high quality development and regeneration.
- Encourage and increase active lifestyles and participation through the provision of varied cultural and sporting opportunities and amenities.
- Engage the Community Safety Partnership to raise awareness and support our most vulnerable residents through partnership working to tackle borough wide issues.

High quality homes for all

- Support the provision of high quality, sustainable, well managed and affordable homes to meet housing standards and local needs, including those for key workers.
- Prevent homelessness and its root causes.

Health and wellbeing for all

- Work with partners to embed health and wellbeing into all that we do.
- Encourage residents be more proactive about their health and wellbeing in order to increase independence and reduce the need for care and support services.
- Provide early support to prevent residents' health and wellbeing deteriorating.
- Work with partners to improve access to health and care services.

Priorities for 2022-23

Safe, thriving and sustainable communities

Recognise the distinctive identity of our towns, villages and neighbourhoods, ensuring they have vibrant centres that support community life, wellbeing, pride and identity

- Continue to broaden the offer at community centres to be inclusive for all ages.
- Continue to support the development of neighbourhood plans.
- Support local villages and neighbourhood communities create the place residents want it to be and working with neighbourhoods to assess gaps in services.
- Return highways grass and tree maintenance back to Surrey County Council.
- Ensure that new developments coming forward, such as West Hall in West Byfleet, meet the objectives set out in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

Create safe and accessible public spaces through high quality development and regeneration

- Complete the first new play area to be delivered as part of the regeneration of Sheerwater.
- Bring forward new SANG provision as an integral part of our strategy.

Encourage and increase active lifestyles and participation through the provision of varied cultural and sporting opportunities and amenities

- Open the refurbished cycle track at Goldsworth Park Recreation Ground, which will include a fully asphalted pump track, an all-weather mountain bike circuit and a grass track circuit.
- Continue to host the Surrey Half Marathon.
- Support looked after children, care leavers and foster families with a leisure offer.
- Develop a high quality ladies only offering, building on the strong base we have already in Sheerwater.

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Engage the Community Safety Partnership to raise awareness and support our most vulnerable residents through partnership working to tackle borough wide issues

- Maintain a high standard of addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) across the borough, using the tools and powers from the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 where appropriate.
- Work with partners to find a sustainable way to support vulnerable women in our borough.
- Invest in additional CCTV cameras to target fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour hotspots.
- Working in partnership with Your Sanctuary and other statutory services to raise awareness of the help and support available for those experiencing domestic abuse.

High quality homes for all

Support the provision of high quality, sustainable, well managed and affordable homes to meet housing standards and local needs, including those for key workers

- Meet our target to deliver 102 additional affordable homes.
- Develop and adopt new affordable housing policies which respond to the needs of the borough and incorporates prioritisation of first homes for key workers.
- Improve our Housing Services by bringing housing and asset management services back into the council and commencing the new housing repairs and maintenance contracts.
- Complete a review of the council's Selective Licensing Scheme and agree a way forward from 2023 to maintain private rented housing standards.

Prevent homelessness and its root causes

- Maintain strong partnership working to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness.
- Deliver five additional homes for rough sleepers.
- Commence development of the new homelessness hostel in Goldsworth Road.

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Health and wellbeing for all

Work with partners to embed health and wellbeing into all that we do

- Maintain strong partnership working to support the integration of health facilities into council and community facilities.
- Promote volunteering within local businesses as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments.

Encourage people to be more proactive about their health and wellbeing in order to increase independence and reduce the need for care and support services

- Continue to offer a range of independent living services, such as Careline and Community Meals, to enable residents to live independently for longer.
- Explore the expansion of the council's fall responder service.

Provide early support to residents to prevent their health and wellbeing deteriorating

- Launch a programme of intergenerational activities linking our community centres with local schools to reduce social isolation.
- Promote the Woking Independent Show Home, which showcases different equipment and technology to aid independent living.
- Support children to develop healthy habits and reduce levels of childhood obesity.

Work with partners to improve access to health and care services

- Work in partnership with Surrey County Council to introduce a pilot local area coordinator approach in Canalside.
- Support Public Health in response to COVID-19 recovery and promote health in communities.

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Case Study

My name is Nina and I live in Woking with my daughter. I moved to Woking in 2017 from a women's refuge. Prior to this I had been homeless, sofa-surfing with my baby daughter as it was not safe for us to live at home. It was incredibly stressful staying with different people during this time, and I never knew what was going to happen to us from one day to the next.

Housing staff from Woking Borough Council visited us at the refuge and were helpful and friendly, which was different to other councils that I'd experienced. They explained the housing options to me which made me feel less anxious, and I found accommodation through the private rented 'Let's Rent' scheme. I now have a secure home and my daughter is happy at school.

In the early days, staff from Woking Family Centres helped me to access a nursery placement and I attended courses to develop my knowledge as a parent. It was great to meet other people this way and I think these groups are so important for families who need support.



What I admire about Woking is the community spirit and how everyone works together as a community. The council, Lighthouse, Women's Support Centre, CAP Life Skills courses and my local church all helped me together and meant that I did not feel isolated.

I am now self-employed and run my own cleaning business. The council gave me employment advice and opportunities through Woking Works and I am joining in with the networking conferences to develop my business further, this is really good.



Engaged communities



Outcomes and how we will achieve them

Informed and consulted residents

- Consult and engage residents more frequently and encourage all residents to have their say.
- Reach and listen to all our communities and act on their feedback.
- Be open and transparent in the management of council business.

A borough with a strong voice

- Have a strong voice and influence with government and business to achieve the best outcomes for the borough.
- Attract investment and protect our interests by raising the profile of the borough.

Strong and effective partnerships

- Actively seek opportunities to work collaboratively with Surrey County Council and other public, voluntary, community and faith sectors.
- Establish and maintain strong and effective relationships with government, communities, local businesses and partners.

Priorities for 2022-23

Informed and consulted residents

Consult and engage residents more frequently and encourage all residents to have their say

- Establish a panel for tenant and leaseholder engagement.
- Establish a tenant and leaseholder area on Woking Community Forum.
- Agree the engagement strategy for the review of the Core Strategy in 2023.
- Commence a review of the Core Strategy and preparation towards a new strategy for adoption in 2027.

Reach and listen to all our communities and act on their feedback

- Develop and publish a Community Engagement Plan.
- Develop a community engagement calendar with a target of six sharing and listening events over the year.

Be open and transparent in the management of council business

- Continue to support the scrutiny of the council's strategies in order to strengthen democratic accountability.
- Develop a new community grants scheme.

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A borough with a strong voice

Have a strong voice and influence with government and business to achieve the best outcomes for the borough

- Continue with an active response to government consultations to represent the voice of communities of the borough.
- Use our representation on the Members Board of the District Councils' Network to collaborate and strengthen the voice of borough and district councils and influence national policy.

Attract investment and protect our interests by raising the profile of the borough

- Agree and implement a Destination Woking marketing project to promote the borough to attract inward investment.

Strong and effective partnerships

Actively seek opportunities to work collaboratively with the county council and other public, voluntary, community and faith sectors

- Continue to engage with businesses, to support them in their recovery and sustained growth.
- Strengthen relationships with partners and stakeholders such as EM3 LEP, Surrey County Council and the Government to ensure cohesive, aligned and effective collaboration in critical projects.
- Develop a community engagement plan in collaboration with Surrey County Council.

Establish and maintain strong and effective relationships with government, communities, local businesses and partners

- Develop an Animal Welfare Action Plan.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to champion businesses and develop trading opportunities.
- Sign up to the Local Digital Declaration with government.

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Woking Community Forum

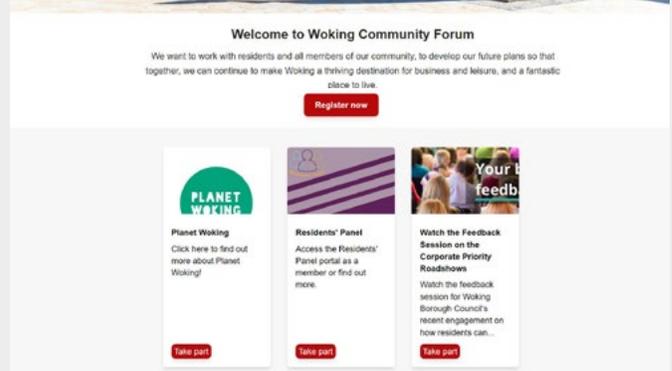
The Woking Community Forum was created to facilitate effective, two-way dialogue with residents and stakeholders that would enable the council to understand what people value and provide a shared vision for Woking as a place to live and work.

A key priority was to build upon and sustain the conversation through a programme of continuous engagement and communication, ensuring that resident feedback forms part of the council's decision-making process influencing the development of council policy, strategy, service design and delivery.

Woking Community Forum is a digital community engagement platform that encourages resident participation through the creation of consultations using surveys and polls, interactive maps, virtual post-it notes and video whilst also having the capacity to create community discussion areas.

As well as individual consultations, the forum allows the creation of hubs, of which there are presently two:

- Woking Residents Panel: approximately 750 residents have signed-up to become members of the panel. The panel is used at an earlier stage in the policy-forming process as a sounding board to gain residents views prior to running a full consultation or as a quick feedback mechanism.



- Planet Woking: provides a one-stop-shop for all things relating to climate change, sustainability and biodiversity. Engaging and educating residents, schools and businesses on climate change and sustainability through information, surveys, consultation and participatory exercises as well as promoting climate change initiatives taking place across the borough.

By involving people through engagement and consultation, the council can demonstrate openness, transparency and accountability, as people's views can be shown to influence policy and service delivery, thereby establishing a culture of trust between the Council and its communities.



Greener communities



Outcomes and how we will achieve them

Greener living

- Help communities reduce their carbon footprint and impact on the environment.
- Use the borough's natural assets and green spaces to support green and sustainable living.
- Work with partners to develop and incentivise greener travel choices, embed wider carbon reductions and greater biodiversity support in our operations.

Greener economy

- Develop the green and sustainable sector as part of the strategy for economic growth.
- Promote sustainable technology and innovation.
- Promote and invest in low carbon energy supply across the borough.

Greener place leadership

- Lead an integrated approach to the management of flood risk, air quality and conserving water.
- Conserve, restore and expand existing habitats.
- Deliver a carbon neutral council by 2030 and lead by example to support Woking businesses to be greener and more sustainable.

Priorities for 2022-23

Greener living

Help communities to reduce their carbon footprint and impact on the environment

- Deliver the actions within the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Work with partners to continue to deliver household energy efficiency improvements and tackle fuel poverty.

Use the borough's natural assets and green spaces to support green and sustainable living

- Continued work through Planet Woking, to sustain a programme of online resources and events focused on the natural environment and habitats.
- As part of the Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in the borough, plant 500 saplings.

Work with partners to develop and incentivise greener travel choices, embed wider carbon reductions and greater biodiversity support in our operations

- Deliver a minimum of 70 additional EV charging points in council car parks and contribute to the County programme to trial kerbside EV points.
- Continue to work in partnership with Surrey County Council to attract additional funding that will support the delivery of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.
- Complete the £3m grant funded energy efficiency project to connect Midas House and Export House to the Thamesway heat network.

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Greener economy

Develop the green and sustainable sector as part of the strategy for economic growth

- Create and sustain a Green Tech led “hub” (incubator/ accelerator) to support businesses to meet the challenges climate change has brought to the planet.
-

Promote sustainable technology and innovation

- Implement further intelligent highway messaging boards to improve wayfinding around the borough.
-

Promote and invest in low carbon energy supply across the borough

- Identify opportunities for renewable energy projects across the council estate and the wider Borough in furtherance of the council’s Renewable Energy Plan.
-
- Continued delivery of fully funded energy efficiency improvements for eligible households via Action Surrey.
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- Support Thamesway to progress investment proposals to extend the district heat network, provide the capacity for major new connections and enable the planned transition to lower carbon technologies.
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Greener place leadership

Lead an integrated approach to the management of flood risk, air quality and conserving water

- Explore innovative finance mechanisms to fund green initiatives.
-

Conserve, restore and expand existing habitats

- Maintain and expand the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and open space as part of our borough wide green network.
 - Prepare for effective implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain developer requirements.
-

Deliver a carbon neutral council by 2030 and lead by example to support Woking businesses to be greener and more sustainable

- Undertake an independent self-assessment of our operations and buildings to develop a baseline for carbon reduction management.
 - To adopt a carbon reduction by design approach to all projects and programmes.
 - Assess the implications of the Government's Waste Strategy and develop local implementation plans.
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Supporting Natural Woking

We all value the countryside, parks and green spaces, to visit for leisure or for work, but also recognise their importance as vital habitats for wildlife. Many local sites are specially protected for nature.

A key council objective is to conserve existing habitats and create new areas. The council declared a climate change and ecological emergency, recognising declines in biodiversity as an equal challenge of our times.

As with climate change, local action can help tackle this global concern. The council protects and enhances natural environments through delivery of its services including managing open spaces, as local planning authority, infrastructure provider and through focused Natural Woking projects.

The best results are achieved by working together and this underlies the council's approach to caring for the environment. We corporately support, directly and indirectly, a wide range of community groups to get out and involved in the great outdoors. From creating new habitat features to conservation volunteering to remove invasive species.



The council also works with expert partners, for example to manage our rare heathlands, and to share the love of nature, knowledge and skills the next generation need to also support these wild wonders.

In the future, the council will continue this work in partnership to expand the number and quality of green spaces, to ease pressure on and increase the area and connectivity of places that wildlife can call home.



Prospering communities



Outcomes and how we will achieve them

A borough of opportunity

- Develop a connected borough that can harness the opportunities provided by new technology.
- Establish the borough as a destination – a place that is open for business and investment.

Strong and sustainable economy

- Support businesses to recover from the pandemic and grow.
- Keep talent and skills within the borough by creating more opportunities for career progression and advancement.
- Create a vibrant town centre, bringing together a compelling offer of high quality leisure, retail and sustainable living opportunities.

A borough with an enabling infrastructure

- Establish a strong case for infrastructure investment that supports the vision and priorities of communities.
- Align space planning for business with our economic strategy.

Priorities for 2022-23

A borough of opportunity

Develop a connected borough that can harness the opportunities provided by new technology

- Improve 5G mobile connectivity.
-

Establish the borough as a destination – a place that is open for business and investment

- Adopt the Woking Town Centre Masterplan – setting out a vision for the place and identifying development opportunities.
 - Establish a Digital Centre of Excellence, a high growth, high-tech incubator hub with a niche ‘green tech’ focus.
 - Develop a detailed sales and marketing plan and improved articulation of our offer with up-to-date facts and figures, including our premises, workforce, support facilities, cultural and leisure offer and our gigabit capable IT infrastructure which will also inform the forthcoming Town Centre Masterplan.
-

Strong and sustainable economy

Support businesses to recover from the pandemic and grow

- Continue to provide business advice clinics and webinars on business strategy, finance, marketing, exporting, customer service.
-

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Keep talent and skills within the borough by creating more opportunities for career progression and advancement

- Promote and encourage careers and apprenticeships in knowledge-based industries for young people.
 - Work with employers, partners and the education sector to highlight skills gaps and shortages and promote opportunities for young people.
-

Create a vibrant town centre, bringing together a compelling offer of high quality leisure, retail and sustainable living opportunities

- Celebrate and support the opening of the Victoria Place to provide an even stronger retail, hotel and leisure offer.
 - Agree an overarching town centre management strategy to support the delivery of a mixed-use centre, supporting local needs while being a shopping destination of choice.
 - Implement new wayfinding in Woking Town Centre.
-

A borough with an enabling infrastructure

Establish a strong case for investment in infrastructure that supports the vision and priorities of communities

- 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.
 - Working with government and infrastructure providers to address shortfalls in provision.
-

Align space planning for business with our economic strategy

- As part of the masterplan, and the Economic Action Plan, review the estate and recommend flexible solutions that allows for future sustained business growth.
-

Woking Hospitality Alliance

The hospitality industry across the UK has been hugely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and periods of lockdown over the past two years. The council is acutely aware of staff shortages and the pressures that this places on Woking hospitality businesses and their workforce.

We want to do everything that we can to support and grow the hospitality industry within the borough, so we spoke to a number of restaurant and pub owners and managers to discuss how we could do just that. These conversations resulted in the formation of the Woking Hospitality Alliance (WHA).

The objective of WHA is to represent and support the hospitality sector and create a space where industry information can be shared, giving hospitality businesses insight on best practice, local producers and suppliers, training opportunities, job vacancies, borough information and plans for the future.

WHA is open to all businesses in the hospitality



sector within the borough including restaurants, pubs and bars, hotels, and other food and beverage focused businesses – and it is free.

There are many benefits of being part of Woking Hospitality Alliance including being part of the marketing and promotion of businesses across the borough, getting access to help and advice through Woking Works and being part of a trusted group where information is shared.

Dukes Bar and Deli is the latest offering from one of Surrey’s most successful restaurateurs, Roberto Gardetto, who commented: “Being part of the Woking Hospitality Alliance will give us an opportunity to share information and work together to create a good hospitality experience in Woking for the future. We are grateful to Woking Borough Council for starting this initiative.”

Woking welcomes its freshest and most inviting bar and delicatessen in years and promises to become a celebrated local institution in the heart of the town.





A high performing council

The scale of austerity means that councils have to find new ways to encourage economic growth and deliver high quality public services whilst substantially reducing their spending.

The council is on a journey, that started many years ago, to:

- have greater control of its finances and sources of income
- engage communities to inform priorities
- set priorities that determine where money is spent
- work in partnership to get the greatest benefit from collective efforts
- invest in the workforce to deliver public value.

The council continues to focus on being a high performing local authority and has set priorities within this strategy accordingly.



Outcomes and how we will achieve them

A transparent, listening and learning council

- Active use of independent and peer reviews to inform service improvement.
- Involve residents in the development of strategies and policies.
- Help residents understand and take an interest in democratic processes.

A high performing council

- Develop and strengthen strategic service and financial planning and performance and risk management.
- Develop the council's digital maturity and capability.
- Adopt a council operating model that delivers the best outcomes from investments.

A modern employer with a progressive workforce

- Continue to invest in staff, our greatest resource, by ensuring they have the skills and equipment necessary to perform their roles to the best of their ability.
- Work closer together to achieve consistent and integrated services for residents.

Priorities for 2022-23

A transparent, listening and learning council

Active use of independent and peer reviews to inform service improvement

- Agree and implement an action plan arising from the planning peer review.
- Further strengthen our Business Continuity arrangements.

Involve residents in the development of strategies and policies

- Develop a new borough vision and mission statement through the stakeholder and engagement plan.
- Review and establish council values and behaviours.
- Actively seek resident feedback in service improvement.

Help residents to understand and take an interest in democratic processes

- Develop a suite of information bitesize factsheets and explanatory media.
- Continue to use online engagement and digital media tools to improve democratic inclusivity.

A high performing council

Develop and strengthen strategic and financial planning and performance and risk management

- Agree and implement strategic asset management plan to ensure that all assets contribute to financial and place making ambitions.
- Establish a council-wide framework for the management of commercial activity and opportunities.
- Undertake a review of the governance of council investment and interests.
- Develop and review the business plans of companies in which the council has an interest.

Develop the council's digital maturity and capability

- Develop and deliver the Digital Strategy 2022 action plan.
- Implement digital car parking management system and payments.
- Launch the CCTV control room and develop plans to exploit its potential and grow its business.

Adopt a council operating model that delivers the best outcomes from investments

- Review and implement the Organisational Change policy.
- Deliver and rollout a hybrid working platform that is tailored to the needs of services.
- Review and develop opportunities for shared services with other local authorities.

A modern employer with a progressive workforce

Continue to invest in staff, our greatest resource, by ensuring they have the skills and equipment necessary to perform their roles to the best of their ability

- Gain new accreditation to Investors in People, a global benchmark for people management.
- Develop a People Strategy which will improve the outcomes that the council delivers and supports staff to achieve their full potential in work.
- Develop a new council vision and set of values through engagement with stakeholders.

Work closer together to achieve consistent and integrated services for residents

- Review the performance management framework against the strategy priorities.
- Adopt a service and team collaboration platform.
- Integrate New Vision Homes back into Council Housing Services.

→

Multi agency partnership working

The North West Surrey (NWS) Alliance's vision is 'to achieve the total wellbeing of our community shifting our focus on health provision responding to sickness to prevention in the fullest sense'.

The service supports individuals in only having to tell their story once and to have consistency with whom they liaise.

The Wrap Around the Resident team are encouraged and empowered to make decisions to improve the individual/family's outcomes that may be outside their organisation's normal processes with the overall aim of improving the individual's situation. The team will consider not just the physical needs, but all determinants of health to deliver a positive impact for Canalside residents.

Local organisations that provide this integrated and focused response to a resident's individual issues and circumstances are Woking Borough Council Housing and Community Services, Surrey County Council Adult Social Care, local GPs, Community Health Nursing Services and Citizens Advice Woking.

Started in October 2021, the Wrap Around the Resident team has already significantly improved the outcomes for eight families and is providing ongoing support.



Additional funding has been secured from the Better Care Fund to support the service in 2022-23.



Our finances and challenges

The money we collect from Council Tax receipts accounts for less than 20 per cent of our annual income. The rest of the money we spend on providing services comes from other revenue streams, such as commercial income, grants and central government funding, some of which have been heavily impacted by the pandemic.

Our finances and challenges

Financial challenges remained for all councils during 2021-22 as they grappled with continuing to deal with the implications of the coronavirus pandemic and support economic recovery. Woking Borough Council was no different in facing these financial challenges.

We are an ambitious and forward-thinking council that has made significant investment into regeneration of the borough through residential, retail, office and leisure activity. In addition, the council has invested to acquire commercial estate that brings significant income back to the council in order to enhance the services delivered to support the borough's communities.

This level of ambition requires, and has taken, a bold 50-year vision and investment plan for the borough. The council has committed to this investment plan in areas where it can secure long-term improvements. The ambition recognises that it comes with a degree of risk and requires a high level of support in the short-term in order to build up sustainable operations that support the delivery of regeneration outcomes.

During 2021, the council commissioned a full, independent and comprehensive review of all its assets and liabilities and all companies in which it has an interest.

The independent review was undertaken by the professional services consultancy firm EY. See link below to read in full.

To support this report and make it more accessible and easier to understand, we produced a short video that provides an overview of the independent report - link below.

This independent review provided the council with insights into some useful areas that we will be focussing on to establish stronger financial strategies to continue investment into services in the short term and investments into regeneration for the future.

The outlook for 2022-23 and the medium term

The council has set budgets for 2022-23 which recognises the uncertain financial and economic climate the council is operating within. To protect frontline services for the most vulnerable, councillors agreed an increase in Council Tax of two per cent, the equivalent of an additional 10 pence a week for a Band D property.

Savings of £2.4m have been agreed which protects those services which provide the greatest contribution to the priorities of the council, whilst recognising that the council will need to find further efficiency measures, income generation and savings in order to balance budgets in the medium term.

Measuring our performance

It is important for us to establish a set of measures that we can use to monitor our performance against the priorities within this strategy.

As this strategy establishes a new set of priorities for the council, not all performance measures have been developed. This year (2022-2023) will be used to review and refresh these measures. The tables below therefore incorporate a draft set of measures that will be updated following this review.

Healthier communities

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Net additional new homes provided	303	147	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	High quality homes for all
Number of empty properties brought back into use through LA intervention	37	14	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
% of non-decent council homes	0.1	2.9	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Number of affordable homes delivered	22	36	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Total number of households in B&B, temporary accommodation and non-secure accommodation	148	191	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Average length of stay of homeless households in B&B, temporary accommodation and non-secure accommodation	312	342	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Average days void		30.13	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Number of fly-tipping incidents	1,253	1,705	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	Safe, thriving and sustainable communities
Number of fly-tipping enforcement actions	1,488	1,748	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Abandoned vehicles	97	96	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	

Continued →

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Satisfaction with street cleaning	74.2	83.8	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	Safe, thriving and sustainable communities
Satisfaction with landscaping	74.4	82.3	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Inspecting food premises	86	8	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Percentage of establishments with a food hygiene rating of 3 or better	96	96	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
% of residents that use council owned leisure facilities	0	0		Potential new indicator	

Engaged communities

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Percentage of those on the electoral register who voted	97.3	97.8	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	Informed and consulted residents
Number of residents registered on the residents' panel	N/A	N/A	New Indicator	TBC May 2022	
Satisfaction levels with Woking Borough Council services			66	TBC May 2022	

Greener communities

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Energy efficient council owned homes	68.5	69.1	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	Informed and consulted residents
Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestions	57.44	56.87	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Residual household waste per household (kg)	387.46	406	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Reduction in carbon footprint of the council's operations				Baseline established Quarter 4	Greener place leadership

Prospering communities

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Growth in the business base	5,055	5,335	5,450	TBC May 2022	A borough of opportunity
New business creation per head of population	121			TBC May 2022	
GVA per job filled	61,763	Summer 2022		TBC May 2022	
Job Seeker Allowance claimants	1.2%	4.4%	2.7%	TBC	
Unemployment	2.9%	3.2%	3.9%	May 2022	
Median gross weekly wages	£717.20	£662.20	£655.00	TBC	
Employment rate of working age population	89.7%	80.3%	76.6%	May 2022	
Self-employment rate of working age population	16.9%	6.9%	8.3%	TBC	
Business survival rates.				TBC May 2022	Strong and sustainable economy
▪ Year 1 (born 2019)	88%				
▪ Year 2 (born 2018)	73%				
Business births	790	775		TBC May 2022	
% occupied office and retail and industrial outlets:				TBC May 2022	
▪ Office	12.2%	11.8%	12%		
▪ Retail	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%		
▪ Industrial	4.2%	3.9%	3.8%		

A high performing council

Performance measure	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 Target	Corporate objective
Top 5% of earners who are:					A modern council with a progressive workforce
▪ women	31.8%	27.3%	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
▪ disabled	4.6%	4.6%			
▪ BME	0%	0%			
Average days lost through sickness	8.1	5.5	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	
Invoices paid on time	96	96	TBC May 2022	TBC May 2022	A high performing council
Savings achieved				New Indicator £2.427m	

Woking's 2022-23 Budget

On our community engagement platform, Woking Community Forum, we host a budget balancing tool. Have a go yourself at prioritising where the council spends its money. You can also submit your balanced budget so that we have a record and use this to inform future years funding priorities.

£4.5m

Health, Wellbeing and Cultural Development

Supporting your mind, body and soul delivering leisure services, health and wellbeing initiatives, sports development, children's and youth services and the arts.

£3.8m

Community Support

Supporting our multi-cultural communities through community engagement, community safety, family support and running our Centres for the Community, in addition to supporting local voluntary and community-led organisations.

£2.6m

Customer Support Services

Assisting our residents through our Housing Benefit and Council Tax services, licensing, revenue collection and customer services.

£5.3m

Corporate and Democratic Services

Keeping the democratic process running smoothly, whilst enabling the rest of the council to function efficiently, ensuring residents are kept informed, financial and legal services, human resources and information technology.

£4.6m

Sustaining the Local Economy

Helping our economy thrive through our business support and parking services.

£1.9m

Independent Living

Enabling elderly and vulnerable residents to continue to live independently through our housing support and handy person services, Careline, community meals and extra care services.

£5.1m

Housing

Ensuring we all have a roof over our heads by delivering homelessness services to those in need and maintaining housing standards within the private sector.

£10.9m

Environmental Quality

Maintaining our physical environment through delivering waste and recycling services, environmental health, environmental services, building services and emergency planning.

£6.8m

Place Making

Creating and managing the environment in which we live through planning and development services, estates management, green initiatives and infrastructure delivery.

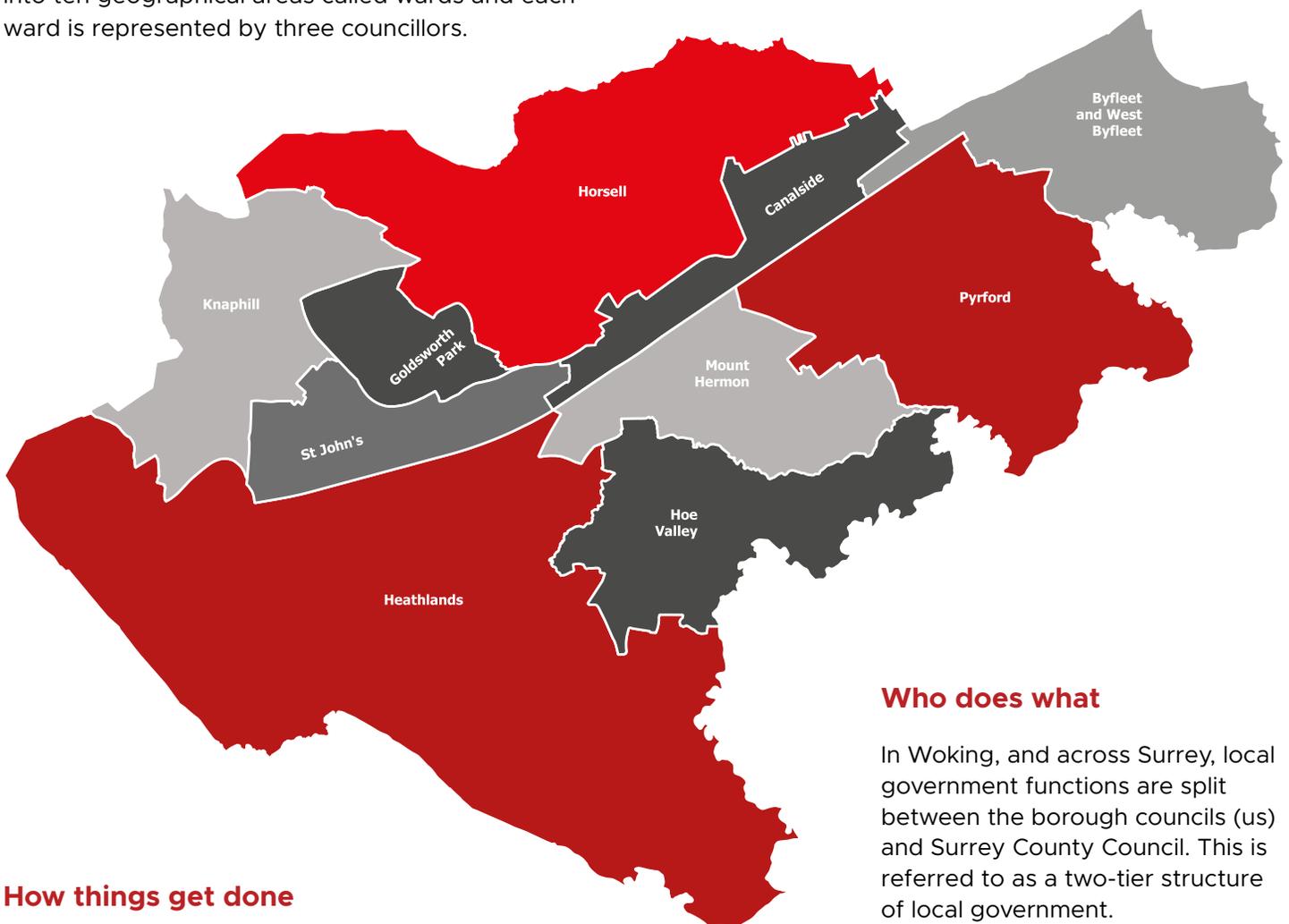


How the council operates

Woking Borough Council has 30 elected members, referred to as councillors. The borough is divided into ten geographical areas called wards and each ward is represented by three councillors.

How decisions get made

The Executive is accountable for decision-making within the council's overall policies and budget framework and recommends to the council on new policies and decisions outside its remit, ensuring the consistent application of corporate standards.



How things get done

The council employs officers to give advice, implement decisions and manage the council's day to day operations. The chief executive officer and senior officers which comprise the council's Corporate Leadership Team, are responsible for developing service delivery plans and managing the teams that carry out the work.

Who does what

In Woking, and across Surrey, local government functions are split between the borough councils (us) and Surrey County Council. This is referred to as a two-tier structure of local government.

We are responsible for local services such as planning, development control and housing, while the county council is responsible for county-wide functions such as education and social services.

Borough Council	County Council
Collection of council tax and business rates	Birth, Marriage and death registrations
Environmental health	Education
Housing	Fire and rescue
Leisure and culture	Highways and roadworks
Parking	Libraries
Parks and open spaces	Public health
Planning	Social care
Public toilets	Strategic planning
Sport	Trading standards
Street cleaning	Transport
Waste collection and recycling	Waste disposal



Additional case studies

Care and technology coming together

A vulnerable young resident, who suffers from a form of dementia, is able to continue to live independently thanks to support by carers and a range of Careline sensor technology. These include smoke alarm, heat, epilepsy and door sensors.

Door sensors notify the Careline team when the client opens their front door, which is especially important for residents that suffer from dementia.

When the client recently answered the door to a cold caller, the Careline door sensor was activated enabling the Careline team to hear the client's conversation with the caller. It quickly became evident that the caller was demanding money for non-existent work.

Realising immediately this was a bogus call, the Careline operator called Surrey Police who attended the address. Whilst this was not the purpose of the door sensor, the client was saved from handing over money and becoming a victim of crime.



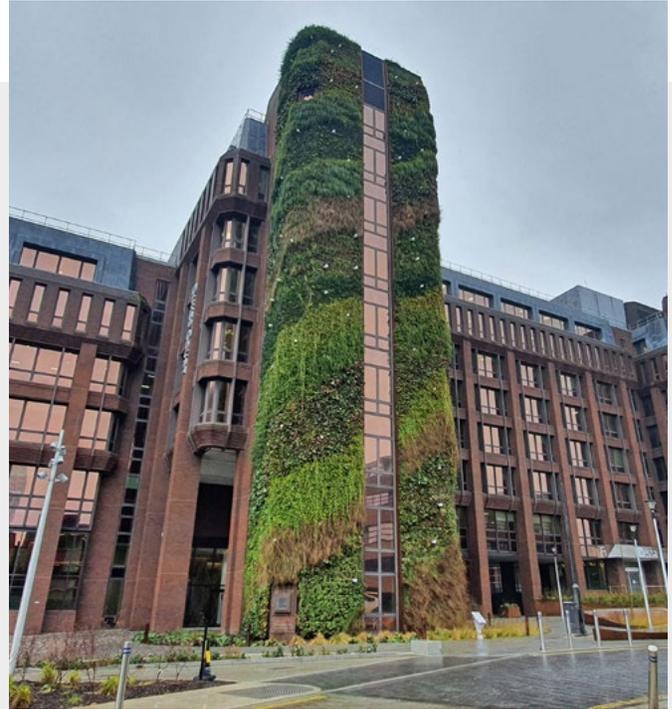
Woking's holistic and innovative approach to redevelopment and the environment

Through an innovative and holistic approach, we lead by example and achieved our desire to enhance, improve and restore the ecology and biodiversity within our borough, whilst reducing flood risk.

The Dukes Court development enhances the urban environment, helping to set the standard for the borough. This is an integrated redevelopment scheme, that takes underutilised urban space to create a thriving, diverse and safe space whilst helping local business to establish.

The Dukes Court external development used innovative techniques to reduce flood risk to the surrounding area and improve air and water quality, whilst increasing suitable habitat for wildlife in an urban environment.

A refreshing and dynamic open space has been created which incorporates rain gardens, tree planting and a green roof. The scheme is designed to hold the rainwater where it falls, treating the water for pollutants and slowly releasing the cleaner water to the river, therefore helping to reduce the flood risk to the surrounding area. The trees and specialist planting within the raingardens help to



breakdown pollutants whilst encouraging bees and butterflies, as well as other wildlife to the area.

The inclusion of the rain gardens, green wall and trees also help to improve air quality and reduce the heat island effect often associated with urban spaces which is expected to get worse in the future with the impact of climate change.

Even through small redevelopments, we are showcasing it is possible to improve and enhance the environment using pioneering integrated techniques and rethinking the way that we deal with water and our urban areas.

Welcoming businesses to Woking

BOC is part of Linde plc, a leading gases and engineering company operating in healthcare, electronics, aerospace, waste water treatment, clean energy technologies, chemical processing and many other industries.

It became clear that their office in Guildford, where they have been for 36 years, was too big for their needs and the building would need considerable investment. BOC decided that a new office was required within a 20 mile radius from their existing office.

Numerous offices were considered. The Forge in Woking offered BOC brand new, spacious, good connectivity, and importantly, close to town centre amenities and Woking Train Station.

The Forge Woking is different. It challenges the convention of what an office is and should be. It's modern and provides playful breakout and co-working spaces for occupiers. The Forge is officially cycle friendly, as staff have access to a cycle ramp that lets you ride into the building and down into the bike store and shower area.



Jim Mercer, BOC UK & Ireland Business President, said: “Woking is like a small city. We wanted to stay in Surrey and find a place with good facilities and great connectivity. With 20 to 30% of our employees living in Woking and a further 20 to 30% in Guildford and the rest commuting from the south east and London. We realised that Woking is perfectly positioned to accommodate employees and clients.”

The Forge is a five minute walk from Woking Train Station, providing excellent access to the rail network. With Heathrow, Gatwick and London all on our doorstep and being surrounded by local hotels, business meetings can be planned with ease.

Woking is home to some truly inspiring, forward thinking individuals and companies. We welcome BOC and their 240 employees.



www.woking.gov.uk