



GREENING GOLDSWORTH ROAD

**PLANNING
STATEMENT
ADDENDUM**

**For Goldsworth Road
Development LLP
July 2020**

By Carter Jonas

Carter Jonas

PLANNING STATEMENT ADDENDUM

GOLDSWORTH ROAD, WOKING

Full Planning Application for Residential-led mixed use development

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF GOLDSWORTH ROAD DEVELOPMENT LLP

JULY 2020

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Appendix 1 – Pre-application response letter

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement Addendum has been prepared further to the submission of a planning application submitted by Goldsworth Road Development LLP (“The Applicant”) to Woking Borough Council (“The Council”) (Reference PLAN/2020/0568).

1.2 The description of development for the planning application is as follows:

‘Demolition of all existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for a phased mixed-use scheme, comprising 965 residential units (Class C3), communal residential and operational spaces, commercial uses (Classes A1/A2/A3/A4/B1/D1/D2) at ground floor and homeless shelter (sui generis) within 5 blocks of varying heights of between 9 and 40 storeys (plus rooftop amenity) to the north and south sides of the site together with soft and hard landscaping including public realm works, highway alterations to Goldsworth Road, car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, ancillary facilities and plant (Environmental Statement submitted).’

1.3 The purpose of this Addendum is to respond to the comments made within the pre-application letter received from the Council on the 3 July 2020 and provide an indication where the relevant detailed information can be found within the suite of planning application documents. A copy of the pre-application response can be found at Appendix A and provides a detailed summary of the consultation process that was undertaken during the preparation stage of the planning application. The pre-application letter summarises the officer’s position as follows:

“I would regard a high density, high quality mixed use development as broadly acceptable in principle subject to the various detailed material planning considerations set out above.

I appreciate that positive steps have been made during the pre-application process in amending and refining the proposals in response to the comments of the DRP. I feel significant steps forward been made in design terms and in achieving a new area of public realm and based on the submitted information, I am broadly of the view that the proposal is appropriate in terms of height, bulk and massing....

.....The proposals could represent an exciting opportunity to assist in the regeneration of this part of the town centre.”

1.4 This Addendum should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement and wider planning application documentation submitted in June 2020.

1.5 Taken together, the application documents explain and assess all aspects of the proposed development. They demonstrate that significant benefits will flow from the proposed development and that in all respects there are no issues of principle or technical detail that would preclude the grant of planning permission for the proposed development.

Structure of Planning Statement Addendum

1.6 This Statement is structured as follows to provide a response to the key matters contained within the pre-application letter:

- **Section 2 – Response to key matters:**
 - Principle of development
 - Land use
 - Character and design
 - Transportation impact
 - Affordable housing
 - Impact on surrounding properties
 - Standard of accommodation
 - Housing mix
 - Flood risk and drainage
 - Wind microclimate
 - Sustainability
 - Contamination
 - Biodiversity
 - Network rail
 - Rail aggregates depot
 - Air traffic considerations
 - HIF Funding & CIL
- **Section 3 – Design Review Panel Key Recommendations**
- **Section 4 - Conclusion**

2 RESPONSE TO KEY MATTERS

Principle of development

- 2.1 The Applicant recognises the significant growth proposed for Woking within its Core Strategy policies. In particular is the level of development proposed to support the regeneration of Woking town centre in Policy CS2. The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the anticipated land uses for the town centre as outlined within the policy and will support the vitality and vibrancy of this part of the town centre.
- 2.2 We support the Council's view that there is a strong policy presumption both in the adopted Development Plan and in emerging Site Allocations DPD in favour of a high density, high quality, mixed use redevelopment of the Site.

Land use

- 2.3 As noted within the Planning Statement, the establishment of a mixed-use development on the Site already exists by the number of uses that currently operate across the individual buildings. As part of the proposals the York Road Project will be provided with a bespoke homeless shelter on land at Church Street West. Furthermore, the proposed development includes new premises for the Woking Railway Athletic Club. The retention and enhancement of these uses on the Site is supported by the Council.
- 2.4 In addition, it is noted that the Council would anticipate a variety of 'A' Class uses within the commercial units at ground level. The planning application proposes flexibility of these ground level units to support as wider a variety of businesses as possible, including the opportunity for the retention of some office floorspace via a shared/ co-working opportunity in one or more of the units. Equally, the opportunity for community uses to occupy the space became apparent during the public consultation of the proposals and so this has been incorporated as part of the flexible ground floor strategy. The use classes proposed for the flexible ground floor units are A1/A2/A3/A4/B1/D1/D2.
- 2.5 The Planning Statement is accompanied by detailed evidence to support the loss of the existing office floorspace on site including a Market Overview prepared by local agent Curchod & Co. This document can be found at Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement.

Character and design

- 2.6 The pre-application response summarises the context of the Site and historic planning position for land south of Goldsworth Road advising that as a result, the height of the proposal could be supported in this location and could be considered consistent with the emerging character and cluster of tall buildings to the west of the town centre. It goes on to note that critical to achieving a successful development is the approach to the bulk, massing and design of the buildings.

- 2.7 The importance of the design to the existing residents of Woking, local councillors, Council planning officers and the future inhabitants of the buildings has been at the forefront of the Applicant's strategy for achieving an exemplary scheme in Woking. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) and Planning Statement provide a detailed explanation of the design process undertaken to achieve the level of detail provided in the proposed development.
- 2.8 The Applicant and their design team met with the Woking Tall Building's Design Review Panel ("DRP") on three separate occasions. As per the Council's instructions within the pre-application letter, as far as possible all advice given by the DRP has been incorporated into the proposed development. A substantial section of the DAS has been drafted to provide the reader with an understanding of the comments received and the design team's response to how and where the DRP's comments have been incorporated within the proposed development. As noted within the pre-application response, the DRP's advice will be a significant material consideration which will have to be taken account of; paragraph 129 of the NPPF (2019) states that: "*Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements...In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels*".
- 2.9 The pre-application letter specifically advises that the DRP's advice is taken onboard with regards the tops of the T3 and BA buildings, how the three T1 buildings relate to each other, in addition to the comments relating to the panels and balcony balustrades and glazing to the south of the York Road Project building. The comments received on these key design areas have been successfully incorporated into the design, the evolution and final approach of the proposed development, which can be seen within the DAS.
- 2.10 The pre-application letters also noted that bay studies should be carried out to further inform the design of the oriel windows. In line with the Council's request, the planning application is supported by Bay Studies at a scale of 1:20 to provide greater clarity of the detailing proposed in these areas.
- 2.11 In response to the Council's comments regarding materials, an indication of the proposed palettes across all buildings and how they connect and establish a relationship within the new neighbourhood whilst reflecting local context is included within the Planning Statement and DAS.
- 2.12 The planning application is accompanied by a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement ("ES")) to assess the impact of the proposal on the Woking skyline and on key viewpoints including long distance views from neighbouring boroughs. The location and selection of views was established during the pre-application process with officers and the DRP which recommended additional views from the west should be incorporated. A total of 25 viewpoints is now assessed within the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment following feedback from planning officers and the DRP. As requested by the Council, this Planning Statement Addendum is submitted with the massing file for incorporation into the VU:CITY 3D model.

2.13 The greening of Goldsworth Road facilitated by its adaptation as a pedestrian and cycle only space has been welcomed by the Council, DRP and local residents during the public consultation. The design team has taken on board the advice provided by James Veats in the Council's Green Infrastructure team and the proposed species and scale of trees within the street has changed as a result to holistically tie in with the rest of the proposal as required by Policy DM2. The incorporation of green roofs also contributes towards achieving this key aim. In accordance with Policy DM1, significant detail has been given to ensuring that the proposed development will integrate with and successfully enhance the wider environment. The pedestrianisation of Goldsworth Road is agreed in principle with the highways authority and the Applicant is progressing detailed discussions on the management strategy with Surrey County Council ("SCC") to secure the long term care of the asset as required by Policy DM1.

Transportation impact

2.14 The sustainable location in which the Site is situated is acknowledged within the pre-application response received from council officers. In response to a requirement for some parking provision, the proposed development will provide 263 car parking spaces inclusive of:

- 29 accessible spaces;
- 7 spaces for WRAC members; and
- 5 Car Club spaces.

2.15 No short stay car parking spaces are provided for visitors or employees of the commercial units in an effort to promote car free journeys.

2.16 The Council's Climate Change SPD outlines that provision must be made for electric vehicle charging points at a ratio of 5% active 15% passive charging points. The proposed development exceeds these requirements by providing a ratio of 20% active and 20% passive in order to futureproof the proposed development.

2.17 With regards to the loss of two publicly accessible car club spaces on Goldsworth Road, the Applicant is working with SCC to identify an appropriate location for the relocation of the spaces.

2.18 The Council's Parking Supplementary Planning Document ("SPD") sets out that for residential development, a minimum of two cycle parking spaces is required per unit. However, the SPD does not set standards for flats and apartments, instead noting that this standard is applicable for houses (defined as 'family houses, up to 6 residents living in a single household'). This interpretation has been confirmed during pre-application discussions with the Council and SCC.

2.19 The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Statement that goes into greater detail regarding the justification for the cycle provision on site but in summary, a total of 1,064 long-stay residential cycle parking spaces will be provided at mezzanine level within three communal cycle stores. It is noted that neither the Council nor SCC set standards for residential short-stay cycle parking, for use by visitors. However, as the proposed development seeks to support and encourage travel by sustainable modes as far as possible, a total

of 42 such spaces will be provided and incorporated within the public realm, equating to one space per 40 residential units. Short-stay cycle parking will be provided in the form of Sheffield-type stands and located in easily accessible and convenient locations in relative proximity to the residential cores.

- 2.20 Given the flexibility of the commercial floorspace, it is not yet possible to accurately determine the proportion of cycle parking demand to be generated by staff (long-stay) and visitors (short-stay). Based on the location and nature of the proposed development, it is anticipated that higher cycle parking demand will be generated by visitors rather than staff. As such, a 75:25 split between short and long-stay cycle parking is proposed. This equates to 17 short-stay and five long-stay cycle parking spaces to support the commercial uses.
- 2.21 A total of 12 cycle parking spaces will be provided for staff of the York Road Project within a standalone cycle store in the proposed development.
- 2.22 Careful consideration has been given to the refuse and waste strategy for the proposed development. It is noted that collection of waste from a development of this scale on the highway would be undesirable and so collection for Buildings T1, T2 and T3 will be undertaken from the service road to the rear of the proposed development. The enhanced collection strategy for both the residential and commercial elements of the proposed development has been developed in association with Joint Waste Solutions during the pre-application stage and the details of the refuse and waste strategy can be found in the accompanying Waste Management Strategy prepared by WSP.

Affordable housing

- 2.23 The application is supported by an Affordable Housing Statement that provides further detail of the Applicant's position and should be read in conjunction with the Financial Viability Statement. In summary the proposed development includes provision of 48 new affordable residential units (5% provision) to be delivered on-site as intermediate tenure which could comprise Intermediate Rent, Discounted Sale and Shared Ownership properties to a range of affordability criteria.
- 2.24 The proposed approach secures a quantum of affordable housing on the basis of the Applicant adopting a constructive and collaborative approach to the affordable provision acknowledging the priority of the council for on-site provision and seeking to find a route to including a package without undermining the projects viability. Ensuring the proposed development represents a deliverable proposal is absolutely key to maintaining momentum on the wider redevelopment of the town centre. Delivering a consent which stalls quickly due to viability constraints will deliver none of the benefits associated with the proposed development.
- 2.25 It is also important that the provision of affordable housing is weighed up against the other significant benefits of the proposed development, namely:
- The provision of the homeless shelter – not only will this fit-for-purpose facility provide a much needed resource for vulnerable members of the community but it could enable other properties

currently used by the YRP for temporary accommodation to transfer back to permanent accommodation;

- The provision of a significant area of public realm – the introduction of much-needed green space to the town centre weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development; and
- The payment of £1,930,000 towards improvements to Victoria Arch (HIF funding gap tariff), approximately 19.3% of the total funding gap.

2.26 The Applicant is keen to emphasise that the viability of the proposed development should be considered and assessed on the basis of the financial evidence available and remains committed to continuing discussions on the above during the determination period of the planning application.

Impact on surrounding properties

2.27 The planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement that includes a detailed chapter assessment on Daylight & Sunlight, Overshadowing and Solar Glare. The assessments presented within the chapter demonstrate the likely impacts on daylight and sunlight availability as well as overshadowing at nearby sensitive receptors. The solar glare effects at sensitive viewpoints at the nearby road junctions and railway line are also tested and reported.

2.28 The assessment of daylight and sunlight amenity as well as overshadowing to communal courtyards and podiums internal to the proposed development is reported on separately within a standalone report accompanying the planning application.

2.29 Based on the context of the Site in terms of its town centre location within an area currently undergoing large scale regeneration and the previous resolution to grant for part of the Site, it is considered that the daylight and sunlight impacts of the proposed development on existing buildings is not unreasonable and that the proposed development achieves a satisfactory relationship with the adjoining properties and avoids harmful impact in accordance with Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy.

2.30 In terms of overlooking, the pre-application response identifies the general standards applied to new residential development but outlines that reduced distances may be acceptable in town centre locations. The separation distances across the proposed development is considered to be well suited to the urban context, ensuring that future residents achieve acceptable privacy and amenity levels. The separation distance between Buildings T1 and T2 is 22.2m, narrowing to 20.2m where T1 footprint 'steps' towards the courtyard. The separation distance between Buildings T2 and T3 is 26.17m, narrowing to 23.1m where T2 steps towards T3.

Standard of accommodation

2.31 All of the residential properties meet the Nationally Described Minimum Space Standards. The planning application is supported by an Internal Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing report to ensure that the proposed residential units also achieve an acceptable quality of outlook and an acceptable level of daylighting.

2.32 Overall, the results show that the proposed development will provide future occupants with good levels of daylight. 1809 (83%) out of all 2190 habitable rooms meet or exceed the levels of Average Daylight Factor (ADF) recommended by BRE, and 1597 (73%) achieve the recommended level for sky visibility (No-Sky Line, or NSL). It is worth noting that in many instances the levels of light within the proposed blocks far exceed the recommended levels, providing excellently daylit spaces for future occupants to enjoy in accordance with Policy CS21. In summary, the orientation of all dwellings ensure that outlook and daylight is achieved at an acceptable level across all dwellings in accordance with Policy CS21.

Housing mix

2.33 The pre-application response confirms that the proposed housing mix is broadly consistent with the aims of Policy CS11 in the context of the location of the Site, and with other town centre developments.

Drainage and flood risk

2.34 The Applicant's flood risk and drainage consultant has been in contact with the Council's flood risk and drainage engineer who has confirmed that the proposed strategy is acceptable.

Wind microclimate

2.35 A greater depth of detail regarding the wind tunnel testing that has been undertaken can be found within the ES. The Wind Microclimate Assessment contained within the ES considers the creation of undesirable wind speeds (resulting in effects to pedestrian comfort and safety) at ground level within the Site, around buildings surrounding the Site and within nearby areas of offsite public open space during the demolition and construction works. It also considers any impact within the Site at the proposed balcony and roof terrace levels, around buildings surrounding the Site and within nearby areas of offsite public open space once the proposed development is fully completed.

2.36 Mitigation measures were developed through wind tunnel testing to alleviate uncomfortable and unsafe wind conditions in localised areas within the Site. Approved cumulative developments identified within the 360m radius of the Site have been assessed in the wind tunnel model.

2.37 Once mitigation measures are implemented as part of the landscaping (to be secured by condition) and some relocation of balconies (incorporated in the final submitted scheme), the proposed development would not give rise to adverse effects with regards wind microclimate.

2.38 The quality of the open space proposed on site (both private and communal areas) has also been assessed within both the Wind Microclimate chapter of the ES and the standalone Daylight and Sunlight Amenity report. Both assessments confirm that, following mitigation, the amenity standards within the proposed development will be good for future residents.

Sustainability

2.39 The pre-application response outlines the reported exceedance of Policy CS22's target policy of 19% improvement on Part L Regulations at the time. This remains the situation and is confirmed within the accompanying Energy Statement that the proposed development will provide approximately a 40% improvement on Part L overall.

Contamination

2.40 A Phase 1 Land Contamination Report can be found at Appendix 1.3 of the ES as required by Policy DM8. A full Site Investigation Report will be submitted in due course which confirms that any existing contamination of the land or groundwater will be addressed by appropriate mitigation measures, including the remediation of existing contamination; and the proposed development will not cause the land or groundwater to become contaminated.

Biodiversity

2.41 The planning application is accompanied by a Bat Emergence Survey at Appendix 11.2 and confirms the presence of bats within two buildings on the Site. Recommended mitigation actions to be implemented under the European Protected Species Mitigation licence include:

- Supervised demolition of the roosts, which should be dismantled by hand overseen by the named licenced ecologist; and
- Provision of compensatory roosting space in newly constructed buildings.

2.42 Bat boxes will be hung from the trees along the railway cuttings immediately south of Site, or on poles, as replacement roosting spaces and as a shelter should any bats be disturbed during the demolition works. Mitigation recommendations also include implementation of a 'bat sensitive' lighting strategy designed to minimise disturbance to the commuting routes and foraging areas.

2.43 In accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy biodiversity enhancements will occur on the Site. The planning application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment that aims to quantify the predicted change in ecological value of the Site in light of the proposed development to assess compliance against draft national planning policy. Whilst the Biodiversity Net Gain is not yet mandated within local policy this assessment has been requested by the Survey Wildlife Trust who were consultees on this project.

2.44 As a result of this extensive 'greening', the proposed development stands to result in a net gain of 1.85 area based biodiversity units compared with pre-development value. This is equivalent to a total net increase of **916.73%** in ecological value which exceeds the 10% net gain target set by emerging national policy.

Network Rail

2.45 As requested, a Solar Glare Assessment has been undertaken and submitted as part of the planning application. Pre-application discussions have also been undertaken with Network Rail to provide information regarding the improvements from the 2016 scheme.

Rail Aggregate Depot

2.46 The Applicant has engaged with the Day Group and Surrey County Council's Mineral and Waste Team during the pre-application process to understand any concerns or queries that the site operators may have. The proposed development has been designed to mitigate, as far as possible, any suggested impact of the operations from the Aggregates Yard on the amenity of the future residents of the proposed development.

Air traffic considerations

2.47 We have engaged with a number of aviation organisations during the pre-application consultation stage including NATS and nearby Fairoaks Airport. NATS has since responded to the Council's consultation confirming 'no objection' to the proposals.

Impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)

2.48 The requirement for new residential development proposed beyond a 400m threshold, but within 5 kilometres of the TBH SPA boundary to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of SANG and SAMM is acknowledged within the planning application and factored into the CIL and S106 costs that will be made by the Applicant.

HIF and CIL

2.49 The Applicant is aware of the recently introduced HIF Recovery Strategy and requirement to pay CIL. Both are factored into the viability of the proposed development as part of the wider package of benefits that the proposed development offers.

3 DESIGN REVIEW PANEL KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The pre-application response summarises that in relation to the DRP, *“It would be important that the recommendations are taken on board and addressed as part of any future planning application; if this is done then Officers would be satisfied that the proposal has been through a successful Design Review process as required by the Woking Design SPD”*.

3.2 The letter sets out the final recommendations made by the DRP:

“The panel commend the applicant and design teams on their thorough presentation and efforts in progressing the proposal through a series of design reviews in such an exemplary manner. Since the previous review the overall proposal has significantly improved; the concept and design strategy are sound, and the proposal now requires refinement of particular elevational design elements and architectural details. The panel is confident the design team will successfully resolve these to deliver a well-considered addition to Woking Town Centre.

Key recommendations

- 1. The central green street on Goldsworth Road should be refined to ensure the layout responds to the wider public realm proposal and connections across the street.*
- 2. The interface between the inner crystalline form and outer hard shell of The Geodes (T3 and BA towers) requires further work to ensure these elements appear as distinct from all perspectives; this will ensure the overall ‘geode’ concept is not undermined.*
- 3. The design of the top of The Geodes should be reconsidered to articulate an extruded form throughout and ensure an elegant design with an emphasised verticality.*
- 4. The elevational composition and treatment of The Foothills (T1 and T2 buildings) should be reconsidered so that this is informed by a clear rationale that relates to the layout and form and distinctly articulates the individual buildings.*
- 5. The building entrances and canopies should be reconsidered to ensure they articulate the hierarchy of entrances and building scale.*
- 6. The placement and arrangement of the patterned vertical panels and balustrades in the York Road Project building should be reconsidered to ensure these better relate to each other and achieve a balanced and elegant appearance.”*

3.3 The DAS provides a greater level of detail in outlining how the design team has responded to the recommendations in its final design. However, in summary following receipt of the proposed recommendations, the following changes have been incorporated into the design.

The Geode Buildings

3.4 The Panel were clear that the Geode buildings would be more successful if they were considered as extruded forms rather than applying a more traditional tripartite structure of base, middle and top. We’ve responded to this by extending the concrete frame to the top of the building, maintaining a consistent infill brick colour and on the railway elevation taking the balconies up to its extent. In a similar vein, the horizontal band was reviewed that differentiates the commercial units at the base of the geode to achieve more continuity with the above facades. In terms of detail the design team also reviewed the scale of the shadow gap between the vertical and horizontal

concrete panels to clarify this reading and looked at the connections between the leading edge balconies and the concrete frame to create the hierarchy discussed during the sessions.

The Foothills

3.5 The height of the expressed frame to the northern edges of the foothill buildings was also reviewed to improve the proportion of these buildings and explore ways to interrupt the deeper concrete horizontals to the western elevation to allow for a clearer reading of the three building parts. The canopies have also been narrowed at ground level so that these sit within the openings.

The Homeless Shelter

3.6 The brick piers to the top of the building have been trimmed, only used a double height 'opening' around the buildings entrance and look at the use of a series of panels to the balcony to improve the proportion of this detail. To the building's rear we have introduced the angled window's suggested by the panel.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This Planning Statement Addendum responds succinctly to the matters raised within the Council's pre-application response dated 3rd July 2020. It provides a direct response where necessary and/or provide an indication where the technical detail can be found within the suite of planning application documents that support the proposed development (Council ref. PLAN/2020/0568).
- 4.2 In terms of the design process that the Applicant has undertaken, the Council can be confident that the recommendations proposed by the DRP have been taken on board and addressed within the planning application, and therefore officers can be satisfied that the proposed development has been through a successful Design Review process as required by the Design SPD.
- 4.3 Equally the technical documents that support the planning application have addressed all matters raised during the extensive pre-application process to support the design of the proposed development. This Addendum should be read in conjunction with the suite of documentation submitted with the planning application which provides the context and depth of detail to address planning policy.
- 4.4 Taken as a whole, the proposed development is in general accordance with the Development Plan. There are significant benefits that would flow from the scheme that outweigh any conflict with planning policy.
- 4.5 The suite of drawings and application documentation assess all aspects of the application proposals and conclude that the proposed development is in general accordance with national, regional and local planning policy and the planning balance is weighted in favour of granting planning permission.
- 4.6 In all these circumstances, planning permission can and should be granted in accordance with the submitted application which is supported by the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" introduced by the NPPF and recognised at Policy CS25 of the Council's Core Strategy.

APPENDIX 1



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By email

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3 July 2020

Dear Ms. Hutchison,

Proposal: Pre application advice for the redevelopment of Goldsworth Road to provide 965x residential units, commercial floorspace, new homeless shelter for the York Road Project, parking and highways alterations to Goldsworth Road.

Location: Land at Goldsworth Road

I have set out below a summary of what I would consider to be the main material planning considerations with your most recent submission. I have also taken account of the comments from Design South East dated 26 February, 6 May and 9 June following on from the Design Review Panel Meetings on 7 February, 21 April and 20 May.

Planning Constraints:

- Urban Area
- Woking Town Centre
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA ZoneB (400m-5km)
- Adjacent Primary Shopping Area
- Adjacent Proposal Site 5/m (Victoria Square)
- Adjacent Primary Shopping Frontage

Relevant Planning Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019):

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

Section 10 - Supporting high quality communications

Section 11 - Making effective use of land

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment



Woking Core Strategy (2012):

Spatial Vision

- CS1 - Spatial strategy for Woking Borough
- CS2 - Woking Town Centre
- CS7 - Biodiversity and nature conservation
- CS8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas
- CS9 - Flooding and Water Management
- CS10 - Housing provision and distribution
- CS11 - Housing mix
- CS12 - Affordable housing
- CS13 - Older people and vulnerable groups
- CS15 - Sustainable economic development
- CS16 - Infrastructure delivery
- CS17 - Open space, green infrastructure, sport and recreation
- CS18 - Transport and accessibility
- CS19 - Social and community infrastructure
- CS20 - Heritage and conservation
- CS21 - Design
- CS22 - Sustainable construction
- CS23 - Renewable and low carbon energy generation
- CS24 - Woking's landscape and townscape
- CS25 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Development Management Policies DPD (2016):

- DM1 - Green Infrastructure Opportunities
- DM2 - Trees and Landscaping
- DM6 - Air and Water Quality
- DM7 - Noise and Light Pollution
- DM8 - Land Contamination and Hazards
- DM16 - Servicing Development
- DM17 - Public Realm
- DM18 - Advertising and Signs
- DM19 - Shopfronts
- DM20 - Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Parking Standards (2018)
- Woking Design (2015)
- Affordable Housing Delivery (2014)
- Climate Change (2013)
- Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2008)

Other Material Considerations:

- Planning Practice Guidance – Build to Rent (September 2018)
- Draft Site Allocations DPD (2018)
- South East Plan (2009) (Saved policy) NRM6 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy 2010-2015
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2015)
- Waste and recycling provisions for new residential developments



Heritage of Woking (2000)
Woking Character Study (2010)
Woking Economic Development Strategy 2012-2017
Wind Microclimate and Buildings (2011) BRE
Site Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2011) BRE
Woking Public Art Strategy (2007)

Principle of Development:

The proposed site is approximately 1.1ha with the south section of the site comprising office buildings and the Woking Railway Athletic Club and the north section comprising office and commercial buildings with Goldsworth Road splitting the site.

The Core Strategy's (2012) 'Spatial Vision' for the borough states that "*Woking will be a regional focus of economic prosperity centred on a vibrant, enhanced town centre that provides a good range of quality shops, jobs, cultural facilities, services and infrastructure to cater for the Borough's needs...*".

Core Strategy (2012) policy CS2 sets out the planning policies for Woking Town Centre and the reasoned justification for policy CS2 states that:

"Woking Town Centre is an important centre of economic activity and key interchange on the rail network. It is the largest centre in the Borough and a primary centre in the context of the South East. The Core Strategy evidence base identifies potential for significant additional commercial and residential development in Woking Town Centre over the plan period, as set out in the policy. Investment of an appropriate level and scale will be promoted to enable the town centre to grow and evolve significantly, enhancing its retail offer and role as a thriving employment centre. Development of a dynamic and successful town centre is central to the achievement of sustainable development in the Borough".

Core Strategy (2012) policy CS1 'A Spatial strategy for Woking Borough' sets ambitious targets for new development in the Borough in the Core Strategy plan period of 2012-2027 including approximately:

- 4,964 net additional dwellings (2,180 of which in town centre)
- 28,000 m² of additional office floorspace (27,000m² of which in town centre)
- 93,900 m² of additional retail floorspace (75,300m² of which in town centre)

Policy CS1 seeks to direct most new development to previously developed land in in town, district and local centres which offer the best access to a range of services and facilities and states that:

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

The proposed site falls within the Site Allocations DPD with the site split across three proposal sites - UA11, UA12 and UA13. UA11 and UA13 seek a mixed use development comprising retail, office and residential including affordable housing and UA12 is allocated for office development. Following the examination in December 2019, the LPA is still awaiting the Planning Inspectorates decision.



There is therefore a strong planning policy presumption in favour of a high density, high quality, mixed use redevelopment of the proposal site however the loss of the existing uses on the site and the principle of proposed new uses must also be examined as set out below.

Land uses:

The site currently includes a variety of uses including Offices (Use class B1), Woking Railway Athletic Club (WRAC) (Use class A4) and centre used by the York Road Project. The centre used by the York Road Project received a two year temporary permission (PLAN/2015/0841) for a change of use from a Wine Bar (Use Class A4) into a Training Centre (Use Class D1) in 2015, the building has remained in use as a training centre.

Policy CS2 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) establishes the town centre as the preferred location for 'town centre uses' which include cultural and entertainment facilities and states that '*The loss of existing cultural and entertainment facilities within the town centre will be resisted, unless there is no demand for such facilities or demand can be met from alternative provision within the town centre either through new or co-located facilities*'.

Policy CS2 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states that development of the town centre will be achieved through the:

1. Mixed-use high density redevelopment of existing sites
2. Refurbishment of outmoded sites
3. Intensification of existing sites
4. Change of use of existing employment uses where this will not undermine the delivery of the proposed development set out in the policy and the other objectives of the Core Strategy
5. Safeguarding of existing office floorspace where there is evidence to justify that.

It is noted that space for the WRAC and York Road Project will be relocated within the proposal and the commercial units fronting the public realm would have flexible uses. It is also noted that the applicant has engaged with both WRAC and the York Road Project to ensure the proposed accommodation meets their needs. It is currently not known what use classes are proposed within the commercial units at ground floor and you would like the size and use class to be flexible. I would advise that the LPA would expect a variety of 'A' class uses at ground level with active frontages onto the public realm. If no office floorspace is proposed with the development then the planning application would need to be supported by evidence to justify the loss of the existing office floorspace within the application site.

Character and Design:

Policy CS1 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) establishes Woking Town Centre as the primary focus for sustainable growth and states that '*In the town centre, well designed, high density development that could include tall buildings and which enhances its image will be encouraged, but without comprising on its character and appearance and that of nearby areas*'.

Policy CS2 places great weight on high quality development in the town centre and states that '*New Development proposals should deliver high quality, well designed public spaces and buildings, which make efficient use of land, contribute to the functionality of the centre and add to its attractiveness and competitiveness*'.



Policy CS21 'Design' states that tall buildings can be supported in the town centre where they are well designed and can be justified within their context requires development proposals to *'respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area in which they are situated, paying due regard to the scale, height, proportions, building lines, layout, materials and other characteristics of adjoining buildings and land'*.

Section 12 of the NPPF (2019) states that *'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'* and requires development proposals to *"add to the overall quality of the area..."*, to be *"visually attractive as a result of good architecture..."* and *"sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment..."*.

The Woking Design (2015) SPD establishes that the criteria against which tall buildings will be considered and include being of exceptional design quality, contributing positively to Heritage Assets, impacts on key views and local environmental impacts.

The proposal includes T1 (12, 16 and 20 storeys), T2 (20 and 28 storeys) and T3 (41 storeys) sited to the south of Goldsworth Road and BA (28 storeys) sited the north of Goldsworth Road with a new area of public realm running through the site created from the closure of Goldsworth Road. The York Road Project (9 storeys) building would front Church Street West. There is a resolution to grant planning permission (PLAN/2016/0742) for a phased development within part of the site at 20-32 Goldsworth Road in 3 blocks comprising 35 storeys, 26 and 20 storeys and 18, 15 and 11 storeys. The legal agreement has never been signed. The Victoria Square development includes building heights of 34, 30 and 23 storeys and is currently under construction to the east of the application site. It is considered that the height of the proposal could be supported in this location and could be considered consistent with the emerging character and cluster of tall buildings to the west of the town centre however the bulk massing and design of the building would be critical in achieving an acceptable development.

I note the comments of the DRP who make some important observations and recommendations and I would encourage you to take on-board their comments and make appropriate amendments to the scheme, as with the previous DRPs. Whilst the outcome of the Design Review does not necessarily determine the LPA's position on an application, it will be a significant material consideration which will have to be taken account of; paragraph 129 of the NPPF (2019) states that *"Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements...In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels"*.

Broadly speaking, successful tall buildings should exhibit high quality design and materials, should relate well to the street scene at ground floor level and should be 'slender' in appearance in order to avoid appearing as overly bulky or overbearing features in the townscape. The layout of the development in separate blocks with T1 and T2 comprising of stepped linear blocks and T3 and BA with staggered frontages onto Goldsworth Road allows for visual separation between the buildings and allows for greater light penetration around the buildings and through to the north of the site.

I would advise that the comments from the DRP regarding the tops of the T3 and BA buildings and how the three T1 buildings relate to each other are taken on board in addition to the comments relating to the panels and balcony balustrades and glazing to the south of the York Road Project building. Bay studies



should be carried out to further inform the design of the oriel windows that have been introduced to the Foothills to ensure they relate well to the scale and massing of the building.

Submitted information has indicated proposed palettes of materials of the Geodes, Foothills and YRP, any external materials however would need to be of a high quality and should seek to respond to local context. The external materials of the buildings should avoid being overly reflective in order to avoid glare.

Consideration would need to be given on the townscape of Woking and the impact of the proposal on the skyline and on key viewpoints, including long distance view points from neighbouring boroughs. The location of viewpoints has been previously discussed, the DRP has recommended that the views of the towers from afar should be considered and there should be more views from the west of the proposal from surrounding streets. You may wish to consider some adding some additional views from the west into the submitted Townscape and Visual Assessment.

With regards to the podium the DRP has noted that the podium connecting the T1, T2 and T3 buildings appears to have the same red brick as the T2 building. Using a different brick colour should be considered to allow the podium and T2 building to be differentiated. It is considered that the planters to the elevations of the car park works well.

As previously indicated, the Council has recently started using 'VU.CITY' software which maps Woking Town Centre in 3D and allows for proposed developments to be inserted into the software. This will form part of the assessment of this and similar schemes so I would appreciate if you could provide us with a massing file for your scheme to use with this software. Without this information, it is difficult to fully evaluate the townscape impact of the development; please therefore provide the model for us to drop into the software. The file must meet the following criteria:

- **FBX (Filmbox) Versions 2011-2016 only**
- **Size Limit: 128MB per file**
- Files must be geo-located in OS space
- Models must be imported in the same scale they were created in
- We will also need to know the source program (VU.CITY currently accepts AutoCad, 3DSMax, Rhino, SketchUp and Revit)

The proposal includes the closure of Goldsworth Road and creation of a new area of public realm. The area of public realm has progressed throughout the pre application. The introduction of green roofs is positive. James Veats was mainly encouraged by the proposed landscaping. His main concern was the trees in planters as this raises long term management issues as they will outgrow their containers in the not too distant future. The DRP also suggested introducing tree planters. The size of container, species selection and irrigation would be the main factors. With regards to species James has advised Alnus is a species that in this area suffers from phytophthora so is unsuitable and suggests species such as Crataegus for the native buffer and perhaps Ginkgo biloba for the street or feature tree. With regards to orchard trees, while they are great for wildlife, insects etc. they do have drawbacks for public areas with fruit dropping, this should be considered in the final plans.

The underground structures should be large enough to enable the tree species selected to get to maturity to gain the maximum benefits. Irrigation and maintenance for the vertical planters on the carpark should be carefully considered.



As previously advised the pedestrianisation and management of Goldsworth Road is agreed by the Highway Authority in principle, however the detail is yet to be sorted, and is currently too early to progress these discussions until further detail is known.

Transportation Impact:

The proposal site is located in a highly sustainable location in Woking Town Centre and is positioned close to the train station and the amenities of the town centre. Supplementary Planning Document 'Parking Standards' (2018) set minimum standards for residential development however the SPD makes clear that provision below the minimum standards can be considered in Woking Town Centre.

Whilst there is a recognised need to focus development towards sustainable locations which are well-served by transport links and local services and to promote non-car based travel, I would advise that parking can be contentious issue locally and would advise that a development of this scale should make some provision for parking. I note the proposed provision of 270 parking spaces at first and second floor would be split across the three phases. It is unclear if any spaces would be for the commercial units. The Council's Climate Change SPD (2013) requires car parks to achieve at least 5% 'active' electric vehicle charging points along with 15% 'passive' spaces.

You have advised that SYSTRA has engaged with SCC to understand the demand for car club in Woking. It is noted that it is proposed to provide five car club spaces at podium level for residents use. The closure of Goldsworth Road would result in the loss of two publically accessible on street car club spaces. The proposal would also need to re provide these spaces in a publically accessible location.

The Council's Parking Standards SPD (2018) requires two spaces per dwelling plus provision for commercial uses. It is proposed to provide around 1000 cycle spaces within T1, T2, T2 and BA, this would fall short of the requirements in the SPD. Any shortfall in cycle standards would need to be justified.

Adequate bin storage areas would be required and I would refer to the capacity, storage and collection requirements and other detailed guidance set out in the Council's 'Waste and recycling provisions for new residential developments' document. I have previously advised you to contact Sarah Beck at Joint Waste Solutions who now manage the waste collection services in Woking to discuss capacity and service arrangements. I would advise that the general standard we would apply would be one 1,100litre refuse and recycling bin per five flats.

A bin store is proposed within T1, T2, T2 and BA with WRAC and YRP having separate bin storage. Bin collections for a development of this size can lead to refuse collection vehicles collecting from the development for prolonged periods of time and it would therefore be undesirable for collections to take place from the highway. Careful consideration would therefore need to be given to where and how refuse would be collected from the building. Collection operatives are unable to wheel the bins more than 10m.

Submitted information indicates refuse collection vehicles would access the bins store using the service road. The refuse collection vehicle serving BA should be positioned so it does not have an impact on the vehicle drop off loop, fire tender access or Carlos access requirement. The refuse collection vehicle serving T1, T2 and T3 would use the service road that is also used by the commercial units. The service yard should have capacity so the refuse collection vehicle does not impact on commercial units during collection. The planning application should also consider the collection of commercial waste.



Any planning application would need to be accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Waste Management Strategy addressing the above issues. The County Highway Authority would be consulted on any planning application and would need to be satisfied with the level of parking provision, the access and servicing arrangements and the overall transportation impact of the proposal. Waste Services will also be consulted and have to be satisfied with the capacity, storage and collection of waste and recycling.

Affordable Housing:

I would advise that affordable housing is a contentious issue locally and that a development of this scale should provide affordable housing.

In accordance with Policy CS12 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012), the Council would expect 40% of dwellings to be affordable. The preference is for on-site affordable housing provision which would need to comply with the definitions of affordable housing set out in the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD (2014). Policy CS12 is supported by the Affordable Housing Delivery SPD (2014) which states that the level of affordable housing required will take account of the financial viability of developing the site and sets out what the LPA considers to constitute affordable housing. You have advised that affordable will be provided but that cost planning is still ongoing which will be fed into the viability of the scheme.

I am aware you have contacted Colin Hall who has advised the affordable requirement in Woking is still predominantly for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings. Although any proposed affordable housing mix would need to be justified in your Planning Statement.

If a viability argument is forwarded then this would need to be in the form of a viability assessment using an approved model. The LPA will normally use Kempton Carr Croft as its consultants in this regard and would expect the applicants to meet the LPA's costs in using consultants to assess these submissions. If it is demonstrated that it is unviable to provide a policy compliant contribution in the current climate, an 'overage' agreement will be sought to reclaim a proportion of any additional profits made as a result of an upturn in property prices.

Impact on Surrounding Properties:

Any development proposal should carefully consider the potential impact on surrounding neighbours in terms of loss of light, overlooking and overbearing impacts. Any planning application should be accompanied by a comprehensive Daylight and Sunlight Assessment which assesses the impact on both existing surrounding neighbours and developments which are under construction or have planning permission (Victoria Square for example) and I would also suggest that the assessment should include a 'sun on the ground' assessment with regards to the new public realm created as part of the proposal and the communal roof terrace. In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, the Council's 'Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight' SPD (2008) recommends a minimum 'front-to-front' separation distance of 15m and 'back-to-back' separation distance of 30m for developments over three storeys however reduced distances may be acceptable in town centre locations.

Standard of Accommodation:

All the proposed residential units appear to meet the minimum space standards in the National Technical Housing Standards (2015). Residential units should also achieve an acceptable quality of outlook and an acceptable level of daylighting; I would advise that any submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment should also include an assessment of residential units within the development itself. It is noted that balconies have been incorporated to provide private amenity space in addition to roof terraces and



podium courtyards for all residents to use. I would considered providing an appropriate buffer and screening between the podium courtyards and residents units that front onto the courtyards.

With regards to the relationship between the YRP and BA the DRP has advised the glazing on the south side of the YRP building could be angled or the elevation could be serrated so that there isn't a need for a screen on the outlook, and instead this elevation could address the gap west of the BA building. The DRP has also suggested that the design team should continue to explore further opportunities to improve the quality of internal circulation spaces by increasing natural daylight and optimising access routes and connections to the main entrance.

Housing Mix:

A good mix of unit sizes would be required as set out by Policy CS11 of Woking Core Strategy (2012). This policy requires proposals to address local housing needs as evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which identifies a general need for family accommodation of two bedrooms or more. However policy CS11 states that "*Lower proportions of family accommodation (2+ bedroom units which may be houses or flats) will be acceptable in locations in the Borough such as the town and district centres that are suitable for higher density developments. Equally, lower proportions of smaller units will be acceptable in areas of existing low residential density where the character of the area will not be compromised*". The submission identifies the following proportions bedroom units:

- Studio and one bedroom: 60%
- Two bedroom: 38%
- Three bedroom 2%

The above housing mix is broadly consistent with the aims of policy CS11, the context of the proposal site's location and with other town centre developments.

Drainage and Flood Risk:

Parts of the proposal site and surrounding area are classified as being at risk from surface water flooding. Details of an appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUDS) would be required up-front to accompany any planning application. I understand a Civil Engineer from Price and Myers has been in contact with Katherine Waters (WBC Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer), who has provided comments on the submitted information.

Wind Microclimate:

Tall buildings, particularly in combination with existing or proposed tall buildings, can have a significant impact on the wind microclimate of the surrounding area. I would advise that any planning application should be accompanied by a detailed assessment of existing and proposed wind speeds and conditions in the area and the assessment should consider the cumulative effect in combination with surrounding developments which are under construction, approved or proposed.

The DRP has advised the microclimate likely to be created, needs to be further explored and the response to it justified. There is the potential for some of the private and communal open spaces to have a limited amount of sunlight (despite the evident and positive thought that has gone into their alignment). Coupled with the likely wind effect, this may undermine the quality of the open spaces and may mean they won't be properly used. The impact of microclimate on balconies should also be considered.



It is noted that following wind tunnel testing the tree planting along Goldsworth Road and within the podium courtyards has been amended to reduce wind speeds in the Eastern and Western Squares and the podium courtyards and multi stem trees have been chosen to assist in mitigating the wind.

To mitigate potential negative impacts on wind microclimate it is often necessary to introduce external modifications to proposed developments. Wind tunnel testing has recently resulted in amendments to a town centre scheme being necessary; it is encouraging that some wind tunnel testing has already been carried out.

Sustainability:

Woking Town Centre features an existing Combined Heat and Power (CHP) network which is a source of sustainable power and hot water in the town centre. Policy CS22 of the Woking Core Strategy requires developments in the town centre to connect to the CHP network unless suitable alternatives can be demonstrated. You have previously advised that you have been engaging with ThamesWey.

Policy CS22 requires a 19% improvement on Part L Building Regulations 2013 for residential and BREEAM very good standard for non-residential development over 1,000sqm. You have advised these targets will be exceeded. The planning application should be supported by an energy statement.

Contamination:

I would advise that there is potential for land contamination on the proposal site which would need to be adequately investigated and remediated as part of a development proposal.

Biodiversity:

Although the proposal site is within an urban location, given the size of the site and range of buildings to be demolished, there is the possibility of bats being present in the buildings. Core Strategy (2012) policy CS7 also seeks biodiversity enhancements as part of development proposals; the proposal represents an opportunity to enhance biodiversity on the proposal site. The potential impact on biodiversity would be a consideration as part of a planning application.

Network Rail:

Due to the close proximity of the proposal site to the railway line and the scale of the proposed development, I would advise early consultation with Network Rail. Network Rail are consulted on planning applications in close proximity to the railway and may have comments on material finishes for example in terms of the potential glare they can cause to train drivers. Other schemes in the town centre have provided a glare assessment to address this point.

Rail aggregate depot:

Due to the close proximity to rail aggregate depot, I would advise early engagement with Day Group Ltd – the operators of the rail aggregates depot and Surrey County Council Minerals & Waste Policy Team. The Day Group Ltd recently raised an objection to a planning application at New Central Development which was in close proximity to the site.

Air Traffic Considerations:

As with any tall building, the LPA would consult with the Civil Aviation Authority, National Air Traffic Services and local aerodromes with regards to the potential impact on air traffic and radar signals etc. You may wish to consult with these bodies at an early stage in order to understand any requirements they may have. I would advise that NATS have recently raised concerns about the nearby Concord



House proposal which is currently under consideration and Fairoaks Airport recently objected to tall buildings at both Crown Place and BHS.

Impact on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA):

The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) has been identified as an internationally important site of nature conservation and has been given the highest degree of protection. Policy CS8 of the Woking Core Strategy states that any proposal with potential significant impacts (alone or in combination with other relevant developments) on the TBH SPA will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment to determine the need for Appropriate Assessment. Following recent European Court of Justice rulings, a full and precise analysis of the measures capable of avoiding or reducing any significant effects on European sites must be carried out at an 'Appropriate Assessment' stage rather than taken into consideration at screening stage, for the purposes of the Habitats Directive (as interpreted into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the "Habitat Regulations 2017")). An Appropriate Assessment will therefore need to be undertaken as part of a planning application and Natural England would be consulted.

Policy CS8 of Woking Core Strategy (2012) requires new residential development beyond a 400m threshold, but within 5 kilometres of the TBH SPA boundary to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM), to avoid impacts of such development on the SPA. The SANG and Landowner Payment elements of the SPA tariff are encompassed within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), however the SAMM element of the SPA tariff is required to be addressed outside of CIL. The required contribution for one bedroom dwellings is £528 per dwelling, for two bedroom dwellings it is £716 and for three bedroom dwellings it is £943. This financial contribution would be secured by legal agreement.

A strategy statement for the expansion of SANG provision is still being drafted. It is expected that the work to extend two of the existing SANGs will be completed within 12 months.

HIF funding:

The HIF recovery strategy seeks to bridge the gap between the total scheme cost (£115 million) and the HIF grant (£95 million). Development will need to make a minimum standard contribution of £2,000 per unit for residential development within the town centre. This funding recovery strategy will apply with immediate effect and continue to apply up until at least 2030, when it is expected that the HIF sites would have been delivered. Further information can be found on the Council's website: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/policies-and-guidance/hif-recovery-strategy-woking-town>.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

The proposal would also be liable to make a contribution towards the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is calculated based on floor area; the current rate is £75 per square metre plus indexation. The floor area of existing buildings can be discounted from the overall charge; further information can be found on our website: <http://www.woking2027.info/infrastructure>.

Summary:

I would regard a high density, high quality mixed use development as broadly acceptable in principle subject to the various detailed material planning considerations set out above.

I appreciate that positive steps have been made during the pre-application process in amending and refining the proposals in response to the comments of the DRP. I feel significant steps forward have



been made in design terms and in achieving a new area of public realm and based on the submitted information, I am broadly of the view that the proposal is appropriate in terms of height, bulk and massing.

I feel the most recent comments from the DRP dated 09.06.2020 are more positive than previous comments and I would draw attention to the following key excerpt which I think best summarises the DRP's position:

"The panel commend the applicant and design teams on their thorough presentation and efforts in progressing the proposal through a series of design reviews in such an exemplary manner. Since the previous review the overall proposal has significantly improved; the concept and design strategy are sound, and the proposal now requires refinement of particular elevational design elements and architectural details. The panel is confident the design team will successfully resolve these to deliver a well-considered addition to Woking Town Centre.

Key recommendations

- 1. The central green street on Goldsworth Road should be refined to ensure the layout responds to the wider public realm proposal and connections across the street.*
- 2. The interface between the inner crystalline form and outer hard shell of The Geodes (T3 and BA towers) requires further work to ensure these elements appear as distinct from all perspectives; this will ensure the overall 'geode' concept is not undermined.*
- 3. The design of the top of The Geodes should be reconsidered to articulate an extruded form throughout and ensure an elegant design with an emphasised verticality.*
- 4. The elevational composition and treatment of The Foothills (T1 and T2 buildings) should be reconsidered so that this is informed by a clear rationale that relates to the layout and form and distinctly articulates the individual buildings.*
- 5. The building entrances and canopies should be reconsidered to ensure they articulate the hierarchy of entrances and building scale.*
- 6. The placement and arrangement of the patterned vertical panels and balustrades in the York Road Project building should be reconsidered to ensure these better relate to each other and achieve a balanced and elegant appearance".*

It would be important that the recommendations are taken on board and addressed as part of any future planning application; if this is done then Officers would be satisfied that the proposal has been through a successful Design Review process as required by the Woking Design SPD.

The proposals could represent an exciting opportunity to assist in the regeneration of this part of the town centre.

This opinion is without prejudice to any decision that may be made as a result of a planning application being registered and is given in the context of the planning policies, regulations and guidance available today. You are advised that this context could change over time and with it the material considerations.



This may affect the above opinion and you are advised to check the position again unless immediately acting in accordance with the above advice.

I trust this answers your query.

Yours faithfully,

Brooke Bognague
Senior Planning Officer