

EXECUTIVE – 6 FEBRUARY 2020

## **HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – FUNDING ALLOCATION OF £95MILLION TO WOKING TOWN CENTRE**

### **Executive Summary**

The Council has had a long-held aspiration to improve conditions at Victoria Arch in the town centre. The existing Victoria Arch Bridge has stifled local growth and town centre development for decades. The current single carriageway that runs through Victoria Arch is not sufficient to cope with the busy A320, which is the main arterial road through Woking, resulting in significant town centre congestion at peak times. Pedestrian and cycle access through Victoria Arch is also limited, with connectivity between the north and south of the railway-line restricted by the existing infrastructure which can no longer service the needs of a vibrant and progressive town centre.

In an effort to remedy this situation, Surrey County Council, in conjunction with Woking Borough Council, has made a successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid for £95million. The Government commitment (through Homes England) to invest in Woking Town Centre will fund the replacement of Victoria Arch and critical highway improvements, which will support Woking to meet its housing needs and become a regional focus of economic prosperity.

It has been confirmed that the Borough Council would be the recipient of the grant, and be responsible for the overall delivery of the project. This will require the Borough Council to enter into a legal agreement with Homes England to deliver the infrastructure project. In accepting the £95m grant, the Borough Council will need to commit to a number of key conditions, including contributing funds to the project, and unlocking a number of development sites in the town centre to deliver up to 3,304 new homes by 2030 in addition to its current commitments.

The delivery of the major infrastructure proposed in the Bid would represent the achievement of a long-held Council objective and it is in the Borough's interest to ensure this once in a life-time opportunity is not lost. Without the £95m grant, it is highly unlikely that private or public sector intervention will ever be able to fund the replacement of Victoria Arch and the associated highway improvements that are necessary to support growth and sustain economic and community vitality.

This report, taking into account the supporting confidential information in the Part 2 report, proposes that the Executive recommends to Council that it accepts the £95m grant and related obligations.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That**

- (i) the £95m grant awarded to the Council by Homes England be accepted, and that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to agree the terms of the contract in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder, and to undertake necessary prerequisite work to develop the project;**

- (ii) the Council accepts that it will be responsible for any project cost overruns;
- (iii) any underspend of the grant award, and/or any surplus funds from the sale of the Triangle site, will be made available to fund project cost overruns, with any balance to be reinvested into local infrastructure that supports housing delivery;
- (iv) the Council authorises advance funding of £10m, in the form of a 15 year annuity loan from the PWLB for the scheme, to be recovered from a proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy and from site specific S.106 tariffs, over the next 15 years;
- (v) the Council commits to use reasonable endeavours, including use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers, to acquire the Triangle site, land required for the replacement of Victoria Arch, land required for widening of the A320, and land required for development sites as outlined in the bid, if not brought forward by current owners;
- (vi) the Council commits to the delivery of homes, as outlined in the bid, on the sites owned by it or its subsidiary Thamesway;
- (vii) the Council approves the Recovery Strategy set out at Appendix 7 to the report; and
- (viii) the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to undertake a review of Community Infrastructure Levy and to establish a Section 106 Tariff for town centre infrastructure associated with the HIF project.

#### Reasons for Decision

Reason: To accept funding that will enable rail infrastructure, highway enhancements, remove congestion, and promote town centre growth and development.

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

**Background Papers:** None.

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## Housing Infrastructure Fund – Funding Allocation of £95Million to Woking Town Centre

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has been working for many years to address the various issues that result from the Victoria Arch Bridge. The existing structure is a single span overbridge, constructed circa 1905, under which runs the A320 main arterial road through Woking. The single carriageway that runs through Victoria Arch cannot cope with the volume of traffic, resulting in a pinch-point which leads to significant congestion at peak times. This infrastructure deficit has stifled local growth and housing development opportunities for decades.
- 1.2 The long-held ambition is to widen the highway that passes under the bridge to improve traffic flows between both sides of the town, and provide better access across the railway and to the railway station for cyclists and pedestrians.
- 1.3 Over the years many options have been explored to try to resolve this infrastructure deficit, but a solution has not been forthcoming for a variety of reasons. The cost of replacing the bridge is estimated to be around £65m, which has always been prohibitive for both the private and public sectors. In addition, the Council's aims and timeframes have historically not aligned with Network Rail's capacity and strategic priorities.

## 2.0 Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

- 2.1 The HIF is a £5.5 billion Government capital grant programme that was introduced to back a small number of strategic and high impact infrastructure schemes. Funding is awarded to local authorities on a highly competitive basis.
- 2.2 Surrey County Council (SCC) and Woking Borough Council (WBC), in consultation with Network Rail (NR), submitted a HIF expression of interest in September 2017 which was shortlisted to progress to the next stage. Work then commenced to develop a detailed HIF business case which was sent to Homes England in December 2018. Homes England, Department for Transport, and a range of consultants scrutinised the bid over a 3 month due-diligence process to ensure that the proposal offered value for money and was viable in terms of deliverability.
- 2.3 The HIF bid was formally approved by the Housing Minister Kit Malthouse in June 2019, with £95m, the full amount requested, awarded to the scheme. The £95m is in the form of a grant which means that it does not need to be repaid.
- 2.4 Conditions associated with the funding were received in September 2019 and the Draft Contract followed in January 2020. The Council will need to agree to all conditions upon acceptance of the funding to enable a contract with Homes England to be signed. Key conditions which are considered to have the greatest impact on the Council are highlighted below in section 8 of this report. Copies of the Draft Contract and conditions, which are confidential, are included in the Part 2 report.
- 2.5 SCC remains a key partner in taking the scheme forward, but the £95m will be directly awarded to WBC, along with full responsibility for delivering the scheme and any associated risks and liabilities.

## 3.0 Project Overview

- 3.1 The total cost of the project is estimated to be £115m. This is estimated to be financed by £95m awarded from the HIF, £10m from WBC, and £10m saving/contribution from Network Rail. There are three key elements to the project:
  - Acquisition/demolition of the Triangle site (£32.5m);
  - A320 highway widening and improvements (£17.5m);

- The replacement of Victoria Arch bridge (£65m).

### 4.0 The Triangle Site

- 4.1 The acquisition and demolition of the Triangle is essential to enable the A320 to be widened to allow for a dual-carriage way. This will facilitate better access through the town and feed into a replacement bridge which will be widened to accommodate the additional lanes. The Triangle is currently comprised of a mixture of retail, residential and office buildings.
- 4.2 A report was submitted to Council in December 2018 which outlined the strategic significance of the Triangle site and recommended that authorisation be given to acquire the site to support the development of the HIF bid. The financial premise was that the acquisition cost would be recovered by the HIF grant should the bid be successful.
- 4.3 The Council has since been working with all owners and tenants on the Triangle to try to secure voluntary acquisition. Good progress has been made; around 87% of the site has either been acquired or terms have been agreed, and formal negotiations with the remainder of the site are in hand. A map providing an overview of the Triangle acquisition status is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The Council has actively supported business owners who wish to relocate to alternative premises, with 50% of businesses having already identified alternative premises, or are in direct discussion with the Council. A further 30% of businesses have confirmed that new premises are not required. The intention of the remaining 20% of businesses is not yet clear in relation to relocation, but discussions are continuing.
- 4.5 It is hoped that the full acquisition of the Triangle will be substantially complete by the summer. Relevant surveys, consultations, and procurement of the demolition contractor will be initiated from April, with a view to commencing demolition of the site with the necessary consents in August this year.
- 4.6 As with any acquisition process, it is possible that despite best efforts, land cannot be voluntarily acquired. In this instance the Council will need to commence Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) proceedings on all land that is required to enable the project to progress. A CPO cannot be initiated until planning approval for the demolition of the Triangle has been authorised. At this stage therefore, the Council is requested to commit to the use of CPO, as part of its reasonable endeavours, in relation to land essential for the project, and in respect of assembling third party sites where development is planned. Further reports will be brought forward in the event that a decision to make a CPO is required.

### 5.0 Highway Works

- 5.1 The highway works will comprise of a number of changes to the A320 to facilitate better access into and through the town centre. Works will include:

#### North of Victoria Arch

- Widened highway on the western side of Victoria Way;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle link along Victoria Way;
- Left turn moved from Goldsworth Road to Church Street West.

### South of Victoria Arch

- Removal of the one-way gyratory system;
- Enhanced pedestrian and cycle paths;
- Installation of 4 new toucan crossings for pedestrians/cyclists;
- Revised junction at Heathside Road to provide a left in and left out to/from Guildford Road;
- Improved informal pedestrian crossing near York Road to ease access to the bus stop;
- New access proposals for Days Aggregate Goods Yard;
- Improved pedestrian crossing near Constitution Hill.

5.2 The highway works will result in a number of tangible improvements, including:

- Reduced and more reliable journey times to and from Woking Town Centre;
- Additional crossing options for pedestrians and cyclists without the need to dismount;
- New pedestrian and cycle links to and from Woking station and around the town centre connecting to Woking Park, Woking Leisure Centre and other amenities; and
- An increase in the number of people walking and cycling, encouraging healthier living.

5.3 Highway enhancements will be required north and south of Victoria Arch to ensure that the dual-carriageway results in a seamless transition through this part of the town centre. Drawings for the proposed highway works are attached at Appendix 2 (north) and Appendix 3 (south). Please note that these are outline drawings at this stage, which will be refined as part of the detailed design process.

## **6.0 Victoria Arch Bridge**

6.1 SCC and WBC have been working with Network Rail since 2017 to develop the HIF business case. Network Rail has undertaken a detailed appraisal of the site to inform bridge replacement options.

6.2 The three most feasible options (based on factors such as requirements, programme, cost, and engineering feasibility) have been taken forward to the next phase. This will see the development of the three remaining options to the point where one can be selected for detailed design and delivery. The next phase of works, currently programmed to begin from September 2020, will focus on the detailed design of the preferred bridge option and the start of the procurement process.

6.3 There are ongoing discussions about costs of works and the level of contribution by Network Rail. From the Council's viewpoint, it is important that £55m is secured from Homes England as the Council does not have the capacity to finance any shortfall in contribution from Network Rail, and is relying upon the design solution securing a lower cost.

6.4 The outcome of works will be a replacement bridge that will be widened to enable a dual-carriage way and enhanced cycle and pedestrian access. An enhanced bridge will also support future Network Rail objectives, such as the possible Woking Station redevelopment and the Woking Flyover. A replacement bridge will also expand the rail network, making it

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more efficient and significantly increasing passenger capacity throughout the Wessex Region. This will underpin both local and regional growth.

### **7.0 Housing Requirement**

- 7.1 The WBC Core Strategy identifies the need for around 5,000 new dwellings by 2027, and the town centre has been designated as the primary focus for these developments.
- 7.2 The infrastructure provided by this project will unlock development potential at 13 town centre brownfield sites. These sites will enable the delivery of up to 3,304 extra town centre homes above existing commitments. Appendix 4 outlines the 13 sites and the forecast housing numbers.
- 7.3 Affordable housing remains a priority for the Council, and the development sites will need to be policy compliant in this regard. This will result in significant numbers of new affordable housing being delivered in the town centre.
- 7.4 In September 2019, the Council commissioned independent experts to undertake a detailed analysis of the town centre housing market. The main purpose of the work was to assess the future demand for dwellings in the town centre, and to form a view as to whether the number of new homes unlocked by the enhanced infrastructure could be absorbed by the market. The findings of the report demonstrate that if the delivery of housing is spread over a number of years to 2030, the market can fully absorb the nature and type of housing that is proposed to be delivered. A full copy of the report is attached at Appendix 5.

### **8.0 Council Obligations and HIF Bid Conditions**

- 8.1 As the grant recipient for the £95m, which will fund a substantial piece of infrastructure and unlock both housing and economic opportunities, the Council will need to enter into delivery obligations with Homes England. The first obligation is to undertake the range of works that were outlined in the HIF bid which includes, the acquisition and demolition of the land, the construction of highways, and the replacement and widening of Victoria Arch as outlined above. Failure to do so would entitle Homes England to recover all or part of the £95m grant. It is considered that the risk of non-delivery is low, although it is acknowledged that the replacement of Victoria Arch is entirely dependent on Network Rail.
- 8.2 The £95m funding from Homes England has been provided to deliver infrastructure which will unlock development sites in the town centre. The Local Plan provides for 1,251 homes across the range of identified sites, and the bid envisages delivery of an additional 3,304 homes across the same locations as demonstrated earlier at Appendix 4. The Council is obliged to use reasonable endeavours, including use of its CPO powers if required, to deliver the infrastructure and additional 3,304 homes. Failure to do so may entitle Homes England to recover all or part of the £95m grant.
- 8.3 It is considered that the risk to delivery varies according to each site. Homes England recognises this difference and expects the Council to ensure delivery on the sites owned by it (Triangle Site) and its subsidiary Thameswey (Concorde/Griffin House and Poole Road). For the other sites, Homes England acknowledges that the Council is not developing the sites and does not own them, but expects the Council to use reasonable endeavours through the use of its powers, including the use of CPO, to bring the sites forward for development.
- 8.4 When finalising the contract with Homes England, the Council will seek flexibility to enable it to substitute sites if any of the current identified sites should prove impossible or wholly uneconomical to deliver.
- 8.5 To receive the £95m from Homes England, WBC will need to accept the grant award Terms & Conditions, and enter into contract. The full list of draft conditions is provided as part of the

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Part 2 report, but for the purpose of this report, the key conditions that are considered to have the greatest impact on the Council have been extracted and are as follows:

- As the grant recipient, WBC will be responsible for project cost overruns. This condition is mitigated to a certain extent due to the fact that having acquired the Triangle site, the residual land (after the highway has been extended), can be sold for development. Any income resulting from the sale will be used to fund any project overspend, and any surplus will need to be reinvested into local infrastructure that supports housing delivery.
- The Council will need to commit £10m forward funding to the project. See Section 12.
- The Council will need to commit to use reasonable endeavours, including Compulsory Purchase Order powers, to acquire the Triangle site, land required for the replacement of Victoria Arch, land required for widening of the A320, and land required for development sites as outlined in the bid, if not brought forward by current owners; and
- The Council commits to the delivery of homes, as outlined in the bid, on the sites owned by it or its subsidiary Thameswey.

### 9.0 Governance Arrangements

- 9.1 The governance arrangements supporting a project of this size and complexity will need to be suitably robust. An officer level project board will be chaired by the Chief Executive, and will have attendees from all of the key stakeholders, including SCC and Network Rail. This monthly meeting will ensure that all project risks and issues are managed in a timely and efficient manner. This arrangement will mirror the one that already operates in respect of the Woking Integrated Transport Project.
- 9.2 In terms of Member oversight, the Joint Committee has agreed the principle of this project being overseen by a small sub-group of members. This sub-group will oversee the project itself during implementation and receive regular reports on progress, risks and issues. In addition, the Victoria Square Oversight Panel, which includes oversight of town centre activities, will receive regular reports on progress and be used as a 'sounding board' where options are being considered.
- 9.3 In line with all WBC project arrangements, the project will also be monitored internally by the Project Support Office which will provide regular updates to the Executive. These reports include commentary on the project budget, schedule, risks and issues as standard.

### 10.0 Project Benefits

- 10.1 The award of the HIF grant of £95m represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to replace Victoria Arch and improve highway infrastructure in the town centre. A widened bridge and enhanced highway will remove the significant congestion which has had a tangible negative impact on residents, businesses, and the environment for many years.
- 10.2 The delivery of this scheme will also continue the regeneration of Woking town centre which will benefit the wider borough, and also support the Council's ambition to meet its housing need and be a regional focus of economic prosperity.
- 10.3 An enhanced bridge will facilitate an increase in passenger capacity throughout the Wessex Region which will have a significant positive impact on the rail network and underpin both local and regional growth.
- 10.4 The key benefit of this project for the Government and Homes England is that the new infrastructure will unlock 13 town centre sites for the development of homes. These sites will help the Council to meet its housing targets and deliver high numbers of affordable housing.

## **11.0 Time Constraints**

- 11.1 To meet the funding requirements set out by Homes England, the replacement of Victoria Arch must be completed by March 2024, and all associated funding must be spent. A detailed project plan has been prepared, which sets out all aspects of the scheme, and a completion date of March 2024 is achievable. The deadline can also be met should there be a need to use CPO powers. The draft project plan is attached at Appendix 6.

## **12.0 Implications**

### Financial

- 12.1 The HIF bid was submitted to Homes England seeking a contribution of £95m which has been awarded subject to contract. A copy of the current breakdown of the project cost of £115m is set out at paragraph 3.1 with the confidential detail attached to the Part 2 report.
- 12.2 The difference between the £115m project cost and the £95m HIF grant is comprised of a £10m contribution from the Council through a PWLB loan to advance fund infrastructure, and £10m reduction in cost from Network Rail by contribution or value engineering.
- 12.3 The use of PWLB to advance fund infrastructure has previously been approved by the Council. For example, supporting Horsell Common Preservation Society to build Heather Farm. A similar approach is proposed here, where a 15 year PWLB annuity loan will provide £10m towards the scheme and will be recovered from a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and from site specific S.106 tariffs over the next 15 years. A copy of the Recovery Strategy is attached at Appendix 7. The Council will need to authorise the loan finance and the Recovery Strategy.

### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 12.4 There will be an impact on the Council's Human Resource's in relation to the project which will provide significant personal development opportunities. The project cost provides for additional contract resources for appropriate professionals.

### Community Safety

- 12.5 The replacement of Victoria Arch will provide significant improvements to the public realm and highway network, and will remove the congestion pinch-point that currently exists through this location in the town centre.
- 12.6 A replacement bridge will also provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle access which will significantly improve permeability across the railway line, and deliver safe connectivity in the town for residents and businesses.

### Risk Management

- 12.7 The management of risk will form an integral part of the HIF project. The project team will develop and maintain a detailed risk register that will cover all aspects of the scheme; this will be reviewed monthly as part of the project board governance arrangements. Overall project progress will be submitted to the Executive as part of the standard Council project monitoring process.

### Sustainability

- 12.8 The detailed design options will be expected to demonstrate sustainable construction and sourcing throughout, in support of the Council's Climate Change Strategy.



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- 12.9 During demolition all necessary steps will be taken to protect endangered species and general biodiversity with appropriate offset/additional habitats created either within the scheme or adjacent to it.
- 12.10A review will be undertaken of buildings subject to demolition so as to recover any important architectural features.
- 12.11 The widening of Victoria Arch will allow for the introduction of a dual-carriageway which will improve traffic-flow through the town centre. The enhanced highway network will remove the significant congestion that can occur along this stretch of road at peak times which will have a direct positive impact on air quality in the immediate area.
- 12.12 As part of the Council's commitment to addressing Climate Change and improving air quality, the scheme will incorporate green infrastructure to mitigate against flooding and improve air quality and biodiversity.

### Equalities

- 12.13 The project process will take account of access requirements to ensure that any design is fully compliant with equality and disability needs.

### Safeguarding

- 12.14 There are no identified issues directly arising from this report.

## **13.0 Consultations**

- 13.1 Surrey County Council and Network Rail have been involved in the development of the HIF business case, and the preparation of the work leading to this report.
- 13.2 A consultation in relation to the A320 proposed road layout changes was undertaken by independent consultants between 12 September and 24 October in 2018. Views were sought from people living and working in the area, as well as those who travel to and from Woking, and other key stakeholders including local elected representatives. The consultation report is attached at Appendix 8. It is important to note that the scheme has moved on a great deal since the consultation, and a number of enhancements, not least the proposed improvements to the aggregate yard access, have now been built into the design.
- 13.3 Members of the Council received a private briefing on 16 January 2020 on the proposals and conditions, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 January 2020 received a presentation in public. The Finance Task Group at its meeting on 30 January 2020 was provided with the opportunity to ask the Chief Executive any questions about the project.

REPORT ENDS

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Appendix 1: Triangle Acquisition Status

Appendix 2: Highways Proposal North Plan

Appendix 3: Highways Proposal South Plan

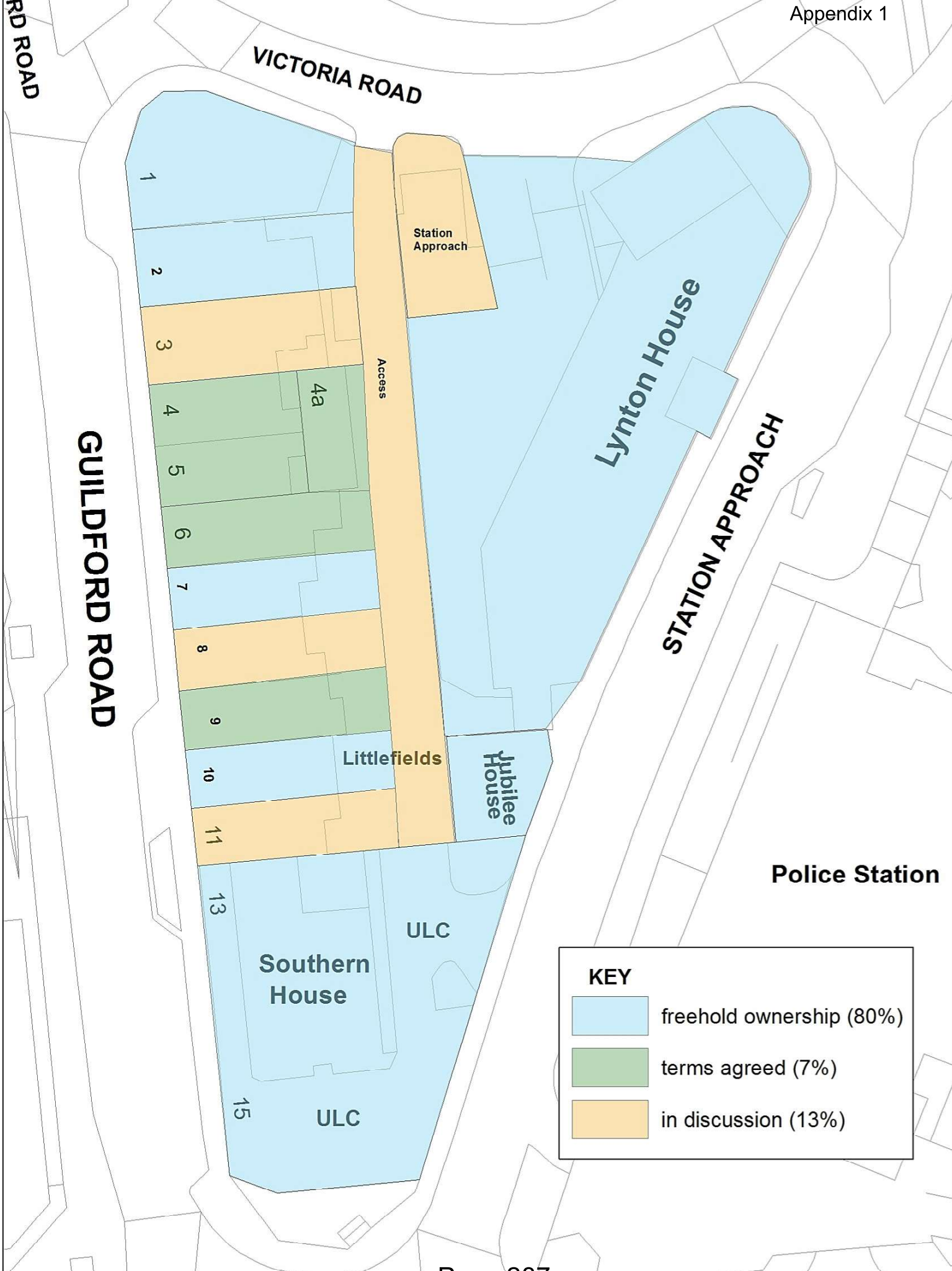
Appendix 4: Housing Unlocked by HIF

Appendix 5: Woking Town Centre Housing Market Analysis

Appendix 6: Draft HIF Programme

Appendix 7: Recovery Strategy

Appendix 8: A320 Consultation Report



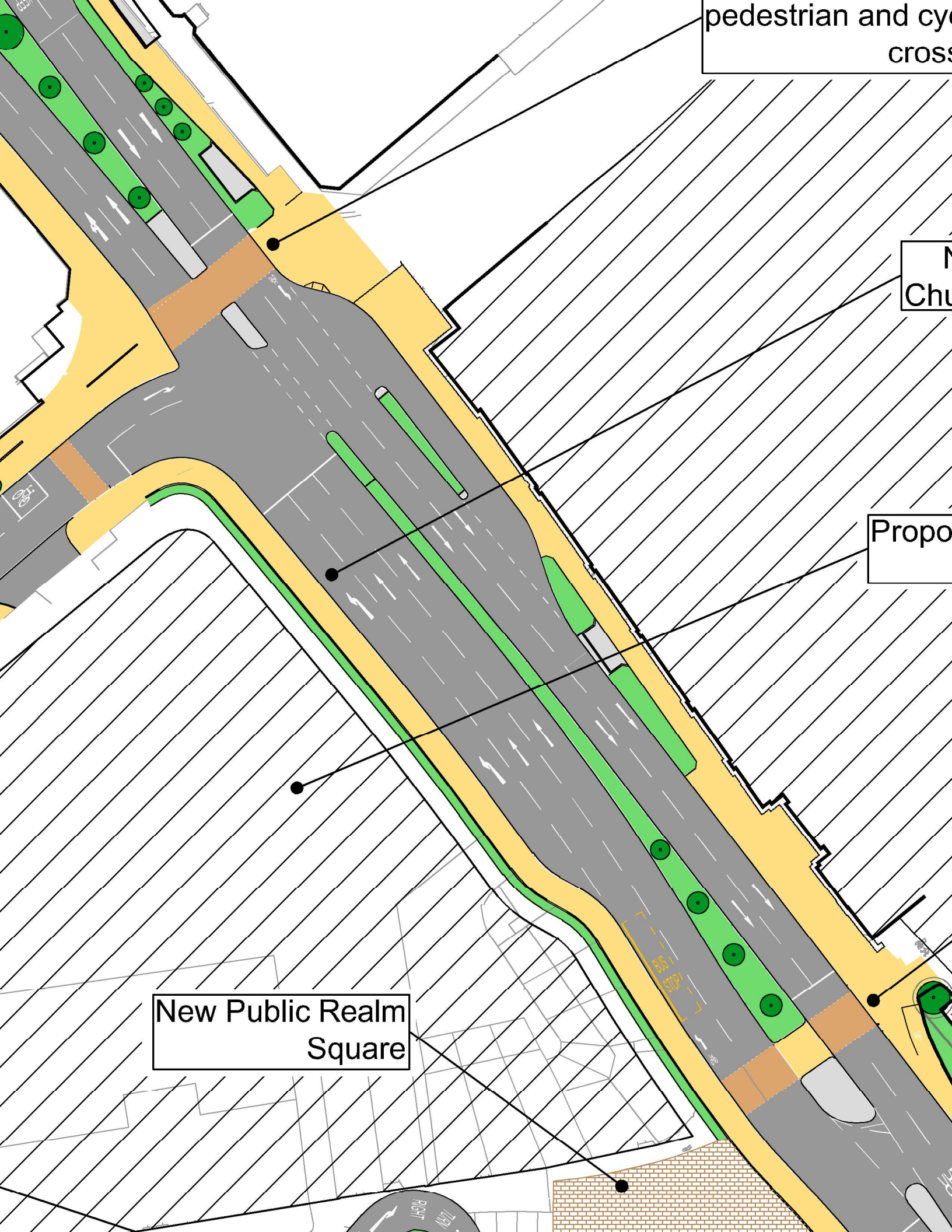


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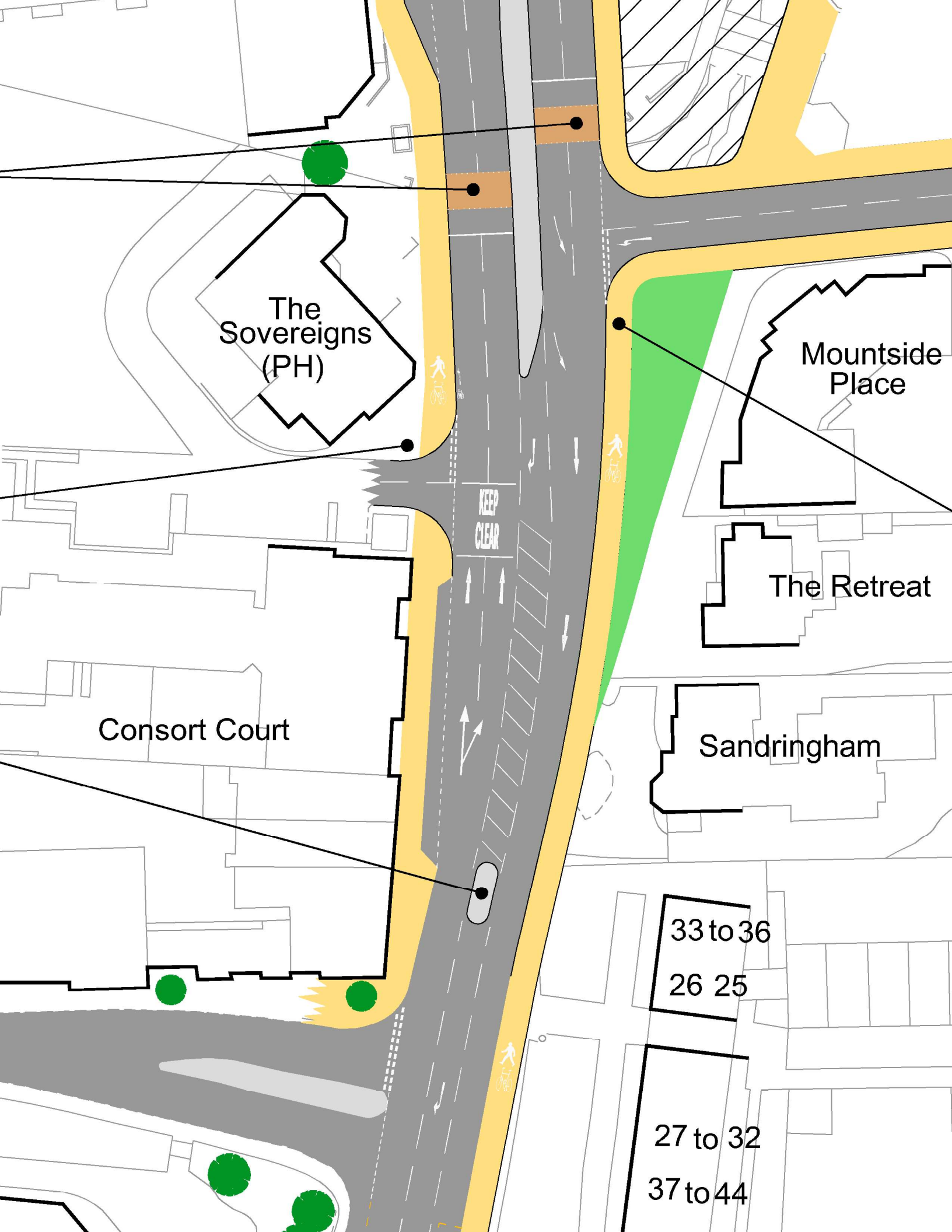
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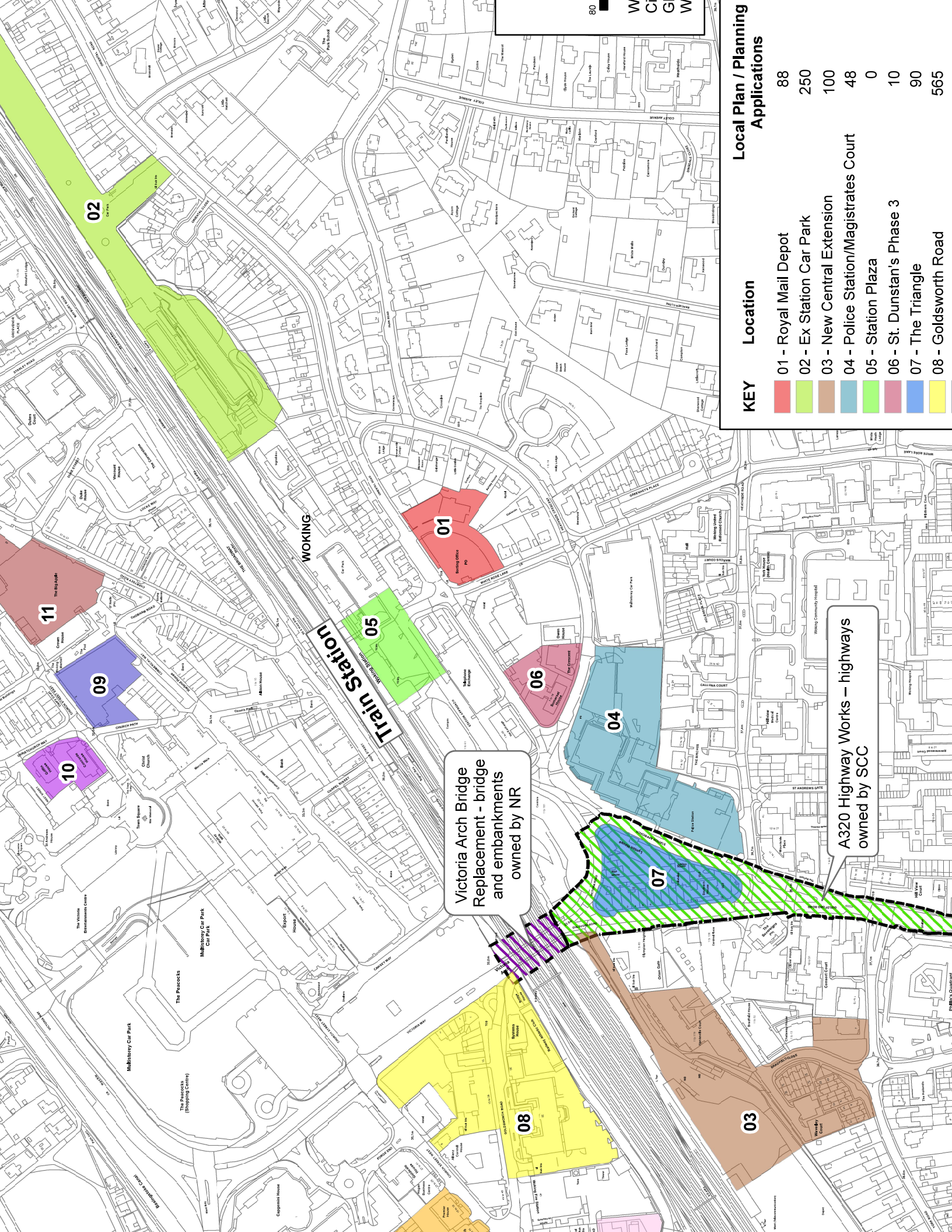
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KEEP CLEAR







KEY	Location	Local Plan / Planning Applications
[Red]	01 - Royal Mail Depot	88
[Green]	02 - Ex Station Car Park	250
[Brown]	03 - New Central Extension	100
[Blue]	04 - Police Station/Magistrates Court	48
[Light Green]	05 - Station Plaza	0
[Pink]	06 - St. Dunstan's Phase 3	10
[Blue]	07 - The Triangle	90
[Yellow]	08 - Goldsworth Road	565

Victoria Arch Bridge Replacement - bridge and embankments owned by NR

A320 Highway Works - highways owned by SCC

Woking Station

WOKING

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# Woking Town Centre Housing Market Analysis

**Woking Borough Council**

November 2019

**Prepared by**

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DATE

28<sup>th</sup> October 2019

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### Limitations

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to assess the likely demand for dwellings in Woking Town Centre (WTC). This is in order to form a view on whether the proposed trajectory and build out rates (BORs), as set out in Woking Town Centre Site Development Schedule (WTCSDS) is achievable.
- 1.2 In market dwellings (for-sale or build-to-rent), BORs are determined by Absorption Rates (ARs), which in turn will be determined by developers' commercial view. Specifically their view on the rate at which new units of housing may be fed into the local market in alignment to their business model.
- 1.3 In the preparation of this report, GL Hearn has assembled and reviewed the following data sources:
  - Demographic data (Census, sub-national household projections);
  - Reports and studies (relevant reports commissioned on behalf of Woking Borough Council or developers operating in WTC);
  - Interviews with market sale and letting agents operating in WTC;
  - Case studies from other major town centre development projects (Croydon, Stratford and Wembley); and
  - Reference to authoritative studies into BORs and ARs.

### Key Messages

- 1.4 In order to arrive at an understanding of potential ARs within a mixed tenure town centre development of the scale and complexity of WTC, it is necessary to disaggregate the proposed supply into different tenures: market sale, market rent and affordable housing.
- 1.5 We do not feel that the current completions trajectory of the market sale component i.e. to finish by Q1 2025/6 (as set out in the WTDS) is realistic, particularly in current market conditions. These conditions are likely to persist for the foreseeable future given the uncertainty generated by Brexit. As a result we believe expected completion should be pushed back to Q4 of 2030.
- 1.6 The average quarterly AR for market sale dwellings is 15. We believe this could increase but is subject to a cap of 45 dwellings per quarter as developers reduce BORs to avoid excess supply placing downward pressure on sales prices i.e. flooding the market.

- 1.7 The trajectory for the Market Rent and Affordable Rent component is more achievable. We see no market reason why this aspect of the WTC development should not be deliverable within the time-frame set out in the WTCSDS.
- 1.8 For this reason we have adopted the blended average of 28 dwellings per month for market rent development. This is drawn from Knight Frank's study for the Victoria Square development in WTC.

### Summary of Evidence

- 1.9 In forming a judgement as to the likely AR, an understanding of the different tenures envisaged is critical. For this reason we have broken the projected AR into the three tenure types of
- Market Sale;
  - Market Rent (Private Rented Sector, PRS); and
  - Affordable Housing

### Market Sale

#### Baseline Absorption Rate

- 1.10 Based on the evidence gathered herein it is reasonable to assume a baseline figure of between 50 and 70 dwellings per annum (dpa) to be achieved on each of the market sale developments on the WTC sites.

#### Adjusted Absorption Rate

- 1.11 The task in this section is to consider whether particular circumstances exist that support an adjustment to the baseline AR. This considers three factors:

##### i. Demographic and market signals evidence

- 1.12 WTC has become an established centre of growth in the Borough (and wider HMA) since 2001, and has seen delivery of smaller homes, suited to newly forming households and people wishing to down-size. It has also yielded a large share of the Affordable Housing delivery in the Borough.
- 1.13 Given the Council has not been able to achieve its policy targets for Affordable Housing at the Borough level, this reinforces the case for additional development within the town centre which will help support further affordable housing delivery.
- 1.14 The data from the 2014-based household projections supports the case for maintaining a strong supply of new homes in coming years. This reflects both the overall growth within the projections and the declining household growth.



- 1.15 Given that smaller, one person and single couple households are forecast to account for a large proportion of overall household growth, it is not unreasonable for a substantial proportion of development to focus on smaller dwellings suited to their needs. WTC represents one of the most suitable and sustainable areas in the Borough to do so.
- 1.16 Market signals collectively make a strong argument for substantially more development in WTC in future years. Both increasing rents as well as worsening affordability are particularly telling.
- 1.17 Woking is well integrated with London, and displays the hallmarks of a dynamic local economy providing the resident workforce access to a wide range of jobs across a diversified economic base.
- 1.18 However, according to the Woking Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 (WEDS) one brake on local economic development is the shortage of affordable market and social housing in the Borough.

#### **ii. Commentary from local agents**

- 1.19 In order to understand current market conditions, GL Hearn approached sales agents in WTC and surrounds. Two agents were able to respond, Agent 1 and Agent 2. A summary of their responses are set out below.
- 1.20 The feedback from the estate agents is downbeat; the consensus is that there is an over-supply of dwellings and this has exerted a downward pressure on house prices since 2016. This is partly explained by weak demand for buy-to-let dwellings from small investors due to the withdrawal of tax relief on mortgage payments.
- 1.21 The commentary from Agent 1 is helpful in terms of sales rates. The agent signalled a decline since the top of the market in 2013 where Barratt's New Central scheme achieved up-to 4 units per week. By comparison, the current market has a rate of 1-2 dwellings per week or around 70 dpa.

#### **iii. Competitor behaviour**

- 1.22 Developers pay close attention to the activities of other developers bringing forward sites in close proximity to their own. The presence therefore of a number of developers releasing product into the market at the same time will have a dampening effect on the overall AR.

### **Market Rent**

- 1.23 In arriving at an AR for Market Rent (Private Rented Sector) dwellings, three factors have been taken into consideration:

#### iv. Demographic and market signals evidence

- 1.24 We have seen that rents in WTC have increased over time; it has been noted that increasing the stock of dwellings has a more direct impact on rent levels than on the price of market sale dwellings. This is because the latter is affected by borrowing rates and investor sentiment.
- 1.25 Indeed, rent increases across the UK over the last twenty years have been very modest in comparison to house price. Increases to the housing stock over the same period has been identified as a reason for this.<sup>1</sup> This creates a strong argument for delivery of additional high-quality PRS homes so as to rein-in recent rent increases.
- 1.26 Given the sentiment reported by local estate agents of small investor towards buy-to-let the right profile of PRS would be specialist build-to-rent developers backed by institutional finance.
- 1.27 In addition, the importance of PRS in housing people on average incomes who are unable to buy (or choose not to) is clear from the substantial local and national increase in the number of PRS dwellings between 2001 and 2011.

#### v. Commentary from local agents

- 1.28 GL Hearn carried out semi-structured interviews with two local letting agents. In addition, we draw on a letter by Seymours to Woking Borough Council, dated 8th January 2019.
- 1.29 There is a consensus as to the strength of the lettings market. In the context of the views expressed by the sales agents, this illustrates the counter-cyclical nature of the market sale and PRS markets.
- 1.30 It is to be expected and encouraged that institutional investors will take an active interest in the PRS market in WTC. This should provide developers seeking to bring forward, fully or in part, Build-to-Rent development over the next decade with confidence that there will be a market for their products.
- 1.31 The prospect for increasing rents in the market is very modest, with agents factoring in the level of supply envisaged for WTC, which they foresee as having a stabilising effect on rents.
- 1.32 Importantly, they do not foresee a fall in rents; this will reassure developers that their viability modelling is unlikely to be compromised by the envisaged pipeline of supply. Indeed, given the importance of housing in the continued growth of the local economy, developers may have taken the view that new development will, in part, generate its own demand.

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<sup>1</sup> Mulheirn, I, UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, Tackling the UK Housing crisis: is supply the answer, August 2019, page 18

## vi. Victoria Square

- 1.33 In determining an AR for PRS specifically, it is worth noting Knight Frank's report<sup>2</sup> into the Victoria Square development published in March 2016; this foresees:

*"Tower 1 (216) units being handed over at the end of July 2020...with a prospective pre-let of 35-50 units in the period May to July 2020...We would anticipate May through to October to have the highest take-up rates, with around 25-30 properties each month. An expectation of 15-25 properties per month reflects the slightly quieter period between February and April, and around 15-20 per month during the quietest period of the year between November and January. **This provides a blended average of approximately 28 move-ins per month over the initial let-up period.** (our emphasis) We expect that the initial letting-up period to be between 17-18 months for both blocks including the pre-let periods and phased release."*

- 1.34 This "blended average" has been used as the basis for the AR for Market Rent dwellings in this report.

## Affordable Housing

- 1.35 Given the affordability issues across the Borough, including the Town Centre, there is likely to be a high demand for affordable Housing.
- 1.36 As we have noted, WTC has seen a substantial number of affordable units coming forward over the period 2001-18. WTC's suitability as a location for households on lower incomes stems from its proximity to public transport (with the resulting reduced need to own or run a car) and lower energy bills associated with living in terraced and flatted developments rather than detached and semi-detached properties.
- 1.37 In addition, WTC has a natural acceptance to the provision of dwellings for people on modest incomes. This serves to highlight the importance of bringing forward development in this part of the Borough.

## Case studies

- 1.38 As part of preparing this study, GL Hearn has also reviewed recent development activity in the comparable high growth areas of Croydon, Stratford (Olympic Park) and Wembley. These areas have been selected on the basis of the rapid scale of growth and their connectivity to Central London.
- 1.39 These locations are frequently cited as part of London's evolution into a polycentric spatial plan, with these sites (in particular Croydon and Stratford) as key growth nodes. This is not dissimilar from Woking's economic development vision<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Knight Frank, Victoria Square, Woking, March 2016, page 12, 14

<sup>3</sup> Woking Economic Development Strategy, 2017-2022, page 3

- 1.40 Like Woking, they have high workplace-based Median Affordability Ratios (MAR), varying from 11.13 to 16.3, suggesting they have similar affordability pressures. Each of them has seen delivery of a substantial number of dwellings in recent years.
- 1.41 This provides evidence that, given the right balance of size and tenure of homes, as well as the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, a high AR is achievable in WTC.
- 1.42 The case studies therefore offer substantial evidence that tenure diversity, in particular the presence of a substantial element of PRS housing, contributes to higher ARs on the basis that different tenures appeal to different market segments.

### What trajectory is envisaged and achievable?

#### **Market Sale**

- 1.43 Based on the evidence gathered, it is reasonable to assume a baseline figure of between 50 and 70 dpa to be achieved on each of the market sale developments on the 13 WTC sites. This level of absorption would have the combined capacity of 650 to 910 dpa.
- 1.44 The findings from the market signals analysis are supportive of on-going development; However, they are not sufficiently strong to warrant applying an uplift (i.e. increasing the AR above the 50-70 dpa range). This is because similar conditions applied in earlier years during which housing delivery in WTC was substantially lower than is envisaged in the WTCSDS.
- 1.45 However, the suitability of WTC to satisfy the demand for affordable market homes and the role of increasing supply in dampening rental growth justifies continued development. It is reasonable to assume WTC can achieve an AR comparable to similar areas within London.
- 1.46 The comment from Agent 1 provides helpful supporting evidence that over a ten-year time frame 70 units per year (2 sales per week) would be achievable. This corroborates other evidence cited in this report.
- 1.47 Taking this into consideration, but adopting a cautious approach given current market uncertainty, a “mid-point” AR of 60dpa has been selected.
- 1.48 However, to allow for competitor activity a cap of 45 new homes being released in to the market at any one quarter (a maximum of three developments producing units across any one quarter) has been assumed. This envisages circumstances in which developers are aware of competitors active in the market, and reduce their BOR accordingly to avoid over-supply.

- 1.49 We have calculated ARs for both Market Sale and Affordable Sale dwellings based on a quarterly BOR of 15, or 60dpa. The Affordable Sale component of the WTC development envisages Shared Ownership (SO).
- 1.50 We recognise this tenure has been criticised on affordability grounds. In addition, while SO has seen growth in Woking during the 2001-11 period, it is still a relatively new (and unproven) tenure. For these reasons, we therefore feel it is reasonable to accord it the same AR as full Market Sale.
- 1.51 Our trajectory (see concluding chapter) indicates that, in our view, the BORs envisaged for Market Sale homes in the WTCSDS, which anticipates completion of this component in the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year (around June 2025) is not likely to be achievable.
- 1.52 In contrast, we anticipate a more plausible time horizon for completion is the fourth quarter of the 2027/28 financial year (around March 2028). This is almost three years longer than first anticipated.
- 1.53 This calculation also includes a cap of 45 dwellings per year by way of assuming the “excess” dwellings built during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years will be absorbed by the market when delivery falls below the 45 dpa.

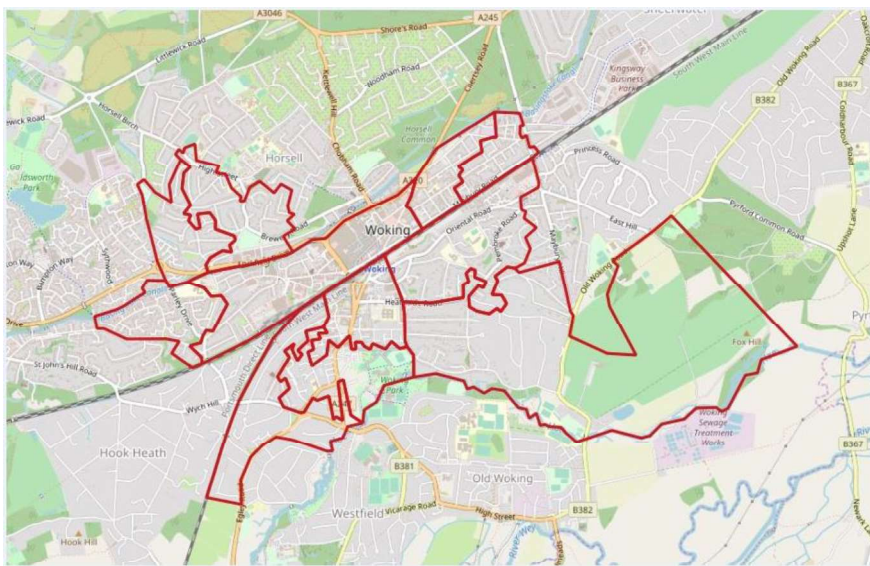
### **Market Rent**

- 1.54 The strong, on-going demand from households for PRS supports delivery of this tenure of housing at pace. This will also have the effect of keeping rents stable, allowing household income to catch up, thus restoring affordability at the median income level.
- 1.55 Our assumptions for PRS reflect the trajectory set out in the WTCSDS. No cap has been applied as we feel the market for PRS is sufficiently strong in WTC to support multiple schemes generating units at the same time.
- 1.56 The trajectory envisaged for Affordable Rent dwellings is driven more by factors relating to construction timetables and the BOR of market homes, rather than the strength of demand for such products, given that demand is likely to exceed supply for this tenure of home.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 As a first step, we analyse demographic trends and the current housing stock to assess whether there exists any evidence of a mis-alignment between supply and demand. This provides a baseline position regarding the likely need for additional dwellings in WTC.
- 2.2 The next step assesses, with reference to market signals, whether any trends justify an uplift to the initial baseline. Bringing the first two steps together enables an assessment of the current strength of the market for dwellings in WTC.
- 2.3 The third part of the study presents findings from a literature review, interviews with property agents and relevant case studies to set a reasonable benchmark for an Absorption Rate for development in WTC. This is broken down by the different tenures: market sale, market rent and affordable homes.
- 2.4 The evidence assembled in the three stages of work allows us to arrive at an estimate of what trajectory is achievable in WTC.
- 2.5 In compiling demographic evidence for this report, we have drawn on Census data for the town centre based on a series of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs, see Figure below). For comparison purposes looked at comparable data for Woking borough and England as a whole.

**Figure 1: Woking Town Centre data geography**



Source: Census 2011

- 2.6 To examine forecasts of demographic change, the 2014-based sub-national household projections have been used. This aligns the work with the standard method for assessing housing need.
- 2.7 To arrive at an understanding of the demand for dwellings, it is important to note WTC exists within a wider Housing Market Area (HMA)<sup>4</sup>. This study has therefore taken into consideration this HMA as well as the commuting relationships with locations where WTC residents' work-places cluster as of 2011.

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<sup>4</sup> The 2015 SHMA identifies a “core West Surrey Housing Market Area (HMA)... which comprises the local authorities of Guildford, Waverley and Woking, page 32

### 3. MARKET STRENGTH

- 3.1 An appropriate place to start assessing the potential strength of demand for dwellings in WTC is to compare the current housing stock and demographic trends. This will potentially identify any mis-alignments between supply and demand.

#### **Housing stock**

- 3.2 In Table 3 below we present data relating to the housing stock in WTC showing change between 2001 and 2011 (the period between the last two Censuses); the same data is shown for Woking Borough and England for the purposes of comparison.
- 3.3 This data indicates WTC accounted for the majority of flatted development in the Borough over the period, and a substantial share of all development.
- 3.4 Over the period, WTC saw 1,242 new flats built in purpose-build blocks, or a 54% uplift. This compares with the Borough as a whole of 32%, or 2,109 new flats.



**Table 1: Types of dwellings delivered between 2001 and 2011**

Type		Woking Town Centre	Woking	England
<b>Detached</b>	<b>2001</b>	2,012	12,618	4786456
	<b>2011</b>	2,025	12,709	5128552
	<b>Change</b>	13	91	342,096
	<b>%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Semi-detached</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,187	9,443	6713183
	<b>2011</b>	1,268	9,872	7076395
	<b>Change</b>	81	429	363,212
	<b>%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Terraced (including end-terrace)</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,315	7,708	5494033
	<b>2011</b>	1,304	7,922	5642969
	<b>Change</b>	-11	214	148,936
	<b>%</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Purpose-built block of flats or tenement</b>	<b>2001</b>	2,296	6,580	2967790
	<b>2011</b>	3,538	8,689	3854451
	<b>Change</b>	1,242	2,109	886,661
	<b>%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Flat as part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits)</b>	<b>2001</b>	422	1,043	968266
	<b>2011</b>	378	919	984284
	<b>Change</b>	-44	-124	16,018
	<b>%</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Flat in a commercial building</b>	<b>2001</b>	157	416	244179
	<b>2011</b>	164	448	257218
	<b>Change</b>	7	32	13,039
	<b>%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure</b>	<b>2001</b>	9	135	88918
	<b>2011</b>	7	132	100228
	<b>Change</b>	-2	-3	11,310
	<b>%</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total</b>		1,286	2,748	1,781,272

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

- 3.5 In terms of net new homes, the Borough saw 2,748 new dwellings over the period, of which 47%, or 1,286 were delivered in WTC.

3.6 The table below presents data relating to the supply of dwellings delivered in WTC, the Borough and England broken down to number of habitable rooms. The definition of a room in this context does not include bathrooms, toilets, halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted.<sup>5</sup> In the section that follows, 'dwelling sizes' are assumed to translate as follows:

- 1 room = bedsit
- 2 rooms = flat/house with one bedroom and a reception room/kitchen
- 3 rooms = flat/house 1 or 2 bedrooms and one reception room and/or kitchen
- 4 rooms = flat/house with 2 bedrooms, one reception room and one kitchen
- 5 rooms = flat/house with 3 bedrooms, one reception room and one kitchen
- 6 rooms = house with 2 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms and a kitchen, or 3 bedrooms and one reception room and a kitchen
- 7+ rooms = house with 3, 4 or more bedrooms

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs407ew>

**Table 2: Sizes of dwellings delivered between 2001 and 2011**

Rooms		Woking Town Centre	Woking Borough	England
<b>All</b>	<b>2001</b>	7,086	36,941	20,451,427
	<b>2011</b>	8,308	39,467	22,063,368
	<b>Change</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>1 room</b>	<b>2001</b>	140	329	181,503
	<b>2011</b>	128	230	172,008
	<b>Change</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>-30%</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>2 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	495	1,126	516,355
	<b>2011</b>	689	1,315	641,307
	<b>Change</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>3 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,083	3,763	1,880,512
	<b>2011</b>	1,504	4,459	2,264,602
	<b>Change</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>4 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,343	6,136	4,084,712
	<b>2011</b>	1,768	6,857	4,227,236
	<b>Change</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>5 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,219	8,612	5,547,813
	<b>2011</b>	1,246	8,208	5,446,830
	<b>Change</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>6 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,034	6,454	4,187,159
	<b>2011</b>	1,017	6,509	4,275,834
	<b>Change</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>7 rooms</b>	<b>2001</b>	646	3,877	1,886,797
	<b>2011</b>	663	4,033	2,223,733
	<b>Change</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>8 rooms +</b>	<b>2001</b>	1,126	6,644	2,166,576
	<b>2011</b>	1,293	7,856	2,811,818
	<b>Change</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>30%</b>

*Source: Census 2001 and 2011*

- 3.7 From this data we can see that there has been a fall in the number of bedsits between 2001 and 2011, but a substantial increase in the number of smaller dwellings of 2, 3, 4 habitable rooms (dwellings of 1 and 2 bedrooms) in the town centre as well as the wider Borough.
- 3.8 The increase in smaller dwellings has been particularly pronounced in the town centre with 1,040 net new dwellings of this size coming into existence over the period in WTC. This compares with 1,606 dwellings in the Borough as a whole, comprising 65% of the total.

- 3.9 This reinforces the importance of WTC as a centre of development activity in the Borough, particularly in the delivery of smaller, more affordable, market dwellings.
- 3.10 It is also worth noting the growth in the number of the largest size of dwelling (+8 rooms) over the same period. A total of 1,212 new dwellings of this size came into existence within the Borough, of which 167 were in WTC. This likely reflects both the presence of a significant number of wealthy households, a key group in supporting the economic growth of the area, and houses in multiple occupation.
- 3.11 In addition, Woking Borough Council has supplied data showing the delivery of new housing in the Borough by bedroom size between 2011/12 and 2018/19. This is set out in the table below. It is worth noting that at 1,498 dwellings 1- and 2-bedroom homes also make up the majority (67%) of these new dwellings.

**Table 3: Supply of dwellings in Woking Borough 2011/12 – 2018/19**

Year	Total net	Bedsit	1-bed	2-beds	3-beds	4+ beds
2011-12	188	0	110	34	19	24
2012/13	273	0	39	210	17	6
2013/14	370	0	148	172	26	24
2014/15	66	0	13	22	18	13
2015/16	360	0	41	125	107	87
2016/17	399	0	120	92	116	71
2017/18	345	0	108	94	67	80
<b>2018/19</b>	231	0	66	113	19	33
<b>Total</b>	2,232	0	645	853	389	348
<b>Percentage</b>			29%	38%	17%	16%

Source: WBC

- 3.12 Assuming the distribution of delivery of these dwellings remains the same as during the 2001-11 period (65% in WTC) then around 974 dwellings would have been completed in WTC. This would equate to an annual rate of 139 dwellings (rounded).
- 3.13 In the table below we set out data from WBC's annual monitoring report (AMR); this document records dwellings delivered in each financial year by location. It is important to note the fluctuations in delivery of dwellings in WTC from year to year.
- 3.14 This shows that in the years 2012/13 and 2013/14 the rate of delivery of new homes in WTC was relatively high with an average rate of 182 dwelling per annum (dpa). In subsequent years the rate reduced dramatically to a three-year average of just 17dpa.

**Table 4: Supply of dwellings in Woking by Location 2012/13– 2016/17**

Area	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	Average
Woking Town Centre	123	241	5	19	27	83
Woking Borough	273	370	66	360	399	294
Local Plan target	292	292	292	292	292	

Source: WBC Annual Monitoring Reports 12/13 – 16/17

- 3.15 Based on the average rate of completions in the 2001 – 2018 period, it is reasonable to express the achievable AR based on historic data of between 83 and 139 dwellings per annum.

### Change in Tenure

- 3.16 In Table 7 below we reproduce Census data relating to the change in the distribution of tenures within WTC, the Borough as a whole and England. This data shows there has been a fall in the number of households that own their property with a mortgage; this indicates the increasingly unaffordable nature of properties in WTC or the lack of access to mortgage products. This trend is also observed in the Borough as well as at the national level.
- 3.17 Those tenures that have seen the strongest increase over the period are Shared Ownership (albeit starting from a low base), dwellings rented from a housing association or registered social landlord (indicating WBC have been successful in delivering substantial numbers of Affordable Homes over the period) and Private Rented Housing (PRS).
- 3.18 The number of households living in the PRS in WTC grew over the 2001-2011 period by 1,283. In percentage terms this level of growth is the same as the Borough as a whole of 97%. It is worth noting that the number of households occupying PRS dwellings in the Borough grew by 3,049 over the period. Indicating that the town centre area accounted for 42% of all PRS growth in the Borough.
- 3.19 It is also worth noting WTC accounts for 35% of the growth in the number of households occupying Affordable Housing units in the Borough, despite accounting for only 21% of all households. This suggests WTC is shouldering a disproportionately large number of affordable homes.

**Table 5: Change in tenure of dwellings 2001-11**

Tenure		Woking Town Centre	Woking Borough	England
All households	2001	7,088	36,941	20,451,427
	2011	8,308	39,467	22,063,368
	change	17%	7%	8%
Owned	2001	5,011	28,060	13,920,429
	2011	4,892	27,829	13,975,024
	%	-2%	-1%	0%
Owned: Owned outright	2001	2,096	11,092	5,969,670
	2011	2,275	12,479	6,745,584
	change	9%	13%	13%
Owned: Owned with a mortgage or loan	2001	2,915	16,968	7,950,759
	2011	2,617	15,350	7,229,440
	change	-10%	-10%	-9%
Shared ownership (part owned and part rented)	2001	30	343	133,693
	2011	82	368	173,760
	change	173%	7%	30%
Social rented: Rented from council (Local Authority)	2001	329	3,374	2,702,482
	2011	337	3,308	2,079,778
	change	2%	-2%	-23%
Rented from a housing association/registered social landlord	2001	215	1,158	1,238,246
	2011	298	1,396	1,823,772
	change	39%	21%	47%
Private rented	2001	1,321	3,137	1,798,864
	2011	2,604	6,186	3,715,924
	change	97%	97%	107%

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

- 3.20 This reaffirms the suitability of the town centre as a location for additional Affordable Housing units; this is likely to be on account of the mixed demographic, the proximity to public transport and the scale of development envisaged.
- 3.21 In the table below we set out how the supply of dwellings at the Borough level splits into market and Affordable Housing. This demonstrates that affordable housing has comprised 17% of delivery. The Council's current policy is to achieve 35% delivery of affordable housing on qualifying schemes.

Therefore, delivery has been skewed towards smaller schemes or not achieving the desired levels of affordable housing.

**Table 6: New Homes in the Borough of Woking, tenure split**

Supply of dwellings		Tenure split	
Year	Total net supply	Market	Affordable
2011/12	188	166	22
2012/13	273	259	14
2013/14	370	355	15
2014/15	66	61	5
2015/16	360	258	102
2016/17	399	233	166
2017/18	345	312	33
2018/19	231	199	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2232</b>	<b>1843</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Source: WBC Monitoring

3.22 Given the town centre’s suitability to the provision of dwellings within reach of people on modest incomes, this serves to highlight the importance of bringing forward development in this part of the Borough.

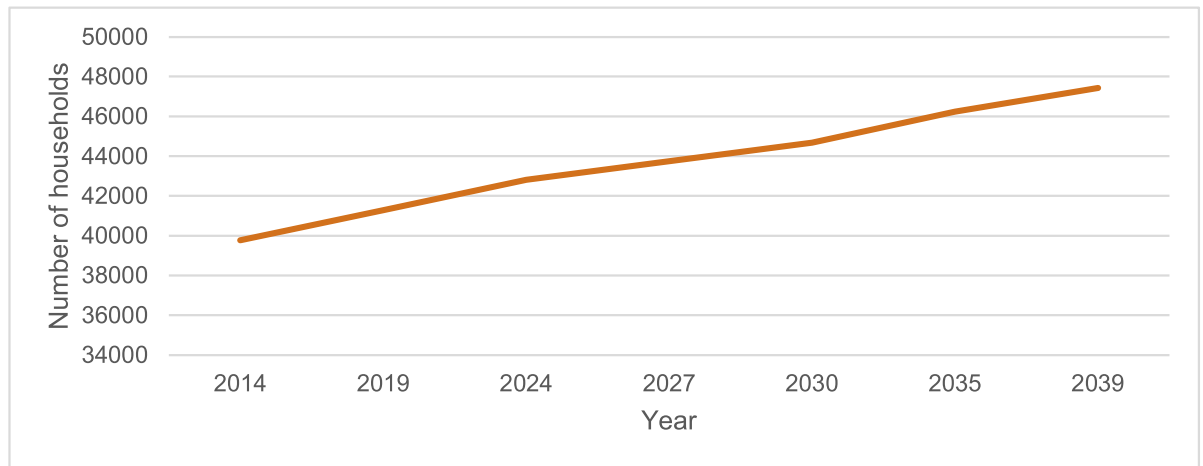
**Components of demand**

3.23 This section of the report reviews the trends in key components that inform demand i.e. household growth, average household size, age structure and household composition. As previously noted, the demand for dwellings in WTC extends beyond the geography of the town centre itself; indeed, in policy terms, the new homes built in the town centre are meant to satisfy demand at the Borough level. For this reason, data at the Borough geography is presented in this section of the study.

*Household Growth*

3.24 Figure 2 below presents the forecast growth in households between 2014 and 2039. This shows a very substantial growth from 39,778 in 2014 to 47,440 in 2039, an increase of 19% or 7,662 households.

**Figure 2: Change in household numbers, 2014–39, Woking Borough**

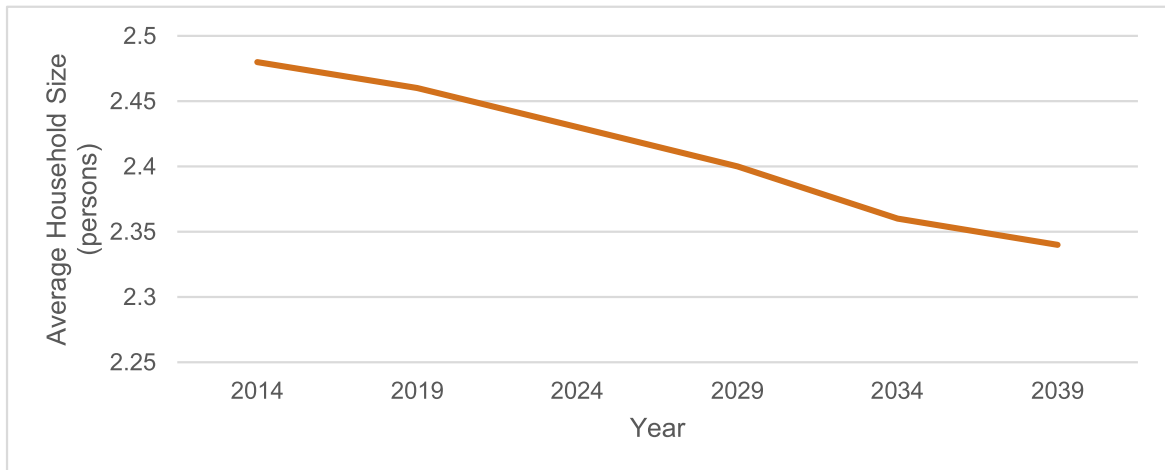


Source: MHCLG, 2014-based sub-national household projections

**Average Household Size**

3.25 The increase in household numbers is accompanied by a substantial reduction in household size over the same period, falling from 2.48 to 2.34 persons. This will have the effect of requiring additional dwellings to house the same number of people than in previous years as well as housing the additional population.

**Figure 3: Average Household Size, Woking Borough 2014-39**



Source: MHCLG, 2014-based sub-national household projections

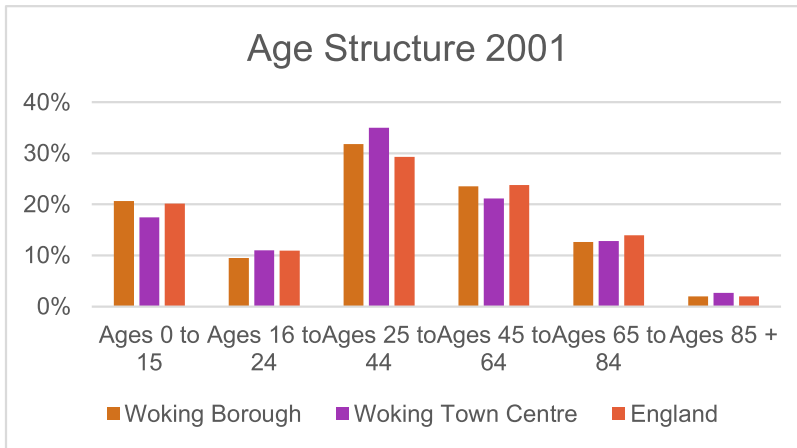
3.26 The growth in households together with declining household sizes in Woking Borough reinforces the case for maintaining a strong supply of new homes in coming years. This would include the smaller homes suitable for higher density development in WTC.



*Age Structure*

3.27 Figures 4 and 5 present the change in the age structure in WTC together with Woking Borough and England. The data shows that WTC possesses a higher proportion of the population that falls into the 25-44 age group than the other two geographies (exceeding the proportion this group represents in the wider Borough by 8%).

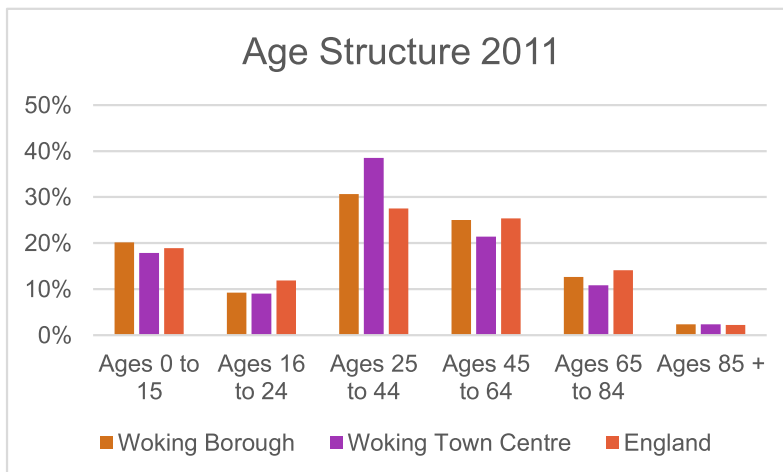
**Figure 4: Age Structure, Woking Borough, 2001**



Source: Census 2001

3.28 In addition, between 2001 and 2011, this group grew from 35% of the town centre population to 38% in 2011. In contrast, the wider Borough has a larger proportion of older households, in particular those aged 65 and above.

**Figure 5: Age Structure, Woking Borough, 2011**



Source: Census 2011

3.29 The table below presents data drawn from the 2014-based household projections setting out the forecast change in the age structure of those nominated as head of a household (Household Representatives) in Woking Borough between 2014 and 2039.

**Table 7: Forecast change to population age structure, Woking Borough**

	2014		2039	
	HR	%	HR	%
All	717	2%	659	1%
Under 25	5,427	14%	4,827	10%
25-34	8,850	22%	8,253	17%
35-44	8,189	21%	8,581	18%
45-54	6,388	16%	8,727	18%
55-64	5,005	13%	6,720	14%
65-74	3,622	9%	5,963	13%
75-84	1,580	4%	3,711	8%
85+				

*Source: 2014-based household projections*

3.30 The data indicates an increase in the proportion of all households headed by a person aged 65 and above. The number of these households is forecast to increase to 16,394 over the period, or 61% (rounded). In addition, the number of households headed by a person aged between 25 and 34 is forecast to fall by 600 households, or 4% (rounded).

3.31 These trends reflect both the ageing population as well as the difficulty of younger age groups establishing independent households in the context of worsening affordability. However as presented previously WTC is well suited to supply smaller affordable market homes. Homes of this size are likely to appeal to younger households as well as an older population seeking to down-size.

3.32 The table below presents data showing how household composition changed between 2001 to 2011. This shows that one-person households have increased in the town centre area by 29%. In contrast, the wider Borough has seen almost no growth. This growth has been concentrated in those below retirement age.

**Table 8: Household composition, Woking Borough, Woking Town Centre and England**

Household Composition	Woking Borough			Woking Town Centre			England
	2001	2011	Change	2001	2011	Change	Change
<b>All categories: Household composition</b>	36,941	39,467	<b>7%</b>	6,195	8,308	<b>34%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>One-person household (OPH)</b>	10,449	10,499	<b>0%</b>	2,107	2,717	<b>29%</b>	<b>8%</b>
OPH: Aged +65	4,776	4,501	<b>-6%</b>	871	938	<b>8%</b>	<b>-7%</b>
OPH: Other	5,673	5,998	<b>6%</b>	1,236	1,779	<b>44%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>One family household (OFO)</b>	24,230	25,747	<b>6%</b>	3,621	4,689	<b>29%</b>	<b>5%</b>
OFO All aged +65	3,162	3,114	<b>-2%</b>	466	465	<b>0%</b>	<b>-2%</b>
OFO: Couple: <b>No children</b>	5,119	5,153	<b>1%</b>	781	1,038	<b>33%</b>	<b>2%</b>
OFO: couple: <b>Dependent children</b>	8,033	8,430	<b>5%</b>	1,200	1,541	<b>28%</b>	<b>-6%</b>
OFO: Couple: <b>All non-dependent children</b>	2,140	2,389	<b>12%</b>	286	350	<b>22%</b>	<b>1%</b>
OFO: Cohabiting couple: <b>No children</b>	2,172	2,267	<b>4%</b>	469	655	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>
OFO: Cohabiting couple: <b>Dependent children</b>	805	1,243	<b>54%</b>	88	181	<b>106%</b>	<b>35%</b>
OFO: Cohabiting couple: <b>Non-dependent Children</b>	85	216	<b>154%</b>	6	24	<b>300%</b>	<b>64%</b>
OFO: Lone parent: <b>Dependent children</b>	1,705	1,801	<b>6%</b>	204	255	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>
OFO: Lone parent: <b>Non-dependent children</b>	1,009	1,134	<b>12%</b>	121	180	<b>49%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Other household types</b>	2,262	3,221	<b>42%</b>	467	902	<b>93%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Source: Census 2001 and 2011

3.33 A mix of family households increased in WTC between 2001 and 2011. Couples without children (married and co-habiting) are the single largest group, indicating the presence of younger age groups.

### Future Household Growth

- 3.34 In the table below we identify projected change in household types in Woking Borough over the period to 2039. This draws on the 2014-based household projections to align with the standard method for housing need.
- 3.35 The table indicates that a substantial number of new households will be one person and single couple households. In contrast, the overall proportion including a dependent child falling over the period from 33% to 30%.

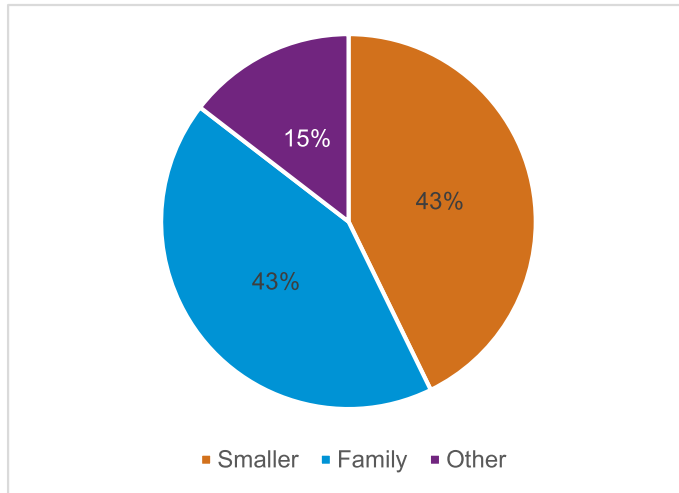
**Table 9: Change in Household Composition, Woking Borough 2014-39**

	2014		2039	
		%		%
One person	10,259	26%	11,586	24%
Couple and no other adult	10,402	26%	12,352	26%
Couple and one or more other adult	3,471	9%	5,531	12%
Households with dependent children	13,137	33%	14,346	30%
Other	2,510	6%	3,625	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,779</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>47,440</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: MHCLG, 2014-based household projections

- 3.36 While household composition is a weak predictor of demand for sizes of market homes given that households can buy dwellings of any size if they can afford to do so, it is nevertheless worth noting that these trends point towards the provision of dwellings of certain sizes. The figure below illustrates the broad size of home based on the change in households, indicating a broadly even split between smaller and family dwellings, with 15% catering to other household types, such as houses in multiple occupation.

**Figure 6: Broad Sizes of home based on change in household type, Woking Borough**



Source: MHCLG, 2014-based household projections

3.37 In order to avoid overcrowding, it is sufficient for a household of 1-2 people to live in a dwelling of not more than two bedrooms. Given the growth in one person and couple households are forecast to account for a large proportion of overall growth over the period, it is not unreasonable for a substantial proportion of development to focus on dwellings suited to their needs. WTC represents one of the most sustainable areas in the Borough to do so.

## Conclusions

3.38 Bringing the evidence in this section together, there a strong economic case exists for the continued delivery of housing in WTC and an important conceptual base-line for arriving at an Absorption Rate.

## Supply

- Of the 2,748 new homes that were delivered in the Borough between 2001 and 2011, 47% (1,286 dwellings), were delivered in the town centre.
- With 1,242 new flats being delivered between 2001 and 2011 WTC has been the focus development of this type in the Borough in recent years. This reinforces the validity of focussing additional supply in WTC.
- WTC plays a particularly important role in the supply of smaller 1- and 2-bedroom dwellings. The area accounted for 65% of total supply of these sizes of home in the Borough.
- The number of households living in the PRS in WTC grew over the 2001-2011 period by 1,283, or 97%. This accounted for 42% of PRS growth in the Borough as a whole.

- Considering the rate of delivery of new homes in WTC between 2001 and 2018, it is possible to arrive at a practical Absorption Rate of between 83 and 139 dpa.
- While delivery in WTC in the financial years 2012/13 and 2014/15 is above trend at 182 dpa, the three subsequent years saw a substantial fall to a three-year average of 17 dpa.
- WTC accounts for a high share of the affordable housing, indicating the suitability of the town centre as a location for additional affordable housing units.
- Given the suitability of WTC to the provision of dwellings within reach of people on modest incomes, the lack of new affordable units reinforces the importance of bringing forward development in WTC.

### **Components of demand**

- The number of households in the Borough is projected to increase substantially between 2014 and 2039 by 7,662 households. This growth coupled with declining household sizes reinforces the case for maintaining a strong supply of new homes in coming years.
- The growth in one person and couple households is forecast to account for a large proportion of overall growth over the period. It is therefore not unreasonable for a substantial proportion of development to focus on dwellings suited to their needs.
- This would require a growth in smaller 1- and 2- bedroom homes best suited for higher density development. WTC represents one of the most sustainable areas in the Borough to do so.
- WTC appears to be well-suited to addressing the housing needs of growing market segments including older households and newly forming households. This is due to its track-record in the practical delivery of smaller dwellings sited close to community and transport infrastructure.

## 4. MARKET SIGNALS

4.1 In the previous section we considered the evidence of supply of dwellings and demand coming from demographic trends. This assessed whether the economic fundamentals exist to support development at the pace as envisaged in the Woking Town Centre Site Development Schedule (WTCDS).

4.2 This section of the report considers a range of “market signals” that examines whether demand is or is likely to be in excess of supply. These are:

- House prices;
- Rents;
- Affordability; and
- Jobs growth

### House prices

4.3 House price change provides an indication of whether the supply of housing has been sufficient to meet demand for market sale dwellings. Where house prices have seen a sustained increase over time, this would suggest an imbalance between supply and demand, prompting an increase in supply.

4.4 However, it is important to note/caveat that the substantial increases in house prices in the South East can, in part, be explained by demand from institutional or private investors for buy to let properties. This in itself has been bolstered by historically low interest rates. For these reasons, increasing the supply of housing may only have a weak impact on house prices.

4.5 Furthermore, in delivering additional housing it is therefore important to be aware that these conditions may change. In the event of such a change, this may precipitate a fall in prices and a perception of over-supply of housing.

4.6 Nevertheless, the delivery of additional homes may help constrain housing costs, both market and rents, and also provide a means of addressing misalignments in supply, for example the need for smaller dwelling to facilitate down-sizing.

4.7 The table below sets out house price change at 5 yearly intervals from 1995. This shows the very substantial increase in prices across all geographies presented in the table. The cumulative increase over 20 years of 271.4% in Woking is broadly in line with the South East, but exceeds the Surrey and the England average (27.4% and 45.2% respectively).

**Table 10: Change in house prices, 1998-2018**

	2018	5 years		10 years		15 years		20 years	
		Change	Annual change	Change	Annual change	Change	Annual change	Change	Annual change
Woking	£390,000	30.0%	5.4%	56.0%	4.5%	105.3%	4.9%	271.4%	7.4%
Surrey	£430,000	28.7%	5.2%	50.9%	4.2%	100.0%	4.7%	244.0%	6.9%
South East	£313,000	28.4%	5.1%	42.3%	3.6%	95.6%	4.6%	264.0%	7.2%
England	£230,000	17.9%	3.4%	32.9%	2.9%	78.3%	3.9%	226.2%	6.6%

*Source: Land Registry Price Paid data*

- 4.8 The same can also be said for the more recent trend (5 and 10 year) where the house price growth in Woking has been faster than wider comparators.
- 4.9 Taken at face value, this suggests a significant under-supply of dwellings across all these geographies and may be accepted as a market signal that supports the delivery of additional homes.

## Rents

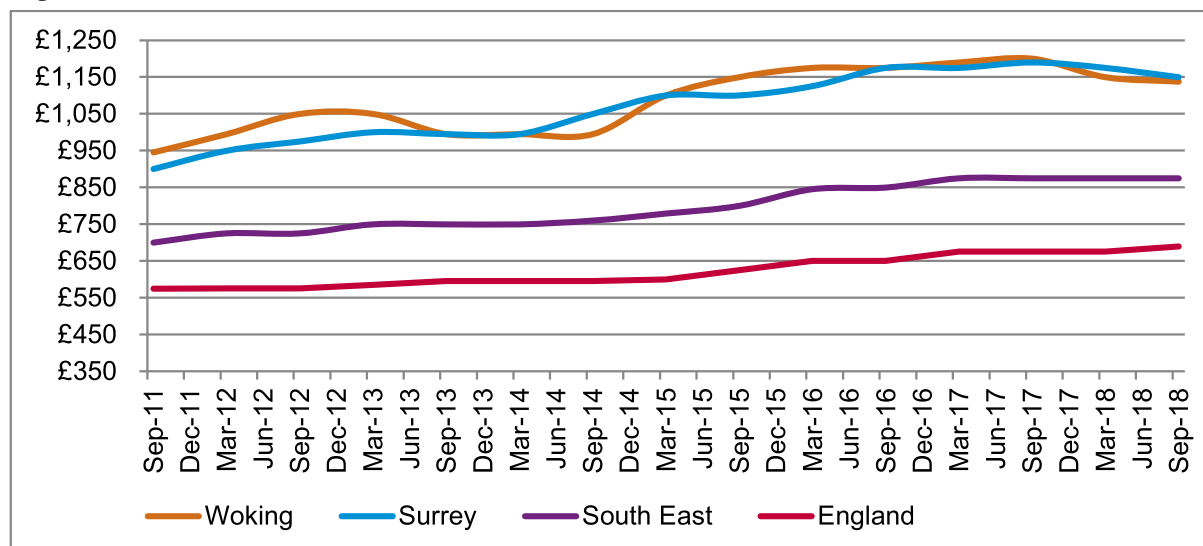
- 4.10 Rents, as an alternative indicator to housing costs are a good indication of the cost of housing given that the price paid is not influenced by factors such as the cost of borrowing (the need to service mortgage debt) and the investment potential of a dwelling as an asset.
- 4.11 For this reason, trends in rents are arguably a better indicator of whether the supply and demand for housing are in balance. Moreover, in bringing forward development at the pace envisaged in the WTCDS it will require a mix of tenures, within which build-to-rent dwellings are likely to play a part.
- 4.12 The figure below presents trends in rents for Woking Borough, Surrey, the South East and England. From this data, it is apparent that median rents in the Borough are closely correlated with Surrey as a whole. However, they are also substantially above median rents for the regional and national levels, indicating the cost of property in Woking is relatively high.
- 4.13 Since 2011, median rents have increased in Woking Borough from around £950 per calendar month (pcm) to around £1,140 pcm, an increase of 20%. While this growth is modest over a 7-year period (averaging around 2.8% each year), it has nevertheless had the effect of stretching affordability in the Borough (this is considered in the context of the Consumer Price Index later in this report).
- 4.14 This topic will be considered in more detail later in this report, but based on a median full time pay for individual workers of £30,404<sup>6</sup>, the PRS is not comfortably affordable to median income households.

<sup>6</sup> Annual survey of hours and earnings (ASHE) 2019 data



If we accept the assumption that the cost of housing should not exceed 37% of household income.<sup>7</sup>  
 At a rent of £1,140, the income threshold for median PRS accommodation would be around £38,000.

**Figure 7: Median rents**

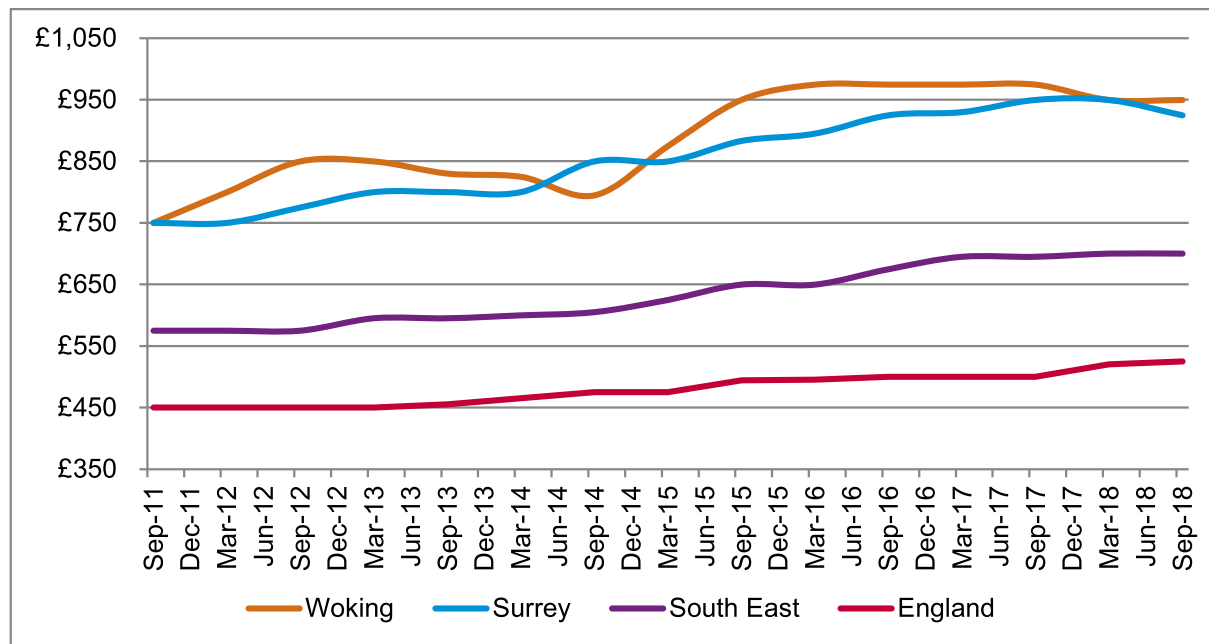


Source: Valuation Office Agency

- 4.15 The figure below sets out data for Lower Quartile PRS dwellings in Woking Borough and comparators from 2011 to 2018. Rents for this type of home have increased in Woking more steeply over the period than PRS priced at the median, from £750pcm to £950pcm, an increase of 27% (rounded).
- 4.16 This suggests there is very little PRS stock that is affordable to even half of all households (those below the median). Applying GL Hearn's rent affordability calculator would suggest at £950 and no more than 35% of household income spent on housing then this would require an income of around £32,500.
- 4.17 In the absence of subsidised housing, such households will face a dilemma of either living in a smaller home or living with someone in a shared household or somewhere else, one that may be more distant from their place of work.

<sup>7</sup> GL Hearn has developed an assessment of income thresholds that relate to different levels of rent. The lower the rent, the lower the percentage of income it should absorb, on the basis that households likely to occupy such housing will need to retain the lion's share of their income to cover other essentials and leave some disposable income.

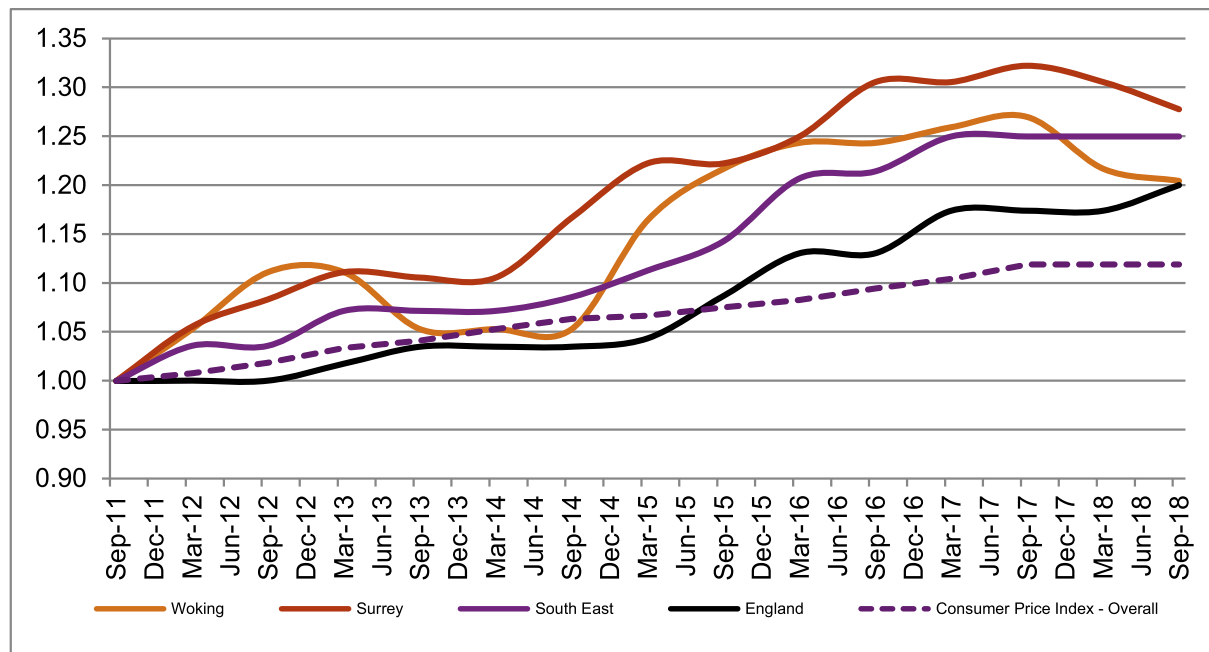
**Figure 8: Lower Quartile rents**



Source: Valuation Office Agency

- 4.18 In order to explore the affordability of PRS in more detail, it is worth reviewing the relative change in the cost of housing against inflation. In the figure below we present trends in two measures of inflation, the overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the CPI with all but the cost of energy extracted. These provide an indication of the real growth in prices and the subsequent pressure on household budgets as a result.
- 4.19 The Figure shows housing costs have risen more steeply than inflation. In the case of Woking Borough, median rents have increased by around 20% from September 2011 while the overall CPI grew by around 13%.
- 4.20 This suggests that housing costs will account for a larger proportion of household expenditure in September 2018 compared with 7 years previously. It also emphasises the need to monitor housing costs and adopt policies that support the principle that a substantial proportion of household incomes should be reserved for non-housing costs.

**Figure 9: Rents and inflation (Consumer Price Index) expressed as an index (base date September 2011)**

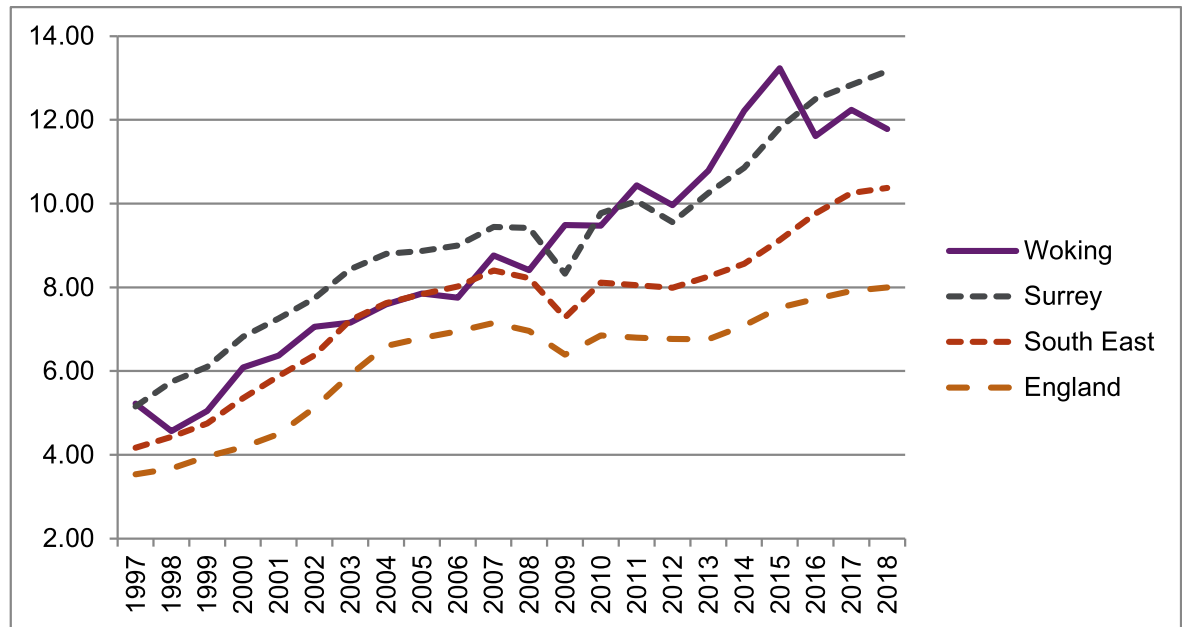


Source: VOA

### Affordability ratios

- 4.21 The figure below presents data on the workplace-based Median Affordability Ratio (MAR) for Woking Borough, the county and regional and national geographies since 1997. This provides an indication of the affordability of market purchase dwellings based on the salaries of individual people working in these geographies.
- 4.22 The relatively steep gradient of the trend line for Woking and Surrey illustrates the worsening affordability. This overall level in Woking also demonstrates the boroughs relative unaffordability compared to these wider areas.
- 4.23 Recent improvements to affordability mean that the borough is more affordable than Surrey. The MAR reached a peak in 2015 of 13.24 in Woking Borough, before falling back to 11.78 in 2018. Woking has historically relied to some degree on the investment and buy-to-let market; as a result of national policy shifts, the market in Woking (and in WTC particularly) has weakened in recent years.

**Figure 10: Ratio of median house prices to gross annual workplace-based earnings (median) 1997-2018**

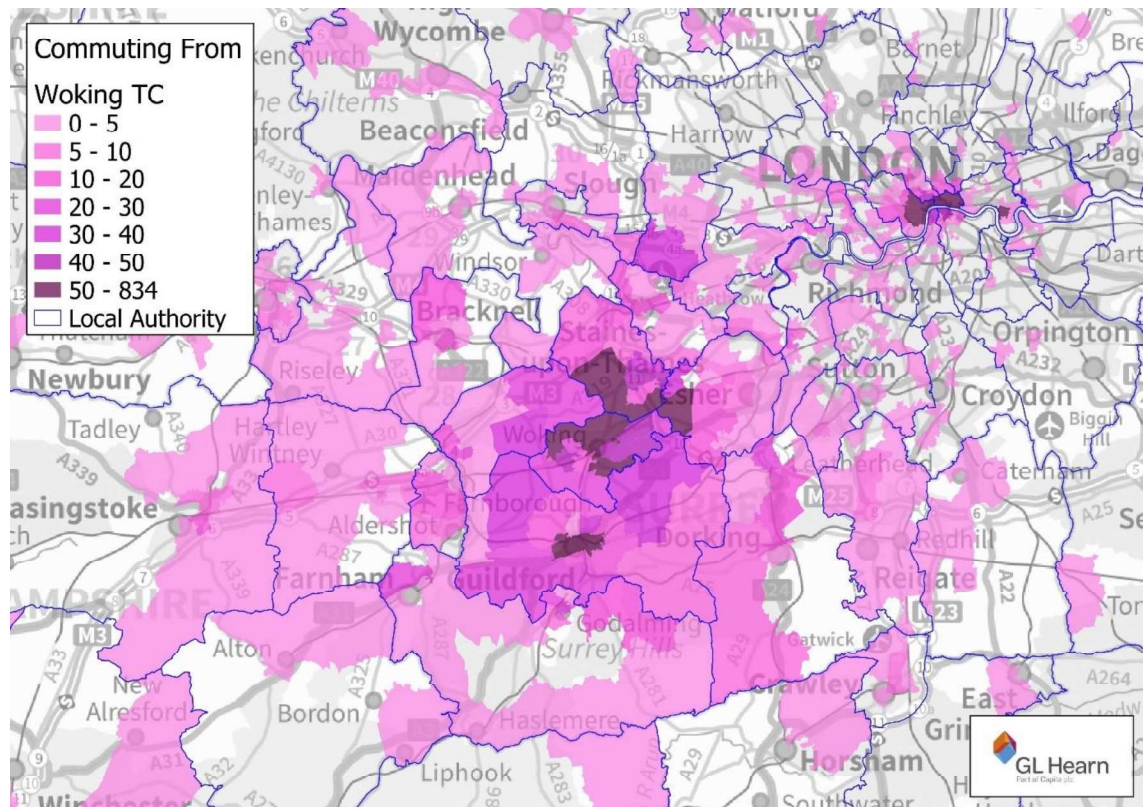


Source: MHCLG

### Jobs growth

- 4.24 Earlier in this report, we emphasised the importance of taking into consideration demand for dwellings in WTC stemming from those seeking a manageable commute to their place of work. In the Figure below we present commuting patterns of the 4,524 individuals living in WTC.
- 4.25 This data is drawn from the Census 2011 and while this data is likely to be out of date in terms of numbers, the patterns it describes are like to remain robust. It is therefore reasonable to use this as a guide as to where residents of WTC work.
- 4.26 As the figure below demonstrates, a large proportion of people live and work in Woking and Guildford. There are however a significant number of people who commute into Westminster, the City and Canary Wharf.

**Figure 11: Map of commuting flows**



Source: Census 2011

- 4.27 The table below shows the local authorities in which jobs held by people living in Woking cluster. This demonstrated the seven local authority areas that account for the majority of commuting journeys from WTC (51%). This shows the importance of the local Borough economy to WTC residents, given that it accounts for 29% of all places of employment of people living within it.
- 4.28 As Identified in Figure x, Guildford also constitutes an important centre of employment, accounting for 6% of all commuting journeys. This demonstrates the interlinkages within the HMA.
- 4.29 In addition, Westminster and the City of London together account for 10% of commuting journeys. This illustrates the degree to which Woking is integrated into London’s “mega-city region”. Furthermore, while direct employment may be locally centred, the businesses themselves are likely to service the London economy.

**Table 11: Key commuting relationships**

Local Authority	Number of commuters	Percent
Woking	1,300	29%
Guilford	256	6%
City of London	240	5%
Westminster	219	5%
Runnymede	139	3%
Elmbridge	97	2%
Tower Hamlets	73	2%
Other	2,200	49%
Total	4,524	100%

Source: Census 2011

- 4.30 The justification for additional housing growth in Woking Town Centre relies in part on the prospects for economic growth (and associated increase in jobs) within these centres of employment. In understanding the prospect for growth, this study relies heavily on the Woking Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 (WEDS), produced by independent consultants, Matthews Associates.
- 4.31 To provide a baseline however, it is worth citing WBC's clarification questions provided to Homes England in December 2018. This document advances the comparative performance of ONS' West Surrey NUTS3 area in terms of total GVA and GVA per capita in comparison to East Surrey and the UK. The document also demonstrates the area has exhibited strong growth since the 2008/9 downturn.<sup>8</sup>
- 4.32 WEDS sets out the Borough's ambitions and gathers together the evidence to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Overall, it finds that Woking has the potential to become the region's leading economic hub<sup>9</sup>.
- 4.33 We also note that, according to WBC, Enterprise M3 LEP continues to identify WTC a growth centre of sub-regional significance.<sup>10</sup> Key observations from the WEDS study include,
- Woking has a proportionally higher number of large businesses than Surrey or the South East<sup>11</sup>;
  - business population has grown by 25% since 2010<sup>12</sup>;

<sup>8</sup> Homes England: Forward Funding Review, 21/12/18, page 6

<sup>9</sup> Matthews Associates, Woking Economic Development Strategy, 2017-2022, page 3

<sup>10</sup> WBC, Woking Market Analysis Report, page 2

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, page 7

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, page 8

- Woking's business density (no. businesses/10,000 working age people) of 795 in 2015 exceeds that of the South East at 705<sup>13</sup>;
  - the proportion of knowledge-based businesses in Woking was 27% compared to 17% in Surrey and 14% in the region as a whole;<sup>14</sup>
  - in 2015/16 just 2.4% of the working age population was unemployed compared to 3.2% in Surrey and 4.1% in the South East as a whole; and
  - the location of the Borough, close to Gatwick and Heathrow and benefitting from a 25-minute rail time to central London provides key locational advantages.<sup>15</sup>
- 4.34 The report concludes that Woking is rapidly growing as a business location.<sup>16</sup> The study does however note that *"the affordability of housing is a key issue for both employers as they struggle to recruit and retain people, and employees as they try and find affordable accommodation across the Borough"*.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.35 The London economy remains one of the most dynamic in the world, with a highly diversified economy fully integrated into the wider global economy. However, the impact of macro-economic shocks, such as Britain's departure from the EU and the overall slowdown of the global economy as a result of increasing protectionism, are difficult to predict.
- 4.36 WEDS however cites Treasury, Oxford Economics and LSE forecasts that suggest a contraction in UK GDP of between 3% and 8% associated with Brexit. They predict that this will have an impact on the prospect for future growth in the London's economy and that of the wider South East, not least the predicted weakening of the capital's role as a global financial centre.
- 4.37 Despite these predictions, WEDS paints an optimistic picture of Woking's prospects outside the EU,
- "Although some of Woking's key sectors have been identified at possible risk by the predicted negative impacts of Brexit, Woking's underlying locational advantage within the south-east; adjacency to London; good road, rail, air connectivity; quality business environment; knowledge based workforce and business friendly local government all will be factors in positively positioning Woking to be resilient to the negative impacts of Brexit and to take advantage of new opportunities that independence from the EU could bring. With the UK expected to widen its global reach beyond the EU, Woking's aspirations to be the region's leading global business location directly align with this."*
- 4.38 In addition, WEDS cites natural spill-over effects on Woking from London's growing population<sup>18</sup>; this is likely to support demand for dwellings in WTC as people seek affordable accommodation with reach of the capital.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, page 9

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, page 10

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pages 29, 30

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, page 12

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, page 33

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, page 42



4.39 In summary the area has many locational and commercial advantages from which to attract businesses. As a result it is likely to attract more businesses which will require additional workforce.

### Key messages from Market Signals

4.40 Bringing the evidence together, the following key messages emerge:

- compared with the wider South East and England, Woking is a relatively expensive place to live, with median rents achieving £1,140 in 2018;
- median income households (£30,700), have difficulty accessing PRS. This leads to households either living in unsuitable dwellings or living elsewhere, resulting in unsustainable transport choices;
- Increases in rents have been above the rate of inflation which is likely to have resulted in a higher proportion of household income being spent on housing costs. This results in household budgets being stretched, increasing the risk of "exclusion" from leisure and recreation activities;
- house prices have increased significantly over the past twenty years, by as much as 271% in Woking, the largest increase of the four geographies considered in this study. This indicates a shortage of housing and provides a sound rationale for increasing supply in the context of other indicators pointing to misalignments in the local housing market and increasing rents;
- the workplace-based median Affordability Ratio provides an important illustration of the unaffordability of for-sale dwellings in Woking;
- commuting patterns show a majority of WTC residents (29%) work in the wider Borough of Woking, although a significant minority travel to Guildford and into the West End and City or London;
- the strength of the housing market in Woking is partially dependent on the capacity of the regional economy to generate jobs; the WEDS study presents compelling evidence of the strength of the local economy, and its resilience in the face of economic shocks (for example the impact of Brexit); and
- the economy of the London City Region is one of the most dynamic in the world, supported by locational and structural advantages that will enable it to perform strongly over the medium to longer term. This should provide confidence that, short-term shocks notwithstanding, the property market in Woking will remain buoyant over the timescales relevant to this study.

4.41 From the evidence gathered, it is reasonable to suggest demand for dwellings in WTC may be stronger in the coming years than an analysis of purely demographic evidence would suggest.



## 5. THE ABSORPTION RATE

5.1 The Absorption Rate in WTC is strongly influenced by two factors:

- developers' commercial view as to the rate at which new units of market housing may be fed into the local market in a way that supports their business models; and
- the delivery of Affordable Housing into the market.

5.2 This study uses the tenures set out in the WTCSDS as a proxy for the business models of developers. This is because choice of tenure mix informs investor appetite for risk, the time horizon over which returns are anticipated and which segment of the market the developer is seeking to sell to.

5.3 Market tenures in WTC are dwellings for market sale (volume house-builder model) and build-to-rent. Affordable housing is split between Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership.

5.4 The notion of tenure is also crucial in arriving at the overall Absorption Rate (AR) given that Build Out Rates (BOR) may be accelerated by managing tenures to optimise diversity. This is because different tenures appeal to different market segments, and diversification in theory enables different schemes being brought forward at the same time. Moreover, PRS and AH are counter-cyclical to “for sale” market homes, and therefore may be progressed while the for-sale property market is weak.

### Dwellings for market sale

#### Baseline Build-Out Rate (BOR)

5.5 In order to arrive at a plausible AR, it is worth considering what has been achieved at other places. The table below reproduces data from Reigate & Banstead in relation to Lead-In Times (LIT) and BOR in the Borough. These cover the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018. As these are reasonably comparable boroughs then much of the analysis may be used to form an understanding of what may be achievable in Woking also.

5.6 Firstly, it is interesting to note that while the LIT is broadly equal for sites of different sizes between 5 and 300 net units, varying between 742 and 1,023 days, with there being no clear relationship between site capacity and LIT (with the conclusion that LITs are driven by other factors, such as location and whether it is brown or greenfield, for example) there is a clear relationship between site capacity and BOR, with sites at the smaller end of the scale taking between 120 and 150 days to build out, and larger sites taking more time.

- 5.7 Given the capacity of the thirteen sites in the Town Centre range from 120 to 1,250 units, the data from Table 12 that is most helpful in understanding BORs in WTC is therefore that relating to schemes of 300+ net units.
- 5.8 Once planning permission has been achieved, Reigate and Banstead recorded an average time to completion of all the units of 2,882 days, or 7.9 years.

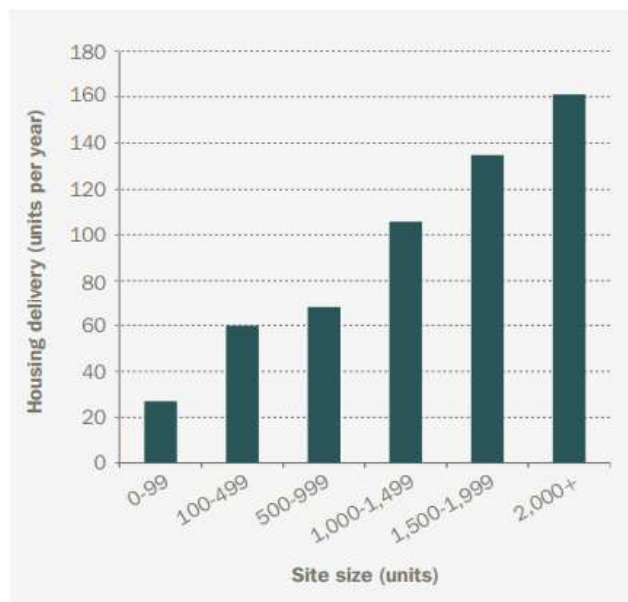
**Table 12: Lead-In Times and Build Out Rates**

Type of Permission	Lead-in Time	Build out rate
All sites	927 days	212 days
Large Sites (5 or more net units)	794 days	279 days
Large Sites (Planning Permission)		
5-10 net units	809 days	119 days
11-20 net units	730 days	154 days
21-30 net units	No data	No data
31-40 net units	742 days	225 days
41-50 net units	902 days	782 days
51-100 net units	1023 days	No data
<b>300+ net units</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>2,882 days</b>

Source: Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

- 5.9 The figure below reproduces data from Litchfield's "Start to Finish" study, which considers the pace dwellings to be completed. This considers the site size and whether the site is greenfield or brownfield.
- 5.10 A key variable is the size of the site in question. As illustrated while larger sites deliver more homes each year, even the largest sites of more than 2,000 dwellings only achieve on average BOR of around 160 dwelling per annum.

**Figure 12: Average annual build rate by site size**



Source: Lichfields

- 5.11 The sites analysed in the Lichfields study comprised 70 different strategic housing sites delivering 500 or more homes to understand what factors might influence delivery. For contrast 83 “small sites” delivering between 50 and 499 homes were also researched to provide further analysis of trends in LITs and BOR at varying scales.
- 5.12 In referencing this study it is therefore important to note the condition of the sites in WTC. All the sites are, with the exception of the Goldsworth Road site, at the smaller end of the scale analysed in Start to Finish and on brownfield land.
- 5.13 The findings in the Lichfields study relating to the sites included on brownfield land are therefore most relevant. The study detected that brownfield sites on average deliver at lower rates than their greenfield counterparts both overall and across the different size bandings.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Start to Finish, November 2016, page 19

**Figure 13: Previous land use by size and average annual build out rate**

	Site Size (dwellings)	Number of sites in this group	Average Annual Build-out Rate
Greenfield Sites	500-999	14	86
	1,000-1,499	9	122
	1,500-1,999	7	142
	2,000+	13	171
	<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>128</b>
Brownfield Sites	500-999	16	52
	1,000-1,499	3	73
	1,500-1,999	1	84
	2,000+2,000+	7	148
	<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>83</b>

Source: Lichfields

- 5.14 Working from the figures above, it is possible to suggest that small sites of 0-99 dwellings can be forecast to deliver around 22 dpa; sites of a larger size on brownfield land, between 100 and 999 dwellings, may be expected to deliver between 50 and 60 dpa, and sites larger than this between 1,000 and 1,499 dpa can be expected to deliver around 70 dpa.
- 5.15 It is worth citing a further study before arriving at an AR assumption. In 2008, the University of Glasgow undertook a study that considers the determinants of sales rates (similar to the build-out rate for market purchase) in private residential development.
- 5.16 In Table x below we reproduce Table 3 from that study that details findings for brownfield development (comprising mainly 2, 3- and 4-bedroom apartments). The study suggests an average optimal sales rate of about 59 dpa for greenfield houses and 67 dpa for brownfield apartments<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> University of Glasgow/DCLG, Factors Affecting Housing Build-Out Rates, February 2008, page 7

**Table 13: Optimal Average Sales Rates: Brownfield**

Sales Rate	All respondents	Volume Developers	Medium-sized developers	Smaller developers
1 per 2/3 days	1	0	0	1
1 per week	7	2	3	2
1 per 10 days	3	0	2	1
1 per fortnight	0	0	0	0

Source: DCLG/University of Glasgow

5.17 Based on a review of the literature presented in this section, it is reasonable to assume a baseline AR of between 50 and 70dpa could be achieved on each of the for-sale developments on the WTC sites. Given the capacity of these sites this would result in a prospective completion timeframe of between 7-8 years for schemes in excess of 300 dwellings.

**Adjusted Build-out rate**

5.18 Drawing the strands of this study together it is worth considering whether particular circumstances exist that support an adjustment to the baseline BOR. This considers three factors:

*Demographic and market signals evidence*

- WTC has become an established centre of growth in the Borough (and wider HMA) since 2001, and has seen delivery of smaller homes, suited to newly forming households and people wishing to down-size.
- WTC has also yielded a disproportionately large share of Affordable Housing and is suitable for lower budget households.
- The data from the 2014-based household projections relating to the growth in the numbers of households, together with declining household sizes in the Borough, supports the case for maintaining a strong supply of new homes in coming years.
- Given the growth in one person and couple households are forecast to account for a large proportion of overall growth, it is not unreasonable for a substantial proportion of development to focus on dwellings suited to their needs. WTC represents one of the most sustainable areas in the Borough to do so and the likely densities within town centre development would necessitate delivery of smaller homes.
- House-price, rents and affordability indicators collectively make a strong argument for substantially more development in WTC in future years;
- The data relating to both increasing rents and deteriorations in affordability are particularly telling.

- Woking is well integrated into the London City Region, and displays the hallmarks of a dynamic local economy providing the resident workforce access to wide range of jobs across a diversified economic base.
- One brake on economic development is however the shortage of affordable market and social housing in the Borough.

### **Commentary from local agents**

5.19 In order to understand current market conditions, GL Hearn approached sales agents in WTC. Two agents were able to respond; in the commentary to follow anonymise their comments referring to them as Agents 1 and 2. A summary of their responses is set out below.

#### *How would you describe current market conditions in the town centre?*

5.20 Both agents were pessimistic about the current market.

5.21 Agent 1 commented that there is an “over-supply of dwellings. We’ve had a very challenging year to two years. When talking to developers they say they are candid that it is a buyers’ market.”

5.22 Agent 2 noted that the “the market for flats is slow at the moment; there seems to be an over-supply of housing. A lot of people sitting, deciding not to move due to the uncertainty. Is difficult to sell units.”

#### *What factors are affecting/driving the market?*

5.23 Agent 1 commented that “Brexit has affected the market since 2017, prompting a more conservative attitude...apartments fell in price due to lack of any buy-to-let demand. Buy-to-let was a major market during 2010/11 onwards, but has choked off due to the Government’s tax policies.”

5.24 Agent 2 commented that “Brexit, Stamp Duty and Help to Buy” are the key factors affecting the market.

#### *How many dwellings did you sell in the town centre in 2018? In 2016?*

5.25 Rather than provide specific data, Agent 1 suggested property prices in the town centre had fallen since the EU Referendum. In 2016 a property valued at £220-£230,000 would now sell for £180,000; a one-bed flat valued at £280,000 to £290,000 in 2016 would sell in today’s market for £230,000 to £250,000; a two-bed flat valued at £350- £400,000 in 2016 would now sell for around £300,000.

5.26 Agent 2 commented that transaction numbers have been low in recent years and agents have been hit with contracting fee levels, leading to a number of business closures.

*Are there specific types of property in particularly short supply?*

- 5.27 Agent 1 commented that there is a “sweet spot of 2/3 bed houses - £250K, £300K; £400K; people prefer freehold (leasehold rap)”; today buyers tend “to be motivated by a “life reason” to move (there are fewer) first time buyers. (They) tend to be wealthier people”.
- 5.28 Agent 2 commented that “three bed houses are relatively easy to sell. Three percent stamp duty has (reduced demand) for buy-to-let property. Only investors left are those with limited companies, but (we) have lost masses. First Time Buyers have Help-to-Buy – this means they can afford three-bed houses. Escalating ground rent makes flats less attractive. Help-to-Buy helps people buy more expensive dwellings, but does not help people on lower incomes.”

*How do you see the market changing?*

- 5.29 Agent 2: Brexit – will dominate everything. Mortgage rates are likely to remain low for the foreseeable future given they respond to wider economy, and the likelihood of a recession. This is not seen as likely to boost the market for sale homes however as low rates have become the norm.

*In your view a how many units would it be prudent to release into the market on any one scheme without “flooding the market”*

- 5.30 Agent 1: “The new central scheme sold at a rate of 2-4 units/week sales per week in 2013. (We are currently) in conversation with developer with planning for 700 units - but does not have confidence to bring forward all at once. Over a ten-year time frame (we think) 70 units per year - 2 sales per week (would be achievable)”.
- 5.31 Agent 2: Would not like to see any further flats on the market, the preference is for houses. But this is the result of policy – Stamp Duty reform and Help to Buy. Help-to-Buy does not work for people looking to buy in the £100 – 150K range as they simply do not have the funds/credit history to buy anything. New Homes developer will not release all at the same time, but Build Out Rates depends on activity of other competing developers. Shouldn't build more flats in the town centre for the time being.

### **Consultation Summary**

- The feedback from Estate Agents seeking to sell units in the current market is down-beat; the consensus is there is an over-supply of dwellings and this has exerted a downward trend in house-prices since 2016. This is partly explained by a weakness in demand from Buy-to-Let investors due to the withdrawal of tax relief on mortgage payments.
- Agent 1: In terms of sales rates, there has been a decline since the top of the market in 2013 where Barratt's New Central scheme achieved up-to 4 units per week, to a rate of 1-2 dwellings per week in the current market, or around 70 dpa.

### **Number of outlets**

- 5.32 It is conceivable that the largest site in WTC at Goldsworth Road may have more than one sales office, and may as a result achieve higher build out rates. In addition, the thirteen sites collectively have the potential to operate in a similar manner to many outlets on a large site, although the effectiveness of this will depend greatly on the diversity of products available.

### **Competitor behaviour**

- 5.33 Developers pay close attention to the activities of other developers bringing forward sites in close proximity to their own. The presence therefore of a number of developers releasing product into the market at the same time will have a dampening effect in the overall Absorption Rate.
- 5.34 It has however been observed that the effect of a competitor securing planning consent is modest, particularly once construction programmes are ready to start or are underway. Most house-builders indicate that this would be unlikely to delay starting development or changing their mix.<sup>21</sup>
- 5.35 This finding should not come as a surprise given that new dwellings constitute only a small proportion of the housing stock, and the true extent of "competition" also includes the second-hand stock on the market at the time of sale. Moreover, the market for dwellings in WTC extends over a wide geographical area typically across the HMA. Therefore any perceived "glut" of dwellings in places like Woking that possesses strong economic and locational appeal, is likely to be short-lived.

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<sup>21</sup> University of Glasgow/DCLG, Factors Affecting Housing Build-Out Rates, February 2008, page 20



## **i. Build to rent**

### **Summary of demographic and market signals evidence**

- We have seen that rents in WTC have been increasing over time; it has been noted that increasing the stock of dwellings has a more direct impact on rent levels than on the price of market sale dwellings on account of the latter being affected by borrowing rates and investor sentiment.
- Indeed, rent increases across the UK over the last twenty years have been very modest compared with house price increases, and the increase in housing stock over the period has been identified as a reason for this.
- This creates a strong argument for delivery of additional high-quality PRS homes so as to slow or reverse recent rent increases. Given the sentiment reported by local estate agents of buy-to-let investors the likely delivery of PRS accommodation would be specialist build-to-rent developers backed by institutional finance.
- In addition, the importance of PRS to house people on modest incomes who are unable (or who chose not) to buy is clear from the substantial increase in the number of PRS dwellings between 2001 and 2011 with an adverse correlation to declining owner occupation with a mortgage.

### **Commentary from local agents**

- 5.36 GL Hearn carried out semi-structured interviews with two letting agents with first-hand experience of the market in WTC. Again, we have anonymised their comments referring to Agents 3 and 4. Agent 3 and Agent 4. Their responses are set out below. In addition, we draw on a letter by Agent 4 to Woking Borough Council; this provides a commentary relevant to the issues raised in the interviews.

#### *Describe the current state of the lettings/rental market*

- 5.37 Agent 3: “The market is strong market as long as landlords are sensible on price (we achieved 44 lets in July), but BTR developers concerned about other schemes flooding the market.”
- 5.38 Agent 4: “The market is buoyant, still plenty of demand for properties. There is no shortage of tenants. Rents have held steady.”
- 5.39 Agent 4 letter: “The rental sector in Woking is booming, there is a large Investment market where these buyers will soak up a large percentage of these units. Prime rentals and the PRS will attract a lot of young professionals. Affordability and the convenience of having Woking Station on their doorstep being a big factor.”

*Is demand coming from a particular part of the market (e.g., young professionals, one-person households, older people?)*

5.40 Agent 3: Professionals, families and companies

5.41 Agent 4: All of the aforementioned categories, but mainly young professionals

*What are typical rents? (either £ per sqm or 1-bed/ 2-bed/ 3-bed etc PCM)*

5.42 Agent 3: 1 bed: 1000pcm, 2 bed: £1,250pcm, 3 bed: £1,400+

5.43 Agent 4: 1 bed: £750 to 1150pcm (average 900pcm); 2 bed - £850pcm to £1500pcm (average 1200pcm); 3 bed: £1000 to 2500pcm (average 1450pcm)

*Have rents been increasing?*

5.44 Agent 3: Slowly but they will increase more now after TT fee ban (ban on “tenants administration fee” previously charged by agents. Leader’s view was these costs will be passed on to the landlord, who will then increase rents). Predicted 3% per annum.

5.45 Agent 4: yes, by around 1-2% per annum.

*Do you see rents continuing to increase going forwards?*

5.46 Agent 4 letter: During this period of development (7-10 years) the apartment market will not grow in value as supply will stunt growth. In some respects, this is a positive as pricing will have to remain competitive and affordable to buyers.

*Are there specific sizes of property that are in particularly short supply?*

5.47 Agent 3: Town centre apartments are always in demand (1 bed and 2 bed mainly)

5.48 Agent 4: Entry Level three-bedroom houses for young families.

## Summary of lettings agents input

- GL Hearn carried out semi-structured interviews with two Woking-based letting agents, Agent 3 and Agent 4. In addition, we draw on a letter by Agent 4 to Woking Borough Council, dated 8th January 2019.
- There is a consensus between both agents as to the strength of the lettings market. In contrast to the views expressed by the sales agents the market is positive. This illustrates the counter-cyclical nature of the lettings and sales markets.
- It is to be expected, and encouraged, that institutional investors will take an active interest in the PRS market in WTC. This should provide the relevant developers with confidence that there will be a market for their products.
- The prospect for increasing rents in the market is very modest, with agents factoring in the level of supply envisaged for WTC, which they see as having a stabilising effect on rents.
- Importantly, they do not foresee a fall in rents; this will reassure developers that their viability modelling is unlikely to be compromised by the envisaged pipeline of supply.
- Indeed, given the importance of housing in the continued growth of the local economy, they may have taken the view that new development will, in part, generate its own demand.

### Absorption Rate for PRS

5.49 In determining an AR for PRS specifically, it is worth noting Knight Frank's report into the Victoria Square development published in March 2016; this state:

*"Tower 1 (216) units being handed over at the end of July 2020...with a prospective pre-let of 35-50 units in the period May to July 2020...We would anticipate May through to October to have the highest take-up rates, with around 25-30 properties each month. An expectation of 15-25 properties per month reflects the slightly quieter period between February and April, and around 15-20 per month during the quietest period of the year between November and January. **This provides a blended average of approximately 28 move-ins per month over the initial let-up period.** (our emphasis) We expect that the initial letting-up period to be between 17-18 months for both blocks including the pre-let periods and phased release."*

5.50 This "blended average" of 28 per month has been used as the basis for the AR for Market Rent dwellings in this report.

## Affordable Homes

5.51 Given the affordability issues across the Borough, including WTC, there is likely to be a high demand for Affordable Housing. This is accommodation which is below market rates

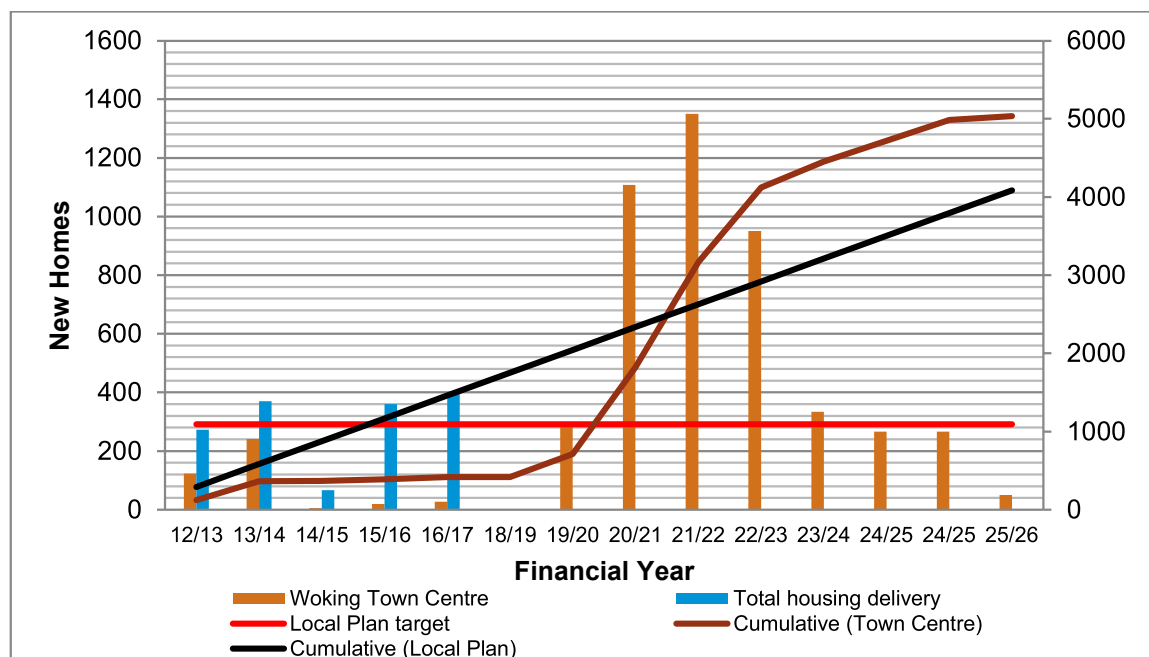
- 5.52 As we have noted, WTC has seen a substantial number of affordable units coming forward over the period 2001-18. Its suitability as a location for households on lower incomes stems from proximity to public transport (with the resulting little need to run a car) and lower energy bills associated with living in terraced and flatted developments.
- 5.53 As previously noted, WTC is a natural location to the provision of dwellings within reach of people on modest incomes, serving to highlight the importance of bringing forward development in this part of the Borough.

## 6. WHAT TRAJECTORY IS ACHIEVABLE?

6.1 As we have identified elsewhere in this report, WTC has, since 2001, achieved an average annual rate of completed dwellings of between 90 and 139 dwellings per annum.

6.2 The Figure below sets out the BOR described in the WTCSDS and illustrates the ambitious year-on-year targets that WBD are seeking to achieve. In considering the achievability of this target it is important to remember that this represents the combined totals of all the different tenures of which the town centre development is composed.

**Figure 14: Cumulative build out rates based on the Woking Town Centre Site Development Schedule**



Source: WBC

6.3 It is also worth noting that consultants WSP submitted two alternative delivery schedules, one over 10 years, the other over 15 years in a technical note dated 22 January 2019. These are illustrated below.

6.4 As noted in the WSP document, these elongated timescales make for a “smoother” rate of delivery. The report identifies a draw-back from adopting a longer time-frame, namely that the value of the housing benefits will be reduced because as housing delivery is draw out over a longer time-line, this has an impact on the net present value calculations. With investors having to wait longer for returns, the value of future revenues in today’s money is reduced. WSP note however the impact will be small.

**Table 14: 10 Year delivery schedule**

Site	Units	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
1	200	40	40	40	40	40	0	0	0	0	0
2	400	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
3	400	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	0	0
4	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	150	150	150
5	200	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	150	0	0	0	75	75	0	0	0	0	0
7	300	0	0	0	100	100	100	0	0	0	0
8	1205	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	200	200	205
9	200	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	200	0	0	0	200	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	150	100	0
12	120	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	80	0	90	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4555</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>395</b>

Source: WSP

**Table 15: 15 Year delivery schedule**

Site	Units	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35
1	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	40	40	40	40	0	0
2	400	0	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	0	40	0
3	400	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	600	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	100	100
5	200	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	0	0	0
7	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
8	1205	0	0	0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	105
9	200	50	50	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	200	0	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	0	0	0	0
11	400	0	0	0	0	0	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
12	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	40	40	0
13	80	0	0	0	0	30	30	30	30	30	30	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4555</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>345</b>

Source: WSP

## Case Studies

- 6.5 By way of a benchmark we have also examined AR in similar large scale development locations within the wider South East. The areas identified as being similar are Croydon, Stratford and Wembley Town Centres.
- 6.6 These areas have been selected on the basis they share Woking's reliance on the London City Region economy and are frequently cited as part of the region's evolution into a poly-centric spatial plan, with these sites (in particular Croydon and Stratford) as key growth nodes. This is not dissimilar from Woking's economic development vision articulated in the WEDS document<sup>22</sup>.
- 6.7 The table below sets out what has been achieved in these areas. Like Woking, they have similar affordability pressures and have seen delivery of a substantial number of dwellings in recent years. This provides evidence that, given the right balance of size and tenure of homes, as well as the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, a high AR is achievable in WTC.

**Table 16: Comparable Town Centre areas**

Area	Croydon Town Centre	Stratford Town Centre	Wembley Growth areas
Local Authority	Croydon	Newham	Brent
Affordability Ratio	11.13	13.41	16.3
Net new homes	3,261	1,693	1,146
Build out period	2016-2019	2016-2018	2015-2018
No. years	4	2	3
Average AR	815	847	382
Source:	Local Authority Annual Monitoring Report data	Authority Monitoring, Report, Housing Monitoring Bulletin, September 2019	Annual Monitoring Reports, 2015-2018

- 6.8 The table below illustrates the balance of market to affordable housing as noted in the respective local authorities' AMR. There does not appear to be a clear relationship between the proportion of affordable housing delivered and the average AR achieved. This is because the proportion of all dwellings that were affordable in Stratford and Wembley Central are the same at 14%, but the annual AR achieved is 847 and 382 respectively.

<sup>22</sup> Woking Economic Development Strategy, page 3

- 6.9 The AMRs do not break down the proportion of market housing that fell into “for-sale” and “PRS”. However, the lead developer in Wembley, Quintain, has made clear PRS will constitute a large share of the 5000 units coming forward around the National Stadium.<sup>23</sup>
- 6.10 As regards to Stratford Town Centre, the transition from industrial location to Olympic site to London neighbourhood has included the delivery of a substantial number of PRS units. This includes the "Get Living London" scheme forming part of the "East Village" (the former Olympic Athlete's Village close). Get Living is a specialist Build to Rent developer and their scheme in Stratford comprises 1,379 PRS dwellings.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.quintain.co.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2017/07-02-2017> (visited 07/10/19)



**Table 17: Tenure split within comparable town centre areas**

<b>Croydon</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>Average AR</b>
All homes	1139	1297	635	
Affordable Housing (all)	125	143	70	
Market	1014	1154	565	
AH (%)	11%	11%	11%	11%
<b>Stratford</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>Average AR</b>
All Homes	1082	612		
Affordable Housing (all)	173	73		
Market	909	539		
AH (%)	16%	12%		14%
<b>Wembley</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>Average AR</b>
All homes	161	371	614	
Affordable Housing (all)	8	82	98	
Market	153	289	516	
AH (%)	5%	22%	16%	14%

Source: Local Authority AMRs

6.11 The case studies therefore offer substantial evidence that tenure diversity, in particular the presence of a substantial element of PRS housing, contributes to higher ARs on the basis that different tenures appeal to different market segments.

6.12 This was one of the key findings of the Letwin Review; which states:

*“I have been told, on every one of my site visits, that the need for social rented housing is far from exhausted; my interlocutors have regularly used phrases such as ‘virtually unlimited’ to describe the demand for such housing; and this, too, strongly implies that, in areas of high housing pressure at least, the market for social rented property is separate from the price-constrained market for open market sales of family-sized homes;*

*on those visited sites where there was a significant amount of property being offered in the private rented sector, it has been repeatedly explained to me by those responsible for marketing homes on the site that the people seeking such rented property arrive seeking this particular form of tenure, due to whatever circumstances make it more appropriate for them than either open market purchase or social renting; how deep this market currently is outside the major cities, is currently in some doubt – but I have seen evidence that institutional investors are able to have private rented sector properties constructed simultaneously with properties for sale on the same site, and are able to dispose of them simultaneously, even in out-of-town locations; this, again, strongly suggests that the private rented sector is essentially a separate market;*

*given these points about the separation of the social rented and private rented markets from the market for open market sales, I have not been surprised to find developers regularly telling me that they also have no difficulty disposing of 'affordable' rented properties at various discounts simultaneously with open market sales; on no occasion has it been suggested to me that there was any serious competition between homes offered with these four types of tenure (open market sale, open market private rented, discounted or 'affordable' rented and 'social' rented), implying that the markets for each are largely complementary rather than overlapping"*

- 6.13 In assessing the plausibility of bringing forward development in WTC in line with the rate envisaged in the WTCSDS, it is important to recognise the different tenures operate within broadly separate markets and may be brought forward at the same without causing an over-supply within any one market.
- 6.14 Having said this, the risk of over-supply does exist, but only where supply substantially exceeds demand for any one tenure. Based on the feedback from "for-sale" estate agents, we believe this market to be particularly vulnerable to over-supply at any given time.
- 6.15 It is therefore appropriate to divide out the tenure types to assess whether the trajectory set out in the WTCSDS is realistic, on the basis of the evidence we have been able to gather.
- 6.16 In order to achieve granularity within these assessments, we divide the forecast BORs into a projection for "market sale" dwellings, a projection for "market rent" (PRS) and one for affordable homes.
- 6.17 In order to optimise the BOR a combination of these strands will be required, with an accent on market rent and affordable homes in the early years, and a return to a balance between these tenures and market sales dwellings over time.

### Market Sale

- 6.18 Based on the evidence gathered, it is reasonable to assume a baseline figure of between 50 and 70 dpa to be achieved on each of the market sale developments on the 13 WTC sites.
- 6.19 The findings from the market signals analysis are supportive of on-going development; but they are not sufficiently strong however to warrant applying an uplift (i.e. increasing the AR to above the 50-70 dpa range).
- 6.20 This is because similar conditions applied in earlier years during which housing delivery in WTC was substantially lower than that envisaged in the WTCSDS.

- 6.21 However, the suitability of WTC to satisfy the demand for affordable market homes and the role of increasing housing supply in moderating increase in rents (a proportion of new build homes will end up in the PRS) justifies continued development. It is reasonable to assume WTC can achieve an AR for affordable dwellings comparable to similar areas within the London City Region.
- 6.22 The comment from Agent 3 provides helpful supporting evidence that over a ten-year timeframe an AR of 70 units per year (2 sales per week) would be achievable. This corroborates other evidence cited in this report.
- 6.23 Taking this into consideration, but adopting a cautious approach given current market uncertainty, a “mid-point” AR of 60 dpa has been selected. However, to allow for competitor activity a cap of 45 new homes being released in to the market at any one quarter has been introduced. This reflects a maximum of three developments producing units across any one quarter.
- 6.24 This is a relatively conservative approach but is a pragmatic approach which envisages circumstances in which developers are aware of competitors active in the market, and reduce their BOR to avoid over-supply.
- 6.25 The table below presents the AR for both Market Sale and Affordable Sale dwellings based on a quarterly BOR per site of 15 per quarter, or 60 dpa. In addition, the aggregate AR of all sites in the town centre is capped at 45 for-sale dwellings per quarter (180dpa) to reflect developer response to perceptions of over-supply.
- 6.26 The Affordable Sale or Low Cost Home Ownership component of the WTC development envisages Shared Ownership (SO). We recognise this tenure has been criticised on affordability grounds and is still relatively new. Moreover, while SO has seen growth in Woking during the 2001-11 period, it is still a relatively new (and unproven) tenure. For these reasons, we therefore feel it is reasonable to accord it the same AR as full Market Sale.
- 6.27 The trajectory set out below indicates that, in our view, the BORs envisaged for Market Sale homes in the WTCSDS, is not likely to be achievable. In contrast to the previously expected completion of June 2025 a more plausible time horizon for completion is the fourth quarter of the 2027/28 financial year (around March 2028).

**Table 18: Trajectory for Market and Affordable Sale dwellings]**

Year	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
01 - Royal Mail Depot	No	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
	Affordable Sale	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70
02 - Ex. Station Car Park	No	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Affordable Sale	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130
03 - New Central Extension	No	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Affordable Sale	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
04 - Police Sir/Magistrates Court	No	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
	Affordable Sale	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210	210
08 - Goldsmith Road	No	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005	1005
	Affordable Sale	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422	422
11 - Planetaria & Parrot	No	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Affordable Sale	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
13 - Churen Gate	No	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
	Affordable Sale	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
15 - Dwelling Capquarter	No	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800
	Affordable Sale	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
Difference Over	No	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
	Affordable Sale	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130
Cumulative Over	No	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
	Affordable Sale	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130
Extension/Delivery	No	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
	Affordable Sale	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130	130

Source: GL Hearn Calculations

- 6.28 The on-going strong demand from households for PRS supports delivery of this tenure of housing at pace. This will also have the effect of keeping rents stable, which assuming wage growth continues will allow household income to catch up, thus improving rental affordability.
- 6.29 The table below sets out the AR for Market and Affordable Rent dwellings. This reflects the trajectory set out in the WTCSDS. No cap has been applied as we feel the market for PRS is sufficiently strong in WTC to support multiple schemes generating units at the same time.
- 6.30 The trajectory envisaged for Affordable Rent dwellings is driven more by factors relating to construction timetables and the BOR of market homes, rather than the strength of demand for such products, given that demand is likely to exceed supply for this tenure of home.

**Table 19: Trajectory for Market Rent and Affordable Rent Dwellings**

Year	No. units	Market Rent	Affordable Rent	2021				2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
05 - Station Plaza	200																																										
	Affordable rent		70																																								
06 - St. Dunstan's Phase 3	150																																										
	Affordable rent		150																																								
07 - The Triangle	300																																										
	Affordable rent		185																																								
09 - BHS Residential/Commercial	200																																										
	Affordable rent		70																																								
10 - Concord/Griffin House	200																																										
	Affordable rent		70																																								
11 - Planets/Rat & Parrot	400																																										
	Affordable rent		130																																								
12 - Thamesway Poole Road	120																																										
	Affordable rent		120																																								
		495																																									
Market Rent		0		0				0				0				0				0				0				0				0				0							
Affordable rent		0		0				0				0				0				0				0				0				0				0				0			

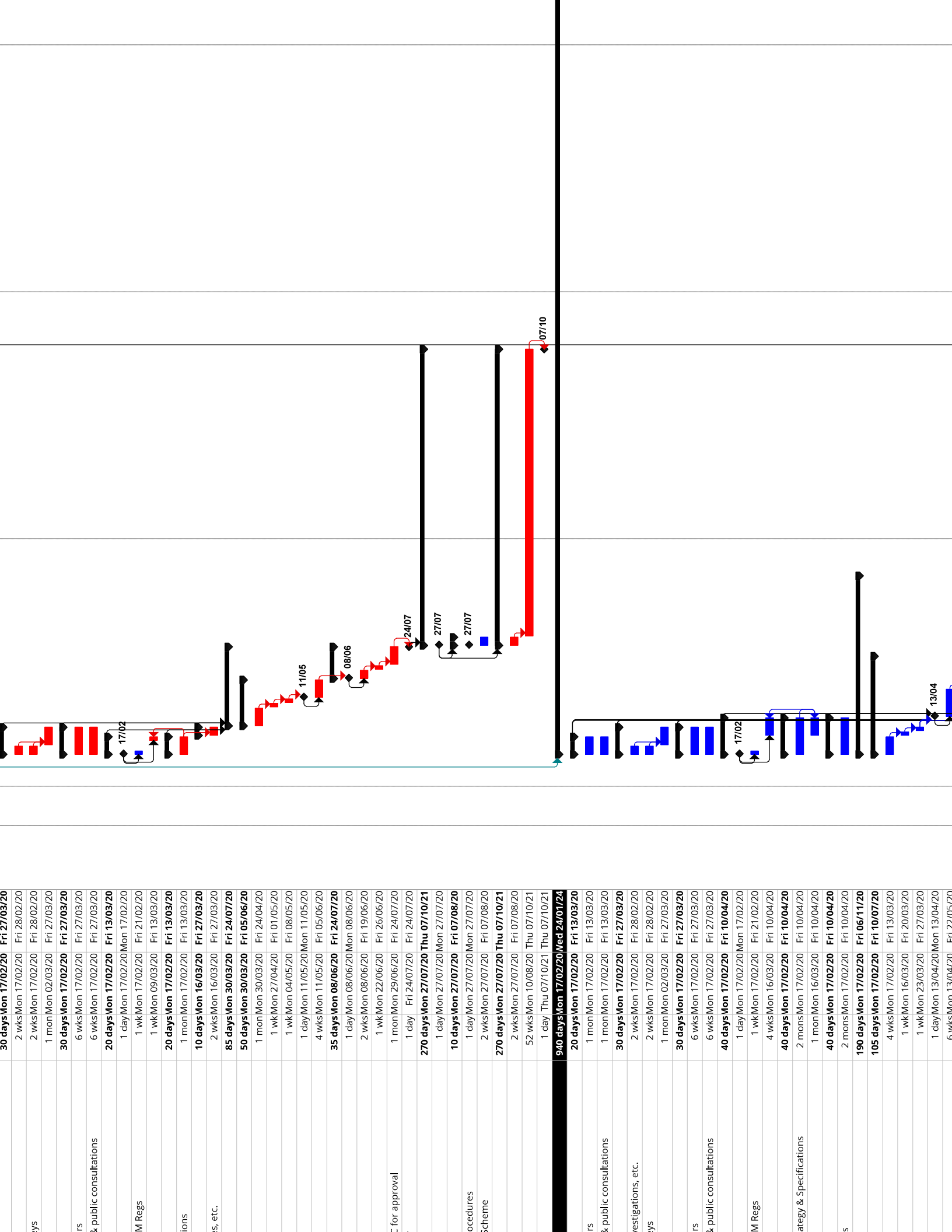
Source: GL Hearn Calculations

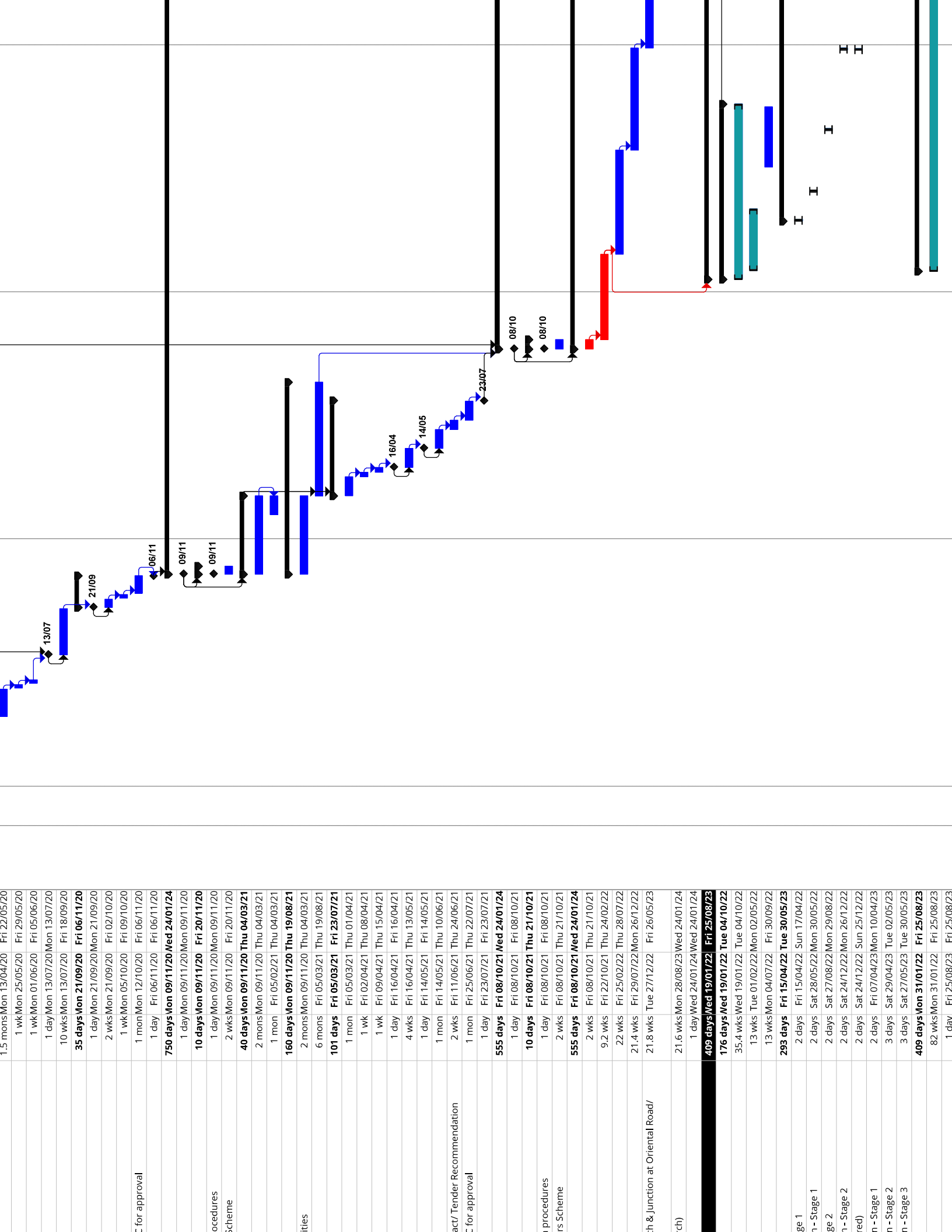
## Conclusions

- 6.31 In our view, the BORs envisaged for Market Sale homes in the WTCSDS, is not likely to be achievable. In contrast to the previously expected completion of June 2025 are more plausible time horizon for completion is the fourth quarter of the 29/30 financial year (around March 2030).
- 6.32 In order to arrive at an understanding of potential ARs within a mixed tenure town centre development of the scale and complexity of WTC, it is necessary to disaggregate the proposed supply into different tenures: market sale, market rent and affordable housing.
- 6.33 We do not feel that the current completions trajectory of the market sale component i.e. to finish by Q1 2025/6 (as set out in the WTDSDS) is realistic, particularly in current market conditions. These conditions are likely to persist for the foreseeable future given the uncertainty generated by Brexit. As a result we believe expected completion should be pushed back to Q4 of 2030.
- 6.34 The average quarterly AR for market sale dwellings is 15. We believe this could increase but is subject to a cap of 45 dwellings per quarter as developers reduce BORs to avoid excess supply placing downward pressure on sales prices i.e. flooding the market.
- 6.35 The trajectory for the Market Rent and Affordable Rent component is more achievable. We see no market reason why this aspect of the WTC development should not be deliverable within the time-frame set out in the WTCSDS.
- 6.36 For this reason we have adopted the blended average of 28 dwellings per month for market rent development. This is drawn from Knight Frank's study for the Victoria Square development in WTC.









1.5 mons	Mon 13/04/20	Fri 22/05/20
1 wk	Mon 25/05/20	Fri 29/05/20
1 wk	Mon 01/06/20	Fri 05/06/20
1 day	Mon 13/07/20	Mon 13/07/20
10 wks	Mon 13/07/20	Fri 18/09/20
35 days	Mon 21/09/20	Fri 06/11/20
1 day	Mon 21/09/20	Mon 21/09/20
2 wks	Mon 21/09/20	Fri 02/10/20
1 wk	Mon 05/10/20	Fri 09/10/20
1 mon	Mon 12/10/20	Fri 06/11/20
1 day	Fri 06/11/20	Fri 06/11/20
750 days	Mon 09/11/20	Wed 24/01/24
1 day	Mon 09/11/20	Mon 09/11/20
10 days	Mon 09/11/20	Fri 20/11/20
1 day	Mon 09/11/20	Mon 09/11/20
2 wks	Mon 09/11/20	Fri 20/11/20
40 days	Mon 09/11/20	Thu 04/03/21
2 mons	Mon 09/11/20	Thu 04/03/21
1 mon	Fri 05/02/21	Thu 04/03/21
160 days	Mon 09/11/20	Thu 19/08/21
2 mons	Mon 09/11/20	Thu 04/03/21
6 mons	Fri 05/03/21	Thu 19/08/21
101 days	Fri 05/03/21	Fri 23/07/21
1 mon	Fri 05/03/21	Thu 01/04/21
1 wk	Fri 02/04/21	Thu 08/04/21
1 wk	Fri 09/04/21	Thu 15/04/21
1 day	Fri 16/04/21	Fri 16/04/21
4 wks	Fri 16/04/21	Thu 13/05/21
1 day	Fri 14/05/21	Fri 14/05/21
1 mon	Fri 14/05/21	Thu 10/06/21
2 wks	Fri 11/06/21	Thu 24/06/21
1 mon	Fri 25/06/21	Thu 22/07/21
1 day	Fri 23/07/21	Fri 23/07/21
555 days	Fri 08/10/21	Wed 24/01/24
1 day	Fri 08/10/21	Fri 08/10/21
10 days	Fri 08/10/21	Thu 21/10/21
1 day	Fri 08/10/21	Fri 08/10/21
2 wks	Fri 08/10/21	Thu 21/10/21
555 days	Fri 08/10/21	Wed 24/01/24
2 wks	Fri 08/10/21	Thu 21/10/21
9.2 wks	Fri 22/10/21	Thu 24/02/22
22 wks	Fri 25/02/22	Thu 28/07/22
21.4 wks	Fri 29/07/22	Mon 26/12/22
21.8 wks	Tue 27/12/22	Fri 26/05/23
21.6 wks	Mon 28/08/23	Wed 24/01/24
1 day	Wed 24/01/24	Wed 24/01/24
409 days	Wed 19/01/22	Fri 25/08/23
176 days	Wed 19/01/22	Tue 04/10/22
35.4 wks	Wed 19/01/22	Tue 04/10/22
13 wks	Tue 01/02/22	Mon 02/05/22
13 wks	Mon 04/07/22	Fri 30/09/22
293 days	Fri 15/04/22	Tue 30/05/23
2 days	Fri 15/04/22	Sun 17/04/22
2 days	Sat 28/05/22	Mon 30/05/22
2 days	Sat 27/08/22	Mon 29/08/22
2 days	Sat 24/12/22	Mon 26/12/22
2 days	Sat 24/12/22	Sun 25/12/22
2 days	Fri 07/04/23	Mon 10/04/23
3 days	Sat 29/04/23	Tue 02/05/23
3 days	Sat 27/05/23	Tue 30/05/23
409 days	Mon 31/01/22	Fri 25/08/23
1 day	Fri 25/08/23	Fri 25/08/23

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 409 days/Wed 19/01/22 Fri 25/08/23  
 176 days/Wed 19/01/22 Tue 04/10/22  
 35.4 wks/Wed 19/01/22 Tue 04/10/22  
 13 wks Tue 01/02/22 Mon 02/05/22  
 13 wks Mon 04/07/22 Fri 30/09/22  
 293 days Fri 15/04/22 Tue 30/05/23  
 2 days Fri 15/04/22 Sun 17/04/22  
 2 days Sat 28/05/22 Mon 30/05/22  
 2 days Sat 27/08/22 Mon 29/08/22  
 2 days Sat 24/12/22 Mon 26/12/22  
 2 days Sat 24/12/22 Sun 25/12/22  
 2 days Fri 07/04/23 Mon 10/04/23  
 3 days Sat 29/04/23 Tue 02/05/23  
 3 days Sat 27/05/23 Tue 30/05/23  
 409 days Mon 31/01/22 Fri 25/08/23  
 1 day Fri 25/08/23 Fri 25/08/23

## **RECOVERY STRATEGY**

The Council's recovery strategy is based on:

- 1 Community Infrastructure Levy contributions
- 2 Development contributions to be secured by Section 106 Agreement
- 3 Disposal of public sector land – serviced Triangle Site

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The Council will borrow £10M (PWLB) to be repaid over 15 years with future CIL and Section 106 receipts. It is estimated that the yearly annuity for the repayment of the loan and the interest would be about £833K. The £10M will be invested to bridge the gap between the HIF award of £95M and the total scheme cost of £115M. The Council has a clear strategy to repay the loan without further burden on public sector finances and at a minimum risk.

The Council has adopted CIL as the primary mechanism for securing development contributions towards infrastructure provision to support development. Payment for CIL by relevant development is mandatory for the development types set out in the CIL Charging Schedule. For the Town Centre, development is charged at £75/sq.m for residential units and £75/sq.m for retail. The CIL rates build in sufficient cushion to ensure development viability, and it is not expected that viability will be undermined when contributions are sought towards the HIF scheme.

The Core Strategy make provision for the delivery of 4,964 dwellings and 93,900 sq.m of retail floorspace between 2010 and 2027. For the residential development, this is equivalent to 292 dwellings per year.

It is estimated that CIL will generate a total income over 10 years based on a housing requirement of 292 dwellings per year of about £13,000,000 - £14,000,000 (approx.), an annual average of £1,300,000 (minimum). It is clear from the viability evidence to support the CIL Charging Schedule that this amount can comfortably be secured over 10 years, and contributions secured so far are in line with the original projection. For example, So far, £4,190,122 has been received. This is against the backdrop of a total of £8,001,281 Demand Notices served, which the Council is expecting payment. This is for the period 1 April 2015 to date. Full details of how this is calculated are set out in the CIL Charging Schedule and the CIL Topic Paper on Infrastructure Funding Gap, which can be accessed by this link: <https://www.woking2027.info/infrastructure>. On average it is estimated that overall contributions per dwelling would be: £4,452.

The Council is committed to invest in delivering other necessary infrastructure to support the housing development. In this regard, of the total contributions to be secured, the Council will seek to ring-fence 40% towards the provision of SANGs to mitigate the impacts of housing development of the European designated sites. This is mandatory under the European Directive. 20% of the contributions will be ring-fenced for local community infrastructure projects in accordance with Government legislation. 10% of the contributions will be set aside for other types of necessary infrastructure such as public realm, open space and green infrastructure identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support development. In total, the Council will be setting aside about £910K per year of the CIL receipts for the provision of other infrastructure other than the HIF scheme. Consequently, the Council is

committing to set aside 30% of the total CIL contributions to help service the £10M loan. This is equivalent to about £390,000 per year. By this approach, the Council is achieving the twin objectives of committing CIL money to deliver the HIF project whilst at the same time setting aside substantial amount of money to deliver other necessary infrastructure to support the proposed housing development.

It should be noted that it is likely that there would be active ground floor retail frontages for a number of the sites, which CIL contributions would be sought. This has not been factored into the calculation, but would help provide sufficient comfort in minimising any potential risks associated with developing the sites.

### **Developer contributions to be secured by Section 106 Agreement**

Improvement to the Victoria Arch has been identified in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Regulation 123 List as necessary to support the delivery of the housing requirement set out in the Core Strategy, in particular, the development earmarked for the Town Centre where the Spatial Strategy of the Core Strategy directs most of the new housing development (about 2,180 dwellings out of the total requirement of 4,964 dwellings)..

Presently, traffic under the bridge and its vicinity has been a congestion hotspot and the inadequate road and bridge infrastructure has stifled housing growth and led to poor north-south connectivity by pedestrians and cyclists. Various scheme options have been assessed in the past and relevant development sites in the Town Centre have contributed towards improvements at the Victoria Arch. There is a clear justification for development within the Town Centre to continue to make a contribution to implement the HIF scheme to address the bottleneck.

The transport modelling works undertaken to support the HIF Bid demonstrates that the network in the vicinity of the Victoria Arch will not be able to cope with any additional traffic generated over and above what has already been planned for the Council's emerging Site Allocations DPD. The 3,304 additional dwellings to be delivered on the back of the HIF award can only be achieved if the HIF scheme is implemented in full. Planning permission for the development of the HIF sites for the additional 3,304 are likely to be refused without the HIF proposal. The case for improvements at the Arch to support the delivery of the Core Strategy has already been made and demonstrated by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The HIF proposal is therefore necessary to enable housing development on the HIF sites in particular to come forward, and for all other town centre sites in general to come forward. The principle for securing the developer contributions towards the scheme will therefore be in accordance with the tests set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations.

It is proposed that development across the Town Centre including the HIF sites will be required to contribute £10M towards the HIF scheme. This will be secured by Section 106 Agreement as site specific requirements over and above any CIL contributions. The Core Strategy expects about 2,180 dwellings to be provided at the Town centre up to 2027. Of this requirement, 462 units have been delivered to date, leaving a residual of 1,718 units yet to be provided. It is expected that an additional 3,304 units will be delivered on the back of the HIF sites making a total of 5,022 units to be delivered within the Town Centre up to 2030.

It is estimated that an annual average of about £581,673 would be secured from this source to help contribute towards servicing the £10M PWLB loan and to provide other necessary infrastructure to support the development. Together with the CIL contributions, about £971,673 would be secured of which £833K would be needed to service the loan and the residual amount thereafter, about £138,673 per annum will go towards the provision of necessary infrastructure to support residential development across the Borough.

### **The Triangle**

An essential part of the scheme is the acquisition and demolition of properties at the Triangle to enable the scheme to progress. The site once cleared will enable the delivery of about 300 new homes. There is a forecast estimate of £15M to be received from the disposal of the serviced Triangle site. This will be retained to cover costs overruns with the net balance being available in future to support further infrastructure to support housing development across the Borough.

### **Conclusion**

The recovery strategy estimates that some £35m could be recovered and used as set out above and to cover any cost overruns. Based on the evidence, there is the reasonable prospect that the amounts involved would be recovered.



# **Woking Borough Council**

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**Proposed road layout changes:  
Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach**

**Consultation Report  
February 2019**

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# 1 Executive summary

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## 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 In autumn 2018, Woking Borough Council, working in partnership with Surrey County Council, consulted on proposals to change the road layout south of Victoria Arch in Woking Town Centre. This document details the consultation process and summarises the responses received.
- 1.1.2 The proposed scheme involves replacing the existing one-way gyratory, around Guildford Road, Victoria Road and the A320 Station Approach, with a two-way road. The objectives include reducing significant levels of existing congestion along Guildford Road and improving walking and cycling facilities along the corridor.
- 1.1.3 To deliver the improvement, the carriageway would need to be extended 15 metres further east, affecting some property and creating an area of land for possible future development. This proposed future development area was shown for reference on consultation materials although the scope of the consultation focused on the proposed road layout changes only.
- 1.1.4 There was also a suggested amendment to access between Guildford Road and Heathside Road. No other planned changes to land use and access were associated with the published consultation.

## 1.2 The consultation

- 1.2.1 The consultation ran for six weeks from 12 September until 24 October 2018. Views were sought from people living and working in the area, as well as those who travel to and from Woking, and other key stakeholders including local elected representatives.
- 1.2.2 It was publicised via a range of channels, including the local media, online and social media activity, and a postcard delivered to over 3,400 local residents and businesses. Two public drop-in sessions were also held to give people the opportunity to speak to members of the project team and find out more about the proposals.
- 1.2.3 The consultation elicited views from 1,315 respondents.
- 1.2.4 Two petitions opposing the plans, containing 807 and 618 signatures respectively, were received during the consultation period, while local campaigns were also run by interested parties to encourage responses. The principal issues identified in these campaigns were:
- Impacts on property owners and local amenity value,
  - A change in access arrangements for the Day Aggregates site in the area, with a removal in access from Guildford Road, and
  - Demolition of listed properties.

- 1.2.5 For the purposes of consultation analysis, the petitions have not been included in the total number of responses received, as only the number of completed questionnaires and written responses are included in the final analysed figures.
- 1.2.6 This is in line with consultation best practice to ensure that respondents have received consistent information about the proposed scheme, directly from the scheme promoter, as information from third parties may or may not accurately reflect the proposals (eg the wording of one petition in response to this consultation suggested that the access arrangements for the Day Aggregates site would change as a result of the proposals but, as outlined above in paragraph 1.1.4, there is no change to this access point associated with these plans).
- 1.2.7 The petitions have, however, been considered alongside other consultation responses and the issues raised within them are dealt with in section 6 of this report.

### **1.3 Summary of responses received**

- 1.3.1 The overarching question about the proposals was: 'In principle do you agree or disagree with proposals to change the road layout at Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach?'
- 1.3.2 Of the 1,290 respondents that answered this question, 80% of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposals, 16% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 1.3.3 Further to the principal question, respondents were also asked a series of questions to elicit the level of support for the supporting proposals within the scheme to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians.
- 1.3.4 The majority of respondents also strongly disagreed with these supporting proposals, including aspects of the scheme, such as new pedestrian crossing points and repaving of footways that have been successfully delivered elsewhere in Woking in recent years.
- 1.3.5 Additional comments received from respondents to the consultation included references to the potential impact of the proposals to businesses along Guildford Road, impact on access to Heathside Road and the perceived change associated with the Day Aggregates site.
- 1.3.6 It is therefore possible that respondents' concerns about specific aspects of the proposals, whether based on the potential impacts from the published plans or information put forward by a third party, have contributed to the level of opposition to each aspect of the proposed scheme.

### **1.4 Stakeholder responses**

- 1.4.1 The consultation prompted one stakeholder response from Southview Medical Practice. The Practice was supportive of the possible increase in physical activity as a result of improved walking and cycling facilities, as well as efforts to reduce harmful emissions in the local community.

1.4.2 However, the Practice had concerns about the close proximity of their car park entrance on Constitution Hill to Guildford Road, and concerns about the proposed removal of parking on Constitution Hill which is currently used by patients. They also informed the Borough Council that there is land around them that could be used to improve parking availability.

## **1.5 Next steps**

1.5.1 Having considered all responses to the consultation, the Borough Council intends to proceed with the proposed scheme with the following modifications:

- The road layout design will be adapted to accommodate the left-turn for vehicles from Guildford Road into Heathside Road
- The Guildford Road bus stop will be moved south of the junction with York Road

1.5.2 A Housing Infrastructure Fund submission will be prepared and submitted to central Government to help develop the proposals further.

1.5.3 The Borough Council recognises the concerns raised through the consultation regarding the impact of the road layout changes on businesses located along Guildford Road. Discussions between the Borough Council, affected landowners and other interested parties are ongoing, while the Borough Council is committed to ensuring that the benefits of the scheme are delivered for the local community, while any associated impacts are minimised as far as possible.

1.5.4 The proposals are also directly linked with Network Rail's intention to widen Victoria Arch, the bridge which carries the railway over Guildford Road. Discussions regarding the bridge widening continue between the Borough Council and Network Rail.

## 2 About the proposals

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### 2.1 Introduction

Woking Borough Council (WBC), in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC), carried out a public consultation between 12 September and 24 October 2018.

Proposals include replacing the one-way gyratory along Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles, as well as the introduction of new shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists.

This chapter sets out the background to the project and is followed by chapters on the consultation approach and analysis of responses.

### 2.2 Project overview

2.2.1 A large amount of redevelopment has been completed in Woking town centre in recent years, with further improvements planned to continue until at least 2023 as part of the Borough Council's plans to underpin the economic growth of the area. This work includes around 5,500 new homes, hotels and shopping facilities, as well as new public spaces and other amenities designed to make the town a better place to live, work and do business.

WBC has commissioned WSP to identify options for removing a one-way gyratory to the south of the town centre. It should be noted that in order to deliver the full extent of the scheme Victoria Arch, the Network Rail bridge which carries the railway over Guildford Road would need to be widened.

2.2.2 The gyratory, along Guildford Road (northbound), Victoria Road (eastbound) and Station Approach (southbound), can create a bottleneck for traffic heading towards the town centre and station, with queues often stretching along Guildford Road. This impacts on the local economy and amenity facilities as Guildford Road provides an important link between the town centre and key destinations, including Woking Park, swimming pool and leisure centre.

### 2.3 The proposals

2.3.1 The consultation sought views on the following proposals:

- Replacing the one-way gyratory on Guildford Road/Victoria Road/Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road
- Introducing new shared pedestrian and cycle paths, with a section of the A320 Station Approach, from Victoria Road to Heathside Road, open to pedestrians and cyclists only
- Installing four new toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
- Adapting the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn exit only with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road
- Improving the non-signalised crossing point with dropped kerb on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road enabling easier access to Guildford Road bus stop
- Resurfacing footways to encourage more local journeys on foot

- Improving informal pedestrian crossing linking to Guildford Road bus stop.

## **2.4 Key benefits of the project**

2.4.1 The project is designed to relieve congestion around the town centre and improve traffic flow to help accommodate additional transport demand arising from new development identified within the Local Plan. Removing the gyratory would also provide scope for introducing safer, more convenient walking and cycling routes between the town centre, residential areas and other important local places of interest. In addition, the proposed changes could help to unlock a number of future developments in the immediate area.

## **2.5 Potential impacts**

The scheme proposals included widening Guildford Road by 15 metres to the east. This would have an impact on some properties and local businesses located on the eastern side of Guildford Road. A proposed future development area was shown for reference on consultation materials although the scope of the consultation focused on the proposed road layout changes only.

Potential impacts also included removal of direct vehicular access from Guildford Road to Heathside Road, the removal of six parking spaces along Constitution Hill and the removal of two trees at the southern end of the gyratory.

## 3 The consultation

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### 3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The consultation ran for six weeks, between 12 September and 24 October 2018 and sought views on proposals to change the road layout south of Woking town centre.

3.1.2 The consultation was designed to:

- Raise awareness of the proposals among local residents and businesses, stakeholders, and the public
- Explain the impacts of the proposed changes
- Ensure prospective respondents received sufficient information about the proposals in order to make an informed response
- Raise awareness of the benefits of more sustainable transport modes.

### 3.2 Who was consulted

3.2.1 The consultation sought views from people living and working in the area, as well as those who travel to and from Woking.

3.2.2 In addition, key stakeholders were consulted, including local elected representatives, walking and cycling groups, schools and colleges, religious centres, and local community groups.

3.2.3 A list of stakeholders that were consulted is included in Appendix A, while a summary of stakeholder responses received to the consultation is included in section 5.

### 3.3 What was asked

3.3.1 Two specific project questions were asked in the consultation. There was also a further comments box to enable respondents to submit any additional thoughts they may have had on any aspect of the proposals. More information about the questions and analysis of responses is set out in section 5, while a full list of consultation questions is included in Appendix B.

### 3.4 What was outside the scope of the consultation

3.4.1 The consultation focused on the proposed road layout changes along Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach. As such, proposals for a possible future development area on the eastern side of Station Approach did not form part of the consultation.

3.4.2 The consultation also did not include proposals for Victoria Arch (the Network Rail bridge above Guildford Road) or ongoing works as part of the Victoria Square development.

### **3.5 Methods of responding**

- 3.5.1 Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation by completing an online questionnaire, available via the consultation website: [woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation). Written responses were also accepted via a freepost address (Guildford Rd consultation, Woking Borough Council, FREEPOST G11690, Gloucester Square, Woking, GU21 6BR) or email ([guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk](mailto:guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk)). Contact details were also provided in all consultation material.
- 3.5.2 There was also a phone number that people could call to ask for further information or request a paper copy of the questionnaire.

### **3.6 Consultation materials and publicity**

- 3.6.1 The consultation was promoted using a range of different methods to encourage as many views as possible. The methods used are listed below.
- 3.6.2 **Website:** The primary method for capturing views was via the consultation website: ([woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation)), where respondents were able to complete an online questionnaire.
- 3.6.3 **Consultation postcard:** The consultation postcard was designed to inform people of the consultation and to direct them to the consultation online questionnaire. It was distributed to 3,420 properties that are located in close proximity to the scheme area and could therefore be affected if the proposals go ahead. Respondents could also request copies of the consultation materials in another format by contacting WBC using the contact details provided. The consultation postcard distribution area is shown in Appendix C. The artwork for the postcard is included in Appendix D.
- 3.6.4 **Emails to stakeholders:** Stakeholders were notified of the consultation by email on the day of the launch. Stakeholders included local councillors (both from WBC and SCC), local community groups, schools, colleges and religious centres. A full list of stakeholders is included in Appendix A.
- 3.6.5 **Press release:** A press release was issued to local and regional media, including Woking News and Mail, Eagle Radio, Radio Jackie, BBC Surrey, BBC online as well as key local groups such as residents' associations. A copy of the press release is included in Appendix D.
- 3.6.6 **Local advertising:** Promotional banners were placed in prominent areas of Woking town centre to raise awareness of the scheme and consultation. The banners could be seen in Woking station, Woking library, Pool in the Park and Woking leisure centre.
- 3.6.7 A full set of consultation banners explaining the proposed scheme were also placed in the windows of Morris House, 34 Commercial Way, Woking for the duration of the consultation, with the exception of the public exhibition events when they were moved to Wolsey Place Shopping Centre. The artwork for the banners is included in Appendix D.



- 3.6.8 **Social media campaign:** The consultation was advertised on Twitter through WBC's feed (@wokingcouncil), which has more than 7,000 followers, and on its Facebook page.
- 3.6.9 **Public exhibition events:** A prominent area of Woking town centre was chosen for the public events to raise awareness of the scheme and consultation. Two public exhibition events were held on the following days at Wolsey Place Shopping Centre in Woking town centre:
- Thursday 20 September from 12.30pm until 8pm
  - Saturday 29 September from 10am until 4pm
- 3.6.10 The consultation banners were on display at the events, along with other materials, while project representatives were present to answer questions about the proposals. There were more than 500 visitors across the two sessions, with more than 300 on the Thursday session.
- 3.6.11 Attendees were encouraged to complete the online questionnaire in order to submit their comments on the proposals, although a balance of opinions were also expressed at the events. Views ranged from concerns about potential impacts on local business, to those who felt that the proposals were needed and would help towards reducing congestion in the town centre. A notable number of concerns were also expressed at the extent of ongoing redevelopment work in the town centre.
- 3.6.12 **Stakeholder events:** There were two stakeholder events on 11 September 2018: the first was for the Borough's Local Access group from 3pm until 4.45pm, attended by three people. The second for Borough and County Councillors from 6pm until 8pm was attended by eight Elected Members. Both these events were held at Woking Borough Council offices.
- 3.6.13 The consultation was also promoted through the 'Woking means business' event for small and medium sized businesses in and around Woking. The event took place on 17 October 2018 from 8am until 9.30am at the HG Wells Centre in the town centre and was attended by approximately 800-1,000 people. The event was advertised in the Woking Chamber of Commerce newsletter and Woking Works. A presentation on the scheme proposals was given by WBC Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks. Copies of the consultation postcard were also available.
- 3.6.14 **Public-facing images/maps:** The consultation banners contained computer-generated images of how the area could look if the proposals were to go ahead, to help respondents understand the proposals. There was also a fly-through animation video on the consultation website, based on the traffic modelling that had been completed as part of the development of the proposals. The video showed projected traffic flow through the area for the completed scheme, during both the morning and evening peak times.

## 4 About the respondents

This chapter summaries responses received to the 'About you' section of the consultation questionnaire as well as the non-specific project questions.

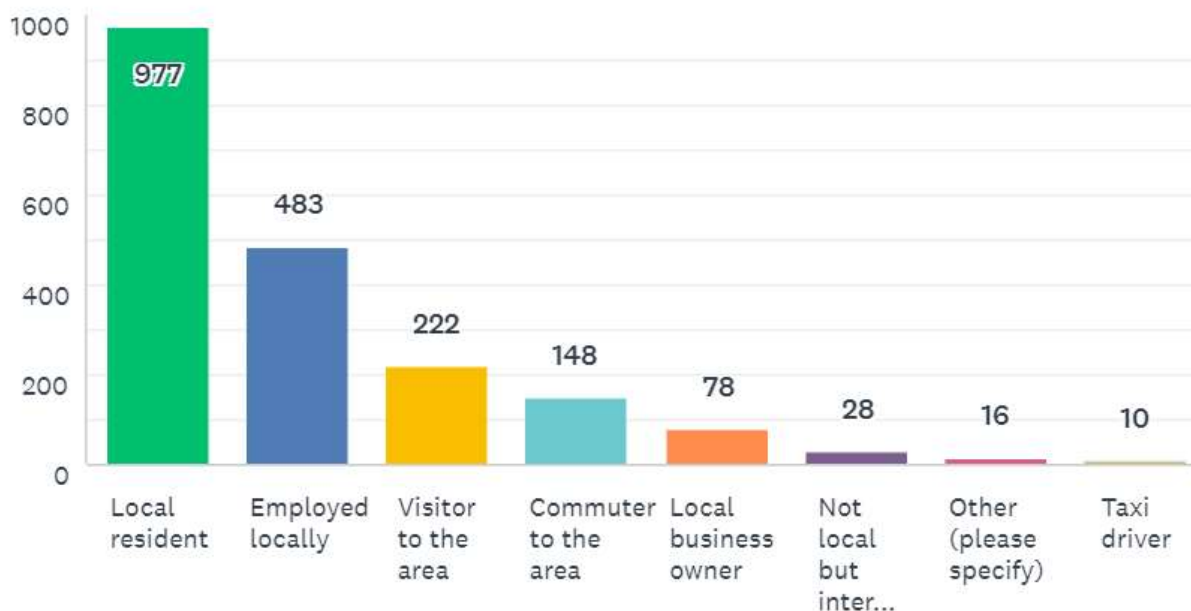
### 4.1 Number of respondents

4.1.1 The consultation elicited views from **1,315** respondents. Of these, 1,287 were received through the online survey and 28 were either emailed or posted to the Borough Council. The consultation also received two petitions, the first containing 807 signatures and the second containing 618 signatures. The Borough Council were also informed of two campaigns which started during the consultation. More information about the petition and campaigns is set out in section 5.

### 4.2 Respondent type

Respondents were asked to state which respondent type best described them. The results are shown in Figure 1 below. Respondents could choose more than one type to describe themselves. Of the 1,217 respondents that answered this question, the majority identified themselves as a local resident although respondents could select more than option to answer this question. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the number of respondents that selected each option.

**Figure 1: Are you a...**



**Table 1: Breakdown of responses**

Answer choices	Number of respondents who selected this choice	Percentage of individual respondents who answered this question*

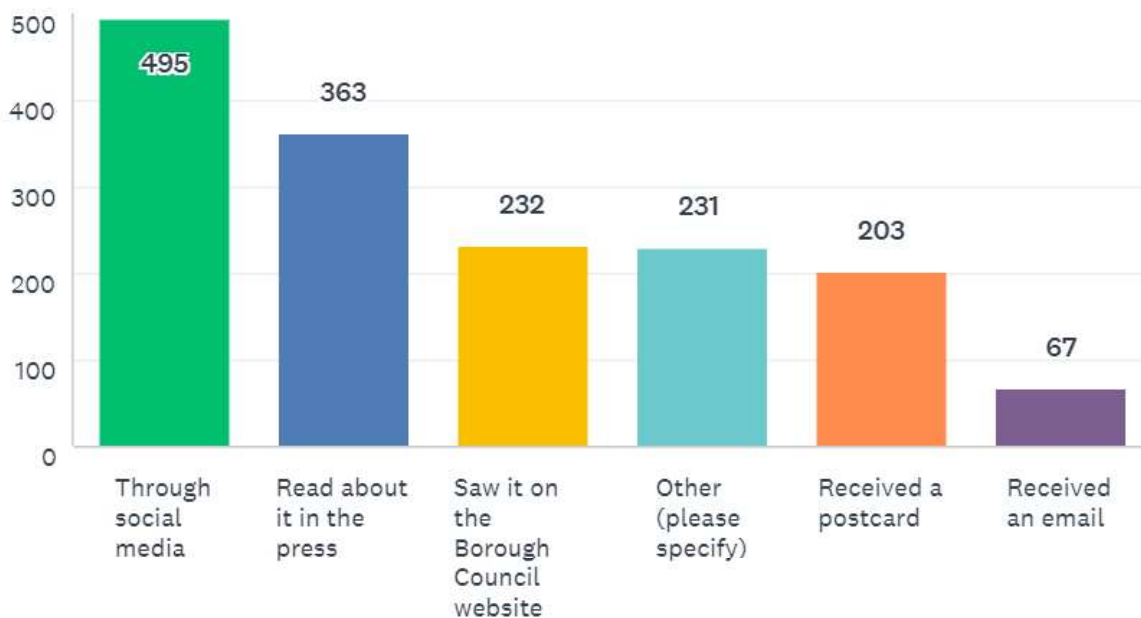
Local resident	977	80%
Employed locally	483	40%
Visitor to the area	222	18%
Commuter to the area	148	12%
Local business owner	78	6%
Not local but interested in the project	28	2%
Other	16	1%
Taxi driver	10	<1%

\*Please note respondents could choose multiple options to this question.

### 4.3 How respondents heard about the consultation

4.3.1 Respondents were asked how they heard about the consultation, with the results shown in Figure 2 below. Of the 1,270 respondents that answered the question, the majority stated that they heard about the consultation through social media. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the number of respondents that selected each choice. Respondents could select more than one choice to answer this question.

**Figure 2: How did you hear about the consultation?**



**Table 2: Breakdown of responses**

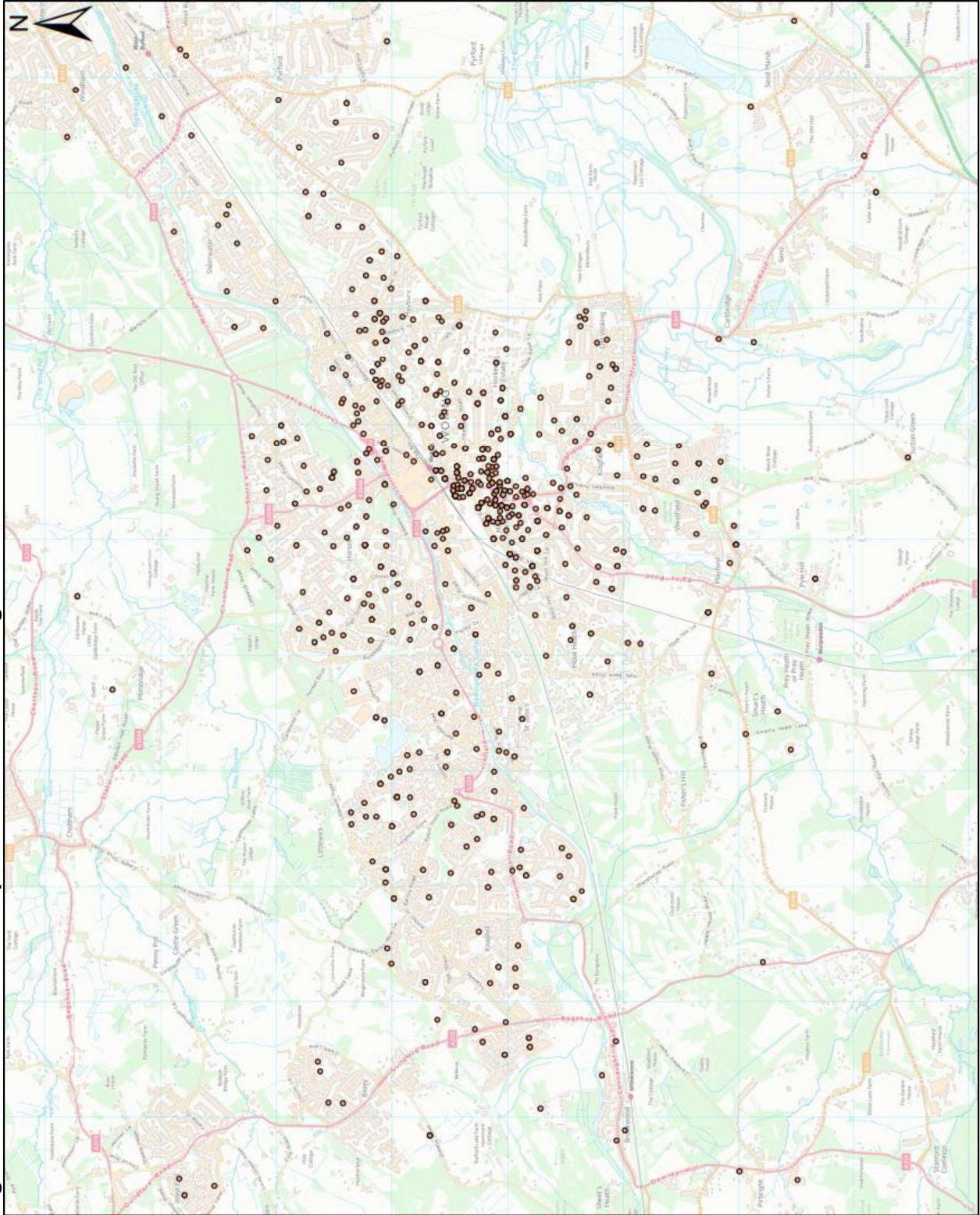
Answer choices	Number of respondents who selected this choice	Percentage of individual respondents who answered this question*
Through social media	495	39%
Read about it in the press	363	29%
Saw it on the Borough Council website	232	18%
Other (please specify)	231	18%
Received a postcard	203	16%
Received an email	67	5%

\*Please note respondents could choose multiple options to this question.

#### **4.4 Distribution of respondents**

- 4.4.1 A total of 1,272 respondents provided their postcode to inform geographical analysis of responses. Of these, 1,099 could be converted into geographical co-ordinates. The results of this postcode analysis (see Figure 3) showed that the majority of respondents were from the Woking area.
- 4.4.2 The consultation also received responses from people from different parts of the United Kingdom stretching as far as Preston, to the Isle of Sky in Scotland and internationally to St Helier in Jersey.

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents in the Woking area



**Key:**

- All Responses



## 5 Summary of consultation responses

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5.1.1 This chapter summarises the responses received to each question asked in the consultation questionnaire.

### 5.2 Number of responses

5.2.1 The consultation elicited responses from 1,315 respondents. Of these, 1,287 were received through the online survey and 28 were either emailed or posted to the Borough Council.

### 5.3 Petitions and campaigns

5.3.1 Two petitions opposing the plans, containing 807 and 618 signatures respectively, were received during the consultation period.

5.3.2 For the purposes of consultation analysis, the petitions have not been included in the total number of responses received, as only the number of completed questionnaires and written responses are included in the final analysed figures.

5.3.3 This is in line with consultation best practice to ensure that respondents have received consistent information about the proposed scheme, directly from the scheme promoter, as information from third parties may or may not accurately reflect the proposals (eg the wording of one petition in response to this consultation suggested that the access arrangements for the Day Aggregates site would change as a result of the proposals but, as outlined above in paragraph 1.1.4, there is no change to this access point associated with these plans).

5.3.4 The petitions have, however, been considered alongside other consultation responses and the issues raised within them are dealt with in section 6 of this report.

5.3.5 The Borough Council was also made aware of two campaigns that took place during the consultation to encourage responses. The first involved a poster containing the message 'save our shop', which was displayed in local businesses along Guildford Road. This poster contained a link to the consultation survey.

5.3.6 The second involved a leaflet posted through letterboxes along York Road which urged those who objected to the proposals to respond to the consultation.

5.3.7 The principal issues identified in these campaigns were:

- Impacts on property owners and local amenity value,
- A change in access arrangements for the Day Aggregates site in the area, with a removal in access from Guildford Road, and
- Demolition of listed properties.

5.3.8 Copies of both campaign materials are included in Appendix E.

## 5.4 Project-specific questions

5.4.1 The consultation asked two specific questions about the proposals: one overarching question about whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes in principle, and a second question consisting of seven different aspects of the scheme, where respondents could use a scale to select how they felt about each aspect.

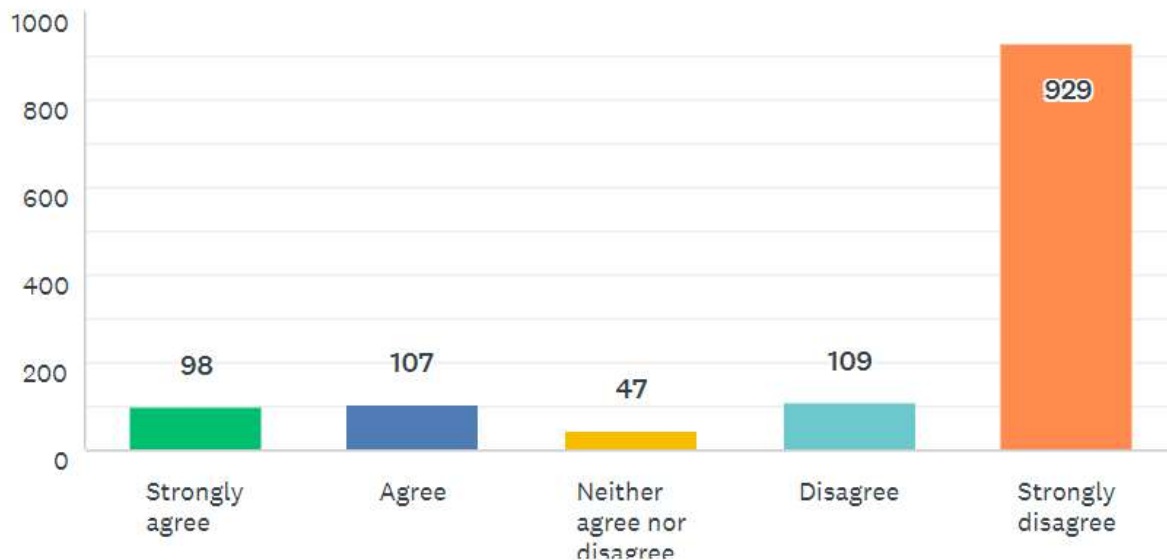
5.4.2 A full list of consultation questions can be found in Appendix B. A summary of the questions and the associated responses is set out below.

### 5.4.3 Question one:

**In principle do you agree or disagree with proposals to change the road layout at Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach?**

5.4.4 Figure 4 shows the number of respondents that strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed, disagreed and chose did not have an opinion when answering question one. Table 3 below shows the breakdown of respondents that answered this question.

**Figure 4 – Q1: In principle do you agree or disagree with proposals to change the road layout at Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach?**



**Table 3: Breakdown of question 1 responses**

Answer choices	Number of respondents who selected this choice	Percentage of responses
Strongly agree	98	8%
Agree	107	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	47	4%
Disagree	109	8%
Strongly disagree	929	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,290</b>	

5.4.5 **Question two:**

**Please tell us how you feel about the following proposals**

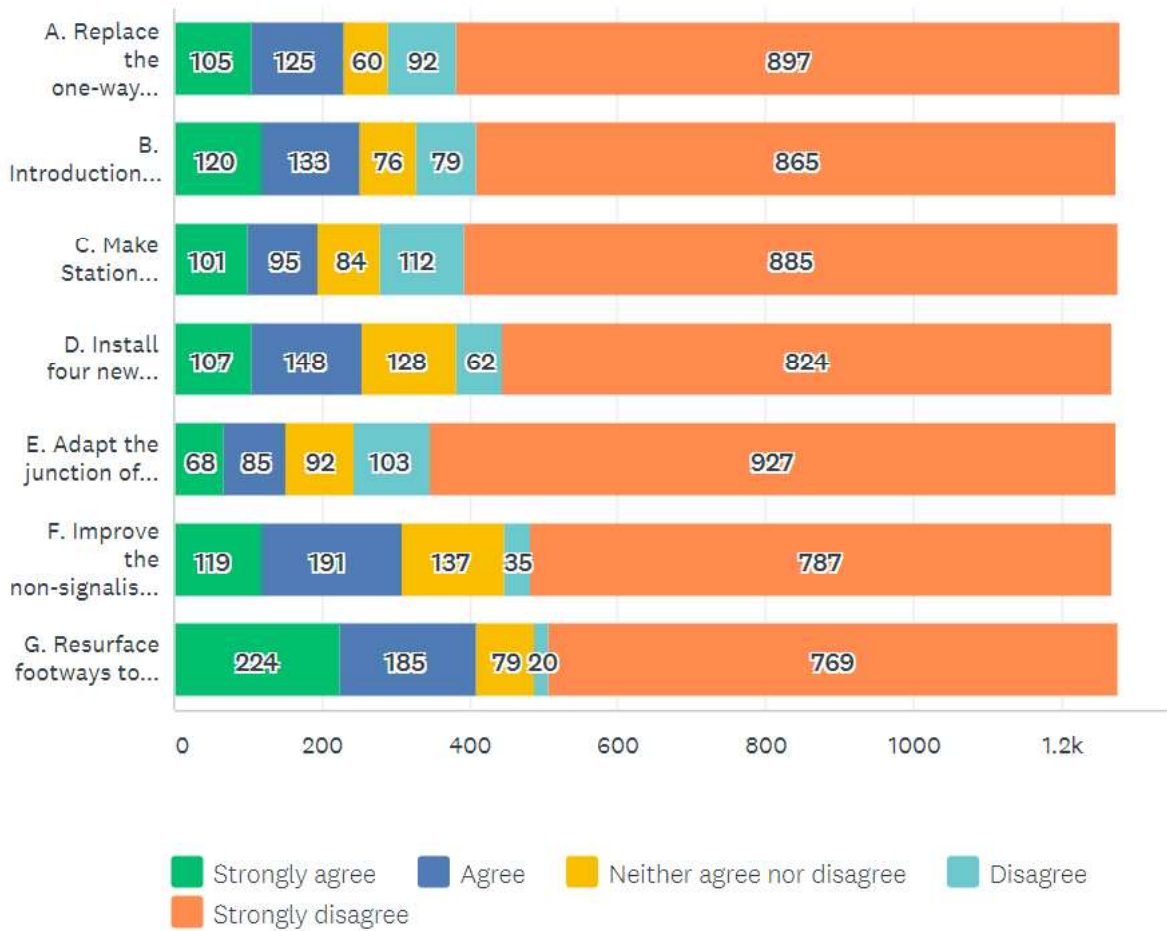
5.4.6 This question was divided into seven parts asking respondents how they felt about the following aspects of the scheme:

- A.** Replace the one-way gyratory system on Guildford Road/Victoria Road/Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road
- B.** Introduction of shared space for pedestrians and cycle paths
- C.** Make Station Approach from Victoria Road to Heathside Road pedestrian and cycle only with no access to vehicles
- D.** Install four new signalised crossings for pedestrians and cyclists
- E.** Adapt the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn exit only, with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road
- F.** Improve the non-signalised crossing point with dropped kerb on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road
- G.** Resurface footways to encourage more local journeys on foot

5.4.7 The responses received to question 2 are shown in Figure 5. Tables 4-10 detail the breakdown of responses.



**Figure 5 – Q2: Please tell us how you feel about the following proposals:**



**Table 4: Breakdown of question 2A responses**

A. Replace the one-way gyratory system on Guildford Road/Victoria Road/Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number of respondents who selected this choice	105	125	60	92	897
Percentage of responses	8%	10%	5%	7%	70%
<b>Total</b>	1,279				

**Table 5: Breakdown of question 2B responses**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>B. Introduction of shared space for pedestrians and cycle paths</b>					
Number of respondents who selected this choice	120	133	76	79	865
Percentage of responses	9%	11%	6%	6%	68%
<b>Total</b>	1,273				

**Table 6: Breakdown of question 2C responses**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>C. Make Station Approach from Victoria Road to Heathside Road pedestrian and cycle only with no access to vehicles</b>					
Number of respondents who selected this choice	101	95	84	112	885
Percentage of responses	8%	7%	7%	9%	69%
<b>Total</b>	1,277				

**Table 7: Breakdown of question 2D responses**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>D. Install four new signalised crossings for pedestrians and cyclists</b>					
Number of respondents who selected this choice	107	148	128	62	824
Percentage of responses	8%	12%	10%	5%	65%
<b>Total</b>	1,269				

**Table 8: Breakdown of question 2E responses**

E. Adapt the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn exit only, with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number of respondents who selected this choice	68	85	92	103	927
Percentage of responses	5%	7%	7%	8%	73%
<b>Total</b>	1,275				

**Table 9: Breakdown of question 2F responses**

F. Improve the non-signalised crossing point with dropped kerb on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number of respondents who selected this choice	119	191	137	35	787
Percentage of responses	9%	15%	11%	3%	62%
<b>Total</b>	1,269				

**Table 10: Breakdown of question 2G responses**

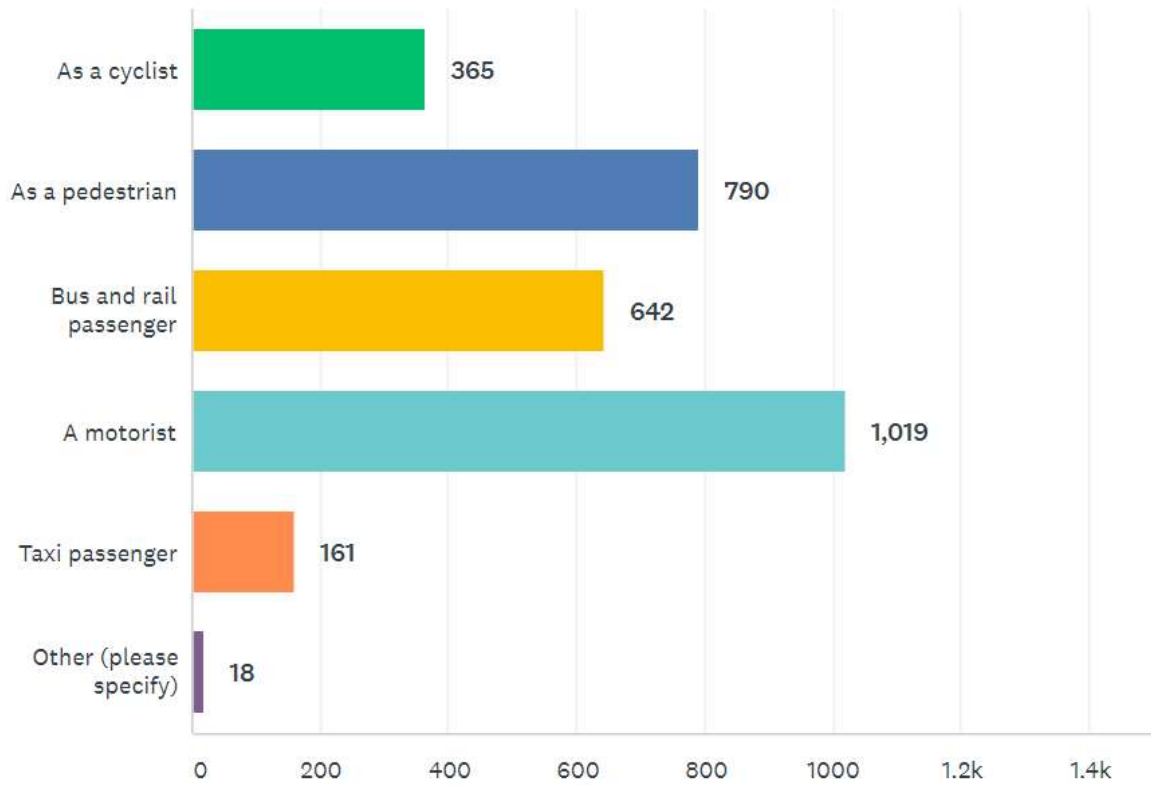
G. Resurface footways to encourage more local journeys on foot	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Number of respondents who selected this choice	224	185	79	20	769
Percentage of responses	18%	14%	6%	2%	60%
<b>Total</b>	1,277				

**5.4.8 Question three:**

**What type of transport do you currently use in the area? If you use many, please feel free to select more than one option.**

5.4.9 Of 1,285 respondents that answered this question, the majority selected that they travel as a motorist. Figure 6 shows the responses received to this question, while Table 11 shows the breakdown of responses. Respondents could select more than one choice to answer this question.

**Figure 6 – Q3: What type of transport do you currently use in the area?**



**Table 11: Breakdown of question 3 responses**

Answer choices	Number of respondents who selected this choice	Percentage of individual respondents that answered this question*
As a cyclist	365	28%
As a pedestrian	790	61%
Bus and rail passenger	642	50%
A motorist	1,019	79%
Taxi passenger	161	13%
Other (please specify)	18	1%

\*Please note respondents could choose multiple options to this question.

5.4.10 **Question four:**  
**Do you have any further comments?**

5.4.11 Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any aspect of the proposals. Of the 1,287 respondents that completed the online questionnaire, 498 provided comments. The highest proportion of additional comments focused on concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposals on businesses along Guildford Road. There is a possibility that these potential impacts had a bearing on overall responses regarding individual aspects of the proposals. It is also apparent that concerns regarding other local issues that do not form part of the proposed scheme (eg changes to the Day Aggregates site access point) may have had an influence on some respondents' views.

5.4.12 Table 12 below shows the most frequently raised comments that were received to this question.

**Table 12 – Most frequently raised comments**

Comment	Number of times raised
Do not get rid of the shops or businesses	158
Retain access to Heathside Road from Guildford Road/Access to the hospital and surgery will be restricted	79
Opposed/It is a bad proposal for Woking	55
The scheme will cause traffic congestion in other places/will add to congestion	35
Concern about shared space/scheme will be less safe for vulnerable users	30
A five-lane dual carriageway is too big for the town	27
Request for further info	25
Too many crossings/poor locations	18
The scheme will cause further pollution	18
There is too much disruption through building work in Woking	16
Opposed to access to Day Aggregates on York Road	15
Improve access to station/consider drop-off and pick-up/reduce amount of taxis	14
Do not build high-rise buildings	13
Concern about loss of parking space/more parking needed	13
Scheme needs to consider vulnerable users	13
Cycling infrastructure needed	12
Cycle and walking routes need to be separate for safety	12
Support/scheme is a good idea/Woking needs it	11

Scheme does not consider local residents or businesses	11
The scheme is necessary	9
Guarantee alternative suitable premises for affected shops	9
Make the traffic free flowing with fewer stops	9
Crossings needed at Mount Hermon/Constitution Hill/Victoria Way/Wych Hill	9
Scheme will ruin York Road	7
Continuous cycle routes needed/cycle priority	7
Preserve the trees in Woking	6
Compensate local businesses for disruption	6
Improve lighting under Victoria Arch/Station Approach around town centre	6
Improve pedestrian/cycle facilities	5
The scheme is unnecessary	5
Discourage/ban cars in city centres	5
Improve disability access	5

- 5.4.13 Other issues that were raised by a fewer number of respondents included the cost of the scheme, construction timings, the possibility of pedestrianising the area, impacts on local bus routes and the cost of parking locally.
- 5.4.14 To help WBC better understand local views on the proposals, further analysis was carried out to understand how views on the proposals varied according to the location of respondents.



Figure 7: the distribution of respondents in the Woking area and nature of response

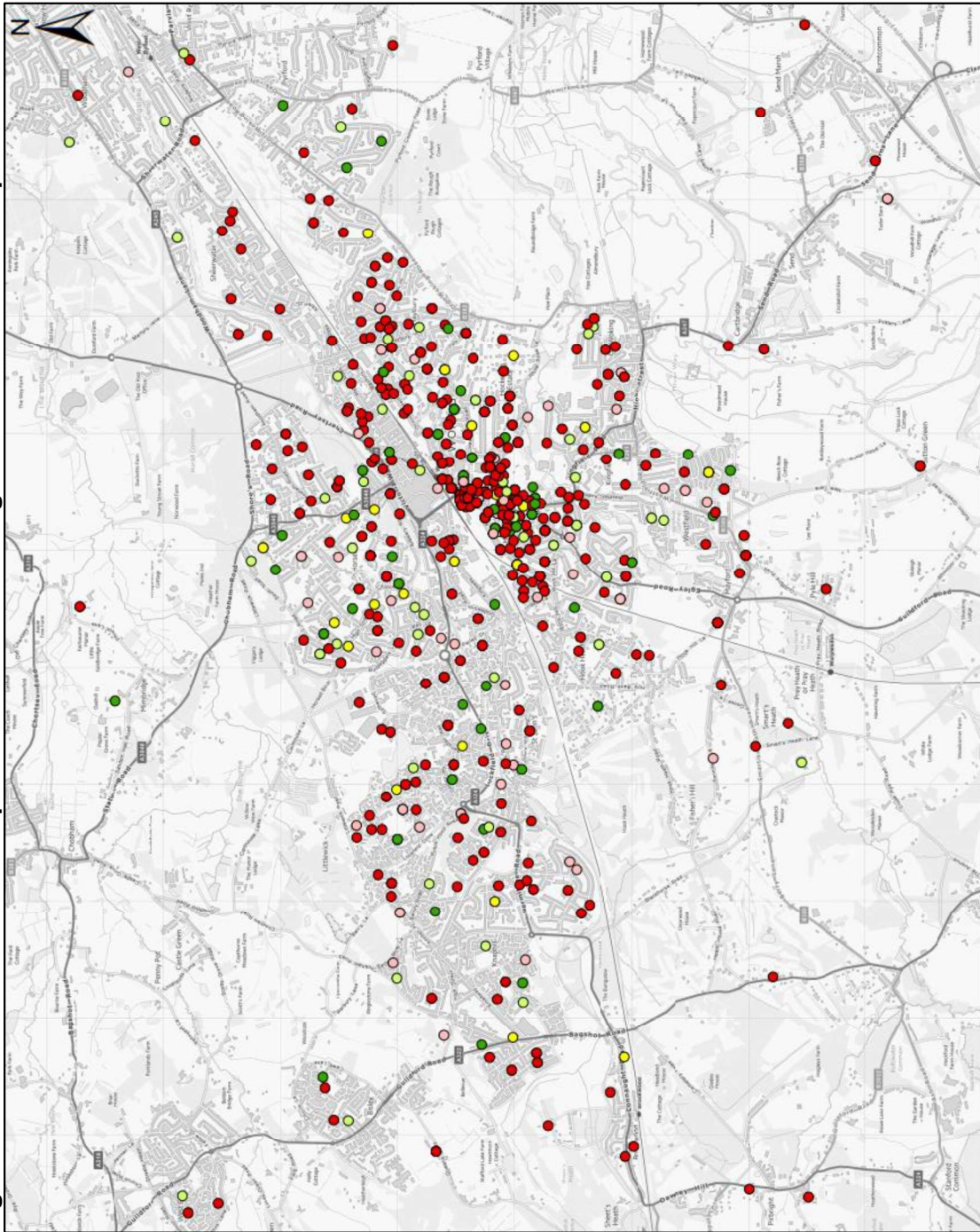
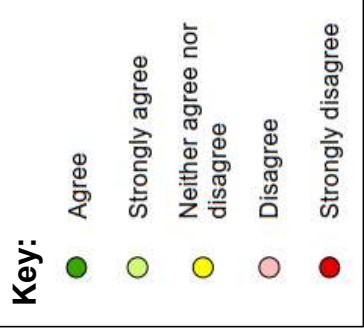
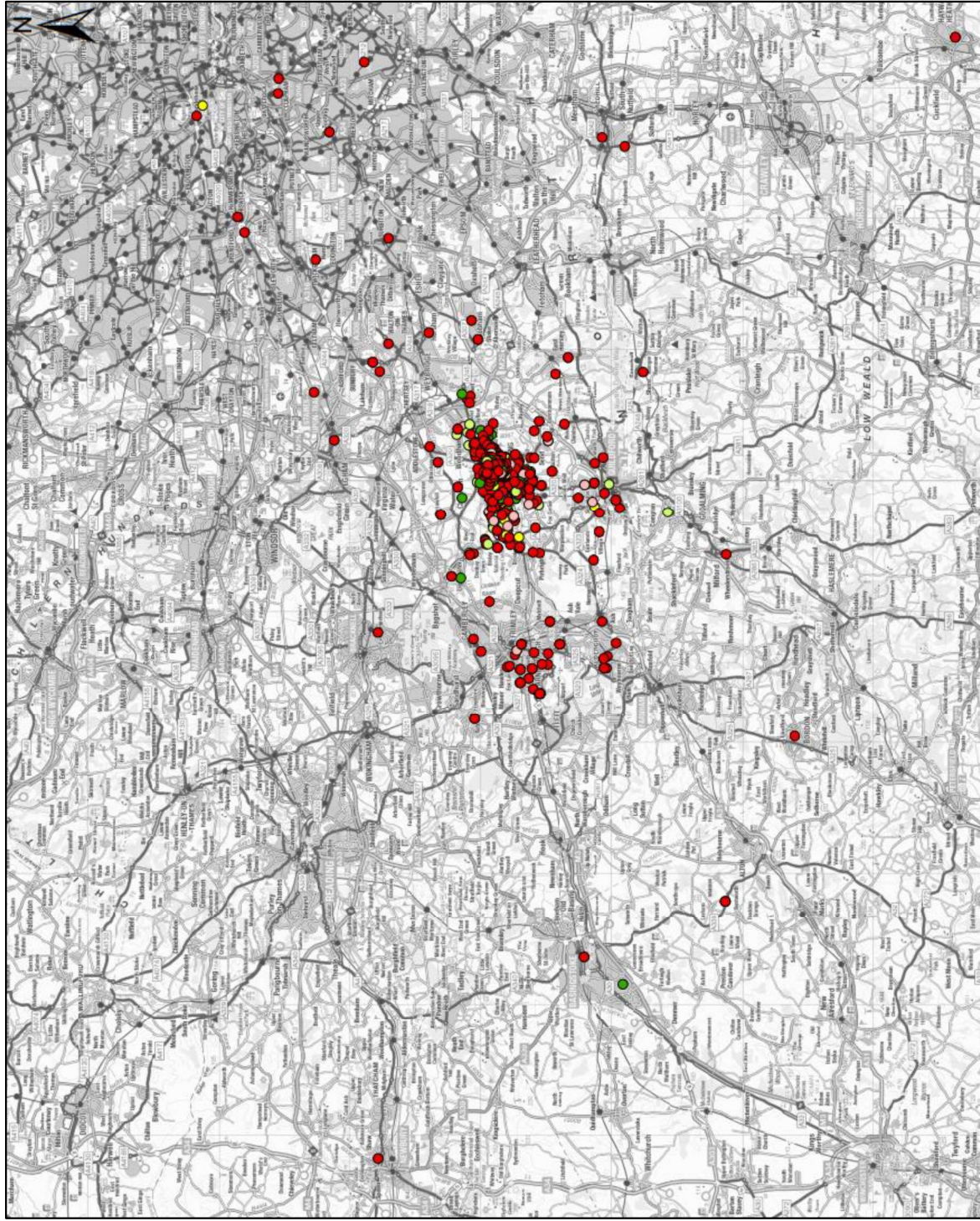




Figure 8: distribution of respondents across the south-east area and nature of response





## 5.5 Stakeholder responses

5.5.1 The consultation received one stakeholder response from Southview Medical Practice. The response is summarised below:

The Practice is supportive of the Borough Council's attempts to increase physical activity and reduce harmful emissions in the local community, but concerned about the safety of the proposals, specifically:

1. The junction between our car park entrance and Constitution Hill with its close proximity to Guildford Road
2. The parking proposed to be removed from Constitution Hill. Believes that this would have a significant impact on the local community and practice population.
3. Lack of available parking could cause delay to patients accessing medical services.
4. Would like to bring to the Borough Council's attention that there is land around the practice that could potentially resolve some of the parking issues i.e. improve parking availability.

## 6 Response to main issues raised

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This section summarises key issues that emerged during the consultation and Woking Borough Council's response to these.

### 6.1 Impacts on residents/businesses along Guildford Road

#### 6.1.1 **Will the shops along Guildford Road be demolished to make room for the wider road?**

The proposals to reintroduce two-way traffic along Guildford necessitates the widening of the carriageway by 15 metres to the east.

This consultation focused on proposed changes to the road layout only, although the Borough Council recognises and understands concerns about how these proposals may impact on properties in the area, including the shops and properties on Guildford Road.

The Council can confirm that no decisions have been taken regarding the future of the proposed future development area that was indicated on consultation materials, and any subsequent proposals would be subject to normal planning processes.

The Council is in discussions with landowners in the area and this engagement will be broadened as the project progress to include other interested parties but, at this stage, any future development would be expected to consist of a mix of commercial and residential property, as is the case to the east of Guildford Road currently.

In the meantime, the Council is committed to ensuring that the benefits of this scheme are delivered for the local community while any impacts on residents or businesses are minimised as far as possible.

#### 6.1.2 **Will the businesses on the site of the proposed development area be re-located/compensated?**

As outlined above, no decisions have been taken regarding the future of the proposed development area indicated on consultation materials.

The Borough Council intends to fully engage with all interested parties as the project progresses to identify and resolve any issues associated with the proposed improvements to the road layout, while specific individual circumstances will need to be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

### 6.2 Design

#### 6.2.1 **Why are you proposing to ban the left-turn into Heathside Road?**

Analysis of current traffic movements in Woking showed that a relatively low number of vehicles turn from Guildford Road into Heathside Road (110 vehicles in the morning peak and 170 in the evening peak), while there are also alternative route options available for vehicles heading towards Heathside Road.

However, having reviewed this proposal in light of comments received through the consultation, we can confirm that the design will be adapted to accommodate the left-turn for vehicles from Guildford Road to Heathside Road.

### 6.2.2 **How can I access Woking Community Hospital by car?**

As outlined in paragraph 6.2.1, vehicles will be able to turn left from Guildford Road to Heathside Road. Access to the community hospital will also continue to be possible from the eastern end of Heathside Road.

### 6.2.3 **Why do you need four new crossings, surely this will just add to the congestion?**

Encouraging more local journeys either on foot or by cycle is a key objective of the proposals. The provision of safe, accessible crossing options for pedestrians and cyclists will contribute to this, while the crossing locations have been chosen to suit preferred routes, or 'desire lines', between residential areas and key locations, including the town centre and train station.

### 6.2.4 **Won't adding lanes of traffic just add to congestion?**

A traffic modelling exercise was completed to inform the development of the proposed road layout design. The modelling showed that, in 2026, journey times for vehicles across the town centre would be improved with the proposed scheme.

### 6.2.5 **Will this lead to more 'rat-running' along York Road?**

The traffic modelling showed that congestion along Guildford Road will be reduced as a result of the proposed changes. This will be of benefit to all users of the corridor, including those who may currently use parallel routes.

## 6.3 **Environment**

### 6.3.1 **If two trees are being removed will you be re-planting any?**

The scheme will be designed to incorporate a planting scheme that will ensure the number of trees removed will be replaced and more will be planted where possible. This is in line with existing practices adopted by Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

### 6.3.2 **Will this scheme increase pollution?**

Air quality analysis has not been specifically completed for the scheme to date. However, potential improvements in local air quality may be derived as a result of traffic flowing more freely along Guildford Road. Typically, these occur when there are less stopping vehicles and improved consistency in vehicle speed that has been identified in the supporting analysis for the proposed scheme.

## 6.4 **Buses**

### 6.4.1 **What will happen to local bus routes as a result? E.g. Will the 437 bus still serve Woking Community Hospital?**

The effects of the proposed changes on local bus routes will be further assessed as the project progresses through more detailed design stages. As the Council developed its proposals for improvements to Guildford Road and the surrounding area, Surrey County Council Passenger Transport Team was consulted and this will continue to ensure bus services are not adversely impacted in the proposed layout.

## **6.5 Pedestrian/cycling facilities**

### **6.5.1 How will this scheme encourage more cycling journeys?**

By extending and improving pedestrian and cycling facilities towards Woking Park and other key amenities, the scheme is designed to help encourage more local journeys either on foot or by bike.

In line with best practice guidance, the proposed new shared paths would be a minimum of 3 metres wide and 4 metres when adjacent to a building. New toucan crossings will make it more convenient for cyclists to continue their journeys, without needing to dismount.

### **6.5.2 Shared pedestrian cycle paths can be dangerous – will there be a line dividing the path to stop pedestrian/cycle conflict?**

Views on this aspect of the project will be taken into account as the project progresses into detailed design stages, although Surrey County Council, as the highway authority has been consulted on the proposals and its agreement with approach adopted. Our experience of successfully introducing shared space schemes elsewhere in Woking will also help shape the design as it develops.

The scheme has been subject to a Road Safety Audit by the highways authority, Surrey County Council, in consultation with Surrey Police, and will continue to do so as the project progresses, to ensure that the scheme meets national highway safety requirements.

## **6.6 Accessibility**

### **6.6.1 How will the scheme help to improve accessibility for vulnerable users, including disabled people?**

- The new crossings will have a tactile paving strip as well as a rotating cone to assist visually-impaired people
- All crossing points will have sloped pavements for wheelchair and buggy accessibility
- All shared paths will be de-cluttered to provide more space
- The scheme will widen the pedestrian footpath beneath Victoria Arch, improving access to the town centre considerably for vulnerable users.

## **6.7 Construction**

### **6.7.1 When will the roadworks start and finish?**

Subject to funding and the progression of Network Rail's proposals to widen Victoria Arch, works could begin in late 2019. A detailed construction programme will only be available once a contractor is appointed, but the works would be expected to take 18-24 months.

As with the ongoing construction in the town centre, the Borough Council would work hard with its contractors, suppliers and Highways Authority, to ensure that any disruption is minimised as far as possible.

## **6.8 Cost**

### **6.8.1 What is the scheme budget?**

An indicative design was produced for consultation purposes to gather initial views from consultees/the public. More detailed design work will now be undertaken and costed accordingly.

## **6.9 Questions not directly related to the road layout proposals**

### **6.9.1 Is the Day Aggregates access point being moved to York Road?**

This subject was included in the campaign leaflet delivered to properties along York Road. The Borough Council can confirm that there are no current proposals to move the access point for Day Aggregates from its existing location on Guildford Road.

### **6.9.2 Can you create a drop-off and pick-up point at Woking station?**

Vehicle access to and from Woking station is outside the scope of this consultation. However, Woking Borough Council regularly discusses options for improving access to the station with Network Rail and will continue to press for improvements, where practical. Woking Train Station's official vehicle drop-off/pick-up is located on the south side of the station. Along the north side, road space close to the station is limited and the Council has prioritised this road space specifically for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists with the aim of improving the public realm, safety and congestion issues in this location.

The provision of improved cycling and walking facilities towards the station is also designed to help encourage more local journeys either on foot or by cycle. This could therefore help reduce congestion around the station in future.

## 7 Next steps

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- 7.1.1 Having considered responses to the consultation, Woking Borough Council intends to proceed with the proposed scheme with the following modifications:
- The road layout design will be adapted to accommodate the left-turn for vehicles from Guildford Road to Heathside Road
  - The Guildford Road bus stop will be moved south of the junction with York Road
- 7.1.2 A Housing Infrastructure Fund submission will be prepared and submitted to central Government to help develop the proposals further.
- 7.1.3 The Borough Council recognises the concerns raised through the consultation regarding the impact of the road layout changes on businesses located along Guildford Road. Discussions between the Borough Council, affected landowners and other interested parties are ongoing, while the Borough Council is committed to ensuring that the benefits of the scheme are delivered for the local community, while any associated impacts are minimised as far as possible.
- 7.1.4 The proposals are also directly linked with Network Rail's intention to widen Victoria Arch, the bridge which carries the railway over Guildford Road. Discussions regarding the bridge widening continue between the Borough Council and Network Rail.
- 7.1.5 Subject to the above and funding, works could begin in late 2019. As with the ongoing construction in the town centre, the Borough Council would work hard with its contractors and suppliers to ensure that any disruption is minimised as far as possible.

## 8 Appendix A – Stakeholder list

### 8.1 Woking: elected representatives

Type	Name	Ward
Councillor	David Bittleston	Mount Hermon
Councillor	Ian Johnson	Mount Hermon
Councillor	Liam Lyons	Mount Hermon
Councillor	John Bond	Byfleet/West Byfleet
Councillor	Amanda Boot	Byfleet/West Byfleet
Councillor	Mary Bridgeman	Byfleet/West Byfleet
Councillor	Mohammad Ali	Canal side
Councillor	Tahir Aziz	Canal side
Councillor	M Ilyas Raja	Canal side
Councillor	Ann-Marie Barker	Goldsworth Park
Councillor	Ian Eastwood	Goldsworth Park
Councillor	Chitra Rana	Goldsworth Park
Councillor	Simon Ashall	Heathlands
Councillor	Ayesha Azad	Heathlands
Councillor	Kevin Davis	Heathlands
Councillor	Will Forster	Hoe Valley
Councillor	Deborah Hughes	Hoe Valley
Councillor	Louise Morales	Hoe Valley
Councillor	Beryl Hunwicks	Horsell
Councillor	Colin Kemp	Horsell
Councillor	Nancy Martin	Horsell
Councillor	Debbie Harlow	Knaphill
Councillor	Saj Hussain	Knaphill
Councillor	Melanie Whitehand	Knaphill
Councillor	Ashley Bowes	Pyrford
Councillor	Graham Chrystie	Pyrford
Councillor	Rashid Mohammed	Pyrford
Councillor	Hillary Addison	St Johns
Councillor	Graham Cundy	St Johns
Councillor	Ken Howard	St Johns
MP	Jonathan Lord	

### 8.2 Surrey County Council: Elected representative

Type	Name	Division (if applicable)
Councillor	Ben Carasco	Woking North
Councillor	Will Forster	Woking South
Councillor	Liz Bowes	Woking South East
Councillor	Ayesha Azad	Woking South West
Leader of the Council	David Hodge	(Warlingham)
Deputy Leader of the Council	John Furey	(Addlestone)

Cabinet member	Mike Goodman	Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Cabinet member	Helyn Clack	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Cabinet member	Denise Turner Stewart	Cabinet Member for Community Services
Cabinet member	Tim Oliver	Cabinet Member for People
Cabinet member	Colin Kemp	Cabinet Member for Place (Economic growth etc)
Cabinet member	Mel Few	Cabinet Member for Adults (Social care etc)
Cabinet member	Mary Lewis	Cabinet Member for All-age learning
Cabinet member	Clare Curran	Cabinet Member for Children

### 8.3 Local community and business groups

Type	Stakeholder
Business	Woking Chamber of Commerce
Business	Surrey Chamber of Commerce
Business	Woking Works
Business	Woking Asian Business Forum
Community	Woking Local Action 21 (LA21)
Community	Woking Area U3A
Community	Woking Association of Neighbourhood Watches
Community	Woking Association of Voluntary Service
Cycling	Breeze Woking
Cycling	Charlotteville Cycling Club
Cycling	CTC West Surrey
Cycling	CTC West Surrey
Cycling	Surrey Wheels for All
Cycling	Woking Cycle Club
Education	All primary schools within the Borough
Education	All secondary schools within the Borough
Fire	Woking Fire station
Healthcare	Dr O'Connell Smith Newman
Healthcare	Hillview Medical Centre
Healthcare	NHS England
Healthcare	Public Health England
Healthcare	Woking Community Hospital
Healthcare	York House Medical Centre
Housing	Quadrant Court
Local business	Belles Bridal
Local business	Curchod & Co Estates
Local business	Enzo's Bar



Local business	Evans Cycles
Local business	Faith Recruitment
Local business	Hart Brown Woking Solicitors
Local business	Heaters Bakery
Local business	Job Centre Plus
Local business	KFC Head office
Local business	Lynton House Vets
Local business	Pizza Hut Delivery
Local business	Sovereigns
Local business	The Money Shop
Local business	Treasure Cove Play Centre
Local business	Working Smart
Local business	Ye Olde Fishmarket
Older people	Crossroads Care Surrey
Older people	Heathside Retirement Home
Older people	Woking 50+ Club
Older people	Woking Homes
Older people	Woking Hospice
Police	British Transport Police Authority
Police	Surrey Police
Police	Woking Police station
Resident Association	Sheerwater Residents Association
Resident Association	Goldsworth Park Community Association
Resident Association	Knaphill Residents Association
Residents Association	Brookwood Village Association
Residents Association	The Resident (West Byfleet, Byfleet and Pyrford)
Religious group	Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking
Religious group	Woking Vineyard Church
Religious group	Woking URC
Religious group	Welcome Church
Religious group	Christ Church Woking
Religious group	Faith Prayer International Church
Religious group	Christian Science Church
Religious group	Masjid Albirr - Mosque
Sport/Leisure	Freedom Runners
Sport/Leisure	Woking Athletics
Sport/Leisure	Woking Leisure centre and Pool in the Park
Sport/Leisure	Woking Town FC
Sport/Leisure	Woking FC
Utility	Thames Water
Walking	Woking and Runnymede health walks
Walking	Woking Ramblers
Youth	Girl Guiding - Guildford
Youth	Scouts
Youth	Surrey Youth Focus
Youth	Woking Youth Centre

#### 8.4 Transport and travel groups

Association of British Drivers	Motorcycle Action Group
Automobile Association	National Private Hire & Taxi Association (NPHA)
British Motorcyclists Federation	National Taxi Association (NTA)
Campaign for Better Transport	Network Rail
Campaign for Rail	Office of Rail and Road
Confederation of Passenger Transport UK	Road Haulage Association
Cyclists Touring Club	Sustrans
Department for Transport	Transport Focus
Freight Transport Association	Woking Taxi Association
Independent Transport Commission	

#### 8.5 Accessibility and Equality groups

Age UK	Guide Dogs for the Blind
Blind Veterans UK	Guildford Access Group
Disabled Motoring UK	North West Surrey Association of Disabled People
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	RNIB
Equality and Human Rights Commission	Woking Access Group

#### 8.6 Environmental and Heritage groups

Canal and River Trust	Green Alliance
English Heritage Trust	Historic England
Environmental Agency	Natural England
Natural Woking	

## 9 Appendix B – Consultation Questionnaire

1. Do you agree with proposals to change the road layout at Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

2.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>A.</b> Replace the one-way gyratory system on Guildford Road/Victoria Road/Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road					
<b>B.</b> Introduction of shared space for pedestrians and cycle paths					
<b>C.</b> Make Station Approach from Victoria Road to Heathside Road pedestrian and cycle only with no access to vehicles					
<b>D.</b> Install four new signalised crossings for pedestrians and cyclists					
<b>E.</b> Adapt the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn exit only, with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road					
<b>F.</b> Improve the non-signalised crossing point with dropped kerb on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road					
<b>G.</b> Resurface footways to encourage more local journeys on foot					

Please let us know how you feel about the following proposals:

3. What type of transport do you currently use in the area? If you use many, please feel free to select more than one option.

As a cyclist, a pedestrian, a bus and rail passenger, a motorist, taxi passenger, Other – please specify

4. Do you have any further comments?

### Your feedback

5. How did you hear about the consultation?

Received a postcard, read about it on the press, received an email, saw it on the Borough Council website, through social media, other – please specify

6. **What do you think about the quality of this consultation (for example, the information we have provided, any printed material you have received, any maps or plans, the website and questionnaire etc.)?**  
Very good, Good, Acceptable, Poor, Very Poor

### **About you**

#### **Data Protection**

As you may be aware, new data protection laws came into effect on 25 May 2018. We want to keep you up to date with information and news about the project and will begin to send you regular updates. If you would prefer not to receive these updates you can unsubscribe at any time by emailing us at [guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk](mailto:guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk).

7. **What is your email address?**
8. **What is your postcode?**
9. **Are you a...**  
Local resident, business owner, employed locally, visitor to the area, commuter to the area, not local but interested, other –please specify
10. **If responding on behalf of an organisation, business or campaign group, please provide us with a name**

#### **Equality Monitoring (optional)**

Please tell us a bit about yourself in this section. All information will be kept confidential and used for analysis purposes only. We are asking these questions to ensure our consultations are open to all sections of the community and to improve the effectiveness of the way we communicate with our customers. You do not have to provide any personal information if you don't want to.

#### **Gender:**

Not specified (default)  
Male  
Female  
Trans female  
Trans male  
Gender neutral  
Prefer not to say

#### **Ethnic Group:**

Not specified (default)	Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	Mixed – White and Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Chinese	Other Ethnic Group
Asian or Asian British – Indian	Other Ethnic Group – Arab
Asian or Asian British – Other	Other Ethnic Group – Kurdish
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	Other Ethnic Group – Latin American
Black or Black British – African	Other Ethnic Group – Turkish
Black or Black British – Caribbean	Prefer not to say
Black or Black British – Other	White – British
Mixed – Other	White – Irish
	White - Other

Mixed – White and Asian

<b>Age:</b>	41-45
Not specified (default)	46-50
Under 15	51-55
16-20	56-60
21-25	61-65
26-30	66-70
31-35	71+
36-40	Prefer not to say

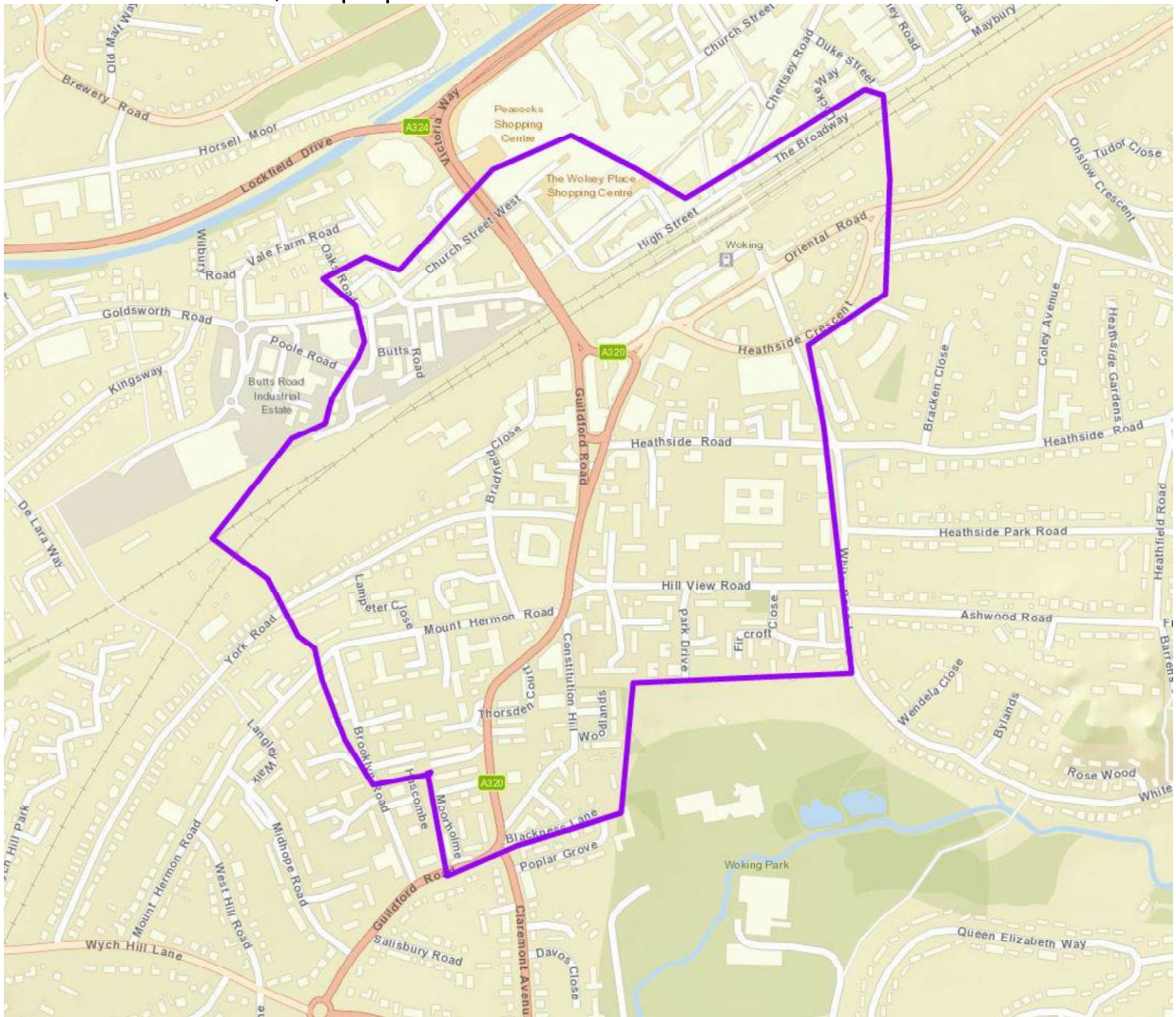
<b>Faith:</b>	Sikh
Not specified (default)	Jewish
Buddhist	Other
Christian	None
Hindu	Prefer not to say
Muslim	

**Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? (Please include problems related to old age) *Please tick one box.***

- Yes, limited a lot
- Yes, limited a little
- No
- Prefer not to say

# 10 Appendix C - Consultation area

The map below shows the area included within the consultation postcard distribution. The area contains 3,420 properties.





# 11 Appendix D – Consultation materials




## 11.1 Copy of the consultation postcard

The consultation postcard was distributed to 3,420 properties in the consultation area.

Front:



Back:

<p><b>Woking Borough Council is working in partnership with Surrey County Council to consult on proposals for Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach.</b></p> <p>Proposals include replacing the one-way gyratory system with a two-way road for vehicles, and the introduction of safer, more convenient walking and cycling routes.</p> <p>The proposal aims to relieve congestion around the town centre, whilst making journey times quicker and more reliable.</p> <p><b>To find out more:</b></p> <p> <a href="http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation">woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation</a></p> <p> <a href="mailto:guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk">guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk</a></p> <p> 01483 755855*</p> <p><small>*Standard network rates apply</small></p> <p><small>If you have any queries or would like to receive information in another format, please contact us.</small></p>	<p><b>Public events</b></p> <p>We will be holding public drop-in sessions on the following dates:</p> <p><b>Thursday 20 September 2018</b> 12.30pm to 8.30pm</p> <p><b>Saturday 29 September 2018</b> 10am to 4pm</p> <p>Drop-in sessions will be held at: Middle Walk, Wolsey Place Shopping Centre, Commercial Way, Woking, GU21 6XF</p> <p>Members of the project team will be present to answer any questions.</p> <p>A public exhibition will also run during the consultation period at <i>Morris House, 34 Commercial Way, Woking, GU21 6EN</i>, with the exception of the above dates.</p> <p><b>Please submit your views by Wednesday 24 October 2018</b></p>
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## 11.2 Copy of the exhibition banners

Exhibition banners were displayed in Morris House in Woking town centre during the consultation period with the exception of the two public events, when they were moved to Wolsey Place Shopping Centre.

### Proposed changes to Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach

**Woking Borough Council is working in partnership with Surrey County Council to consult on proposals to change the road layout south of Victoria Arch in Woking Town Centre.**

The proposal includes replacing the existing one-way gyratory system around Guildford Road, Victoria Road and A320 Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles, which aims to relieve congestion whilst making journey times quicker and more reliable.

Other proposals include the introduction of safer, more convenient walking and cycling routes between the town centre, residential areas and other important local places of interest.



**Our proposals**

We propose to:

- Replace the one-way gyratory system with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road.
- Introduce new shared pedestrian and cycle paths.
- Install four new toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Adapt the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn only exit with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road.
- Improve the non-signalised crossing point on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road.
- Resurface footways to encourage more local journeys on foot.

The widening of Victoria Arch is an integral part of our proposals. Partial road, walking and cycle route changes could be implemented south of Victoria Arch in advance of the widening, but the full scheme proposals and associated benefits could only be achieved with the widening in place.

**Timescales**  
Subject to funding, the approval of the Victoria Arch widening proposals and the outcome of public consultation, implementation of the scheme could start in late 2019.

woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation



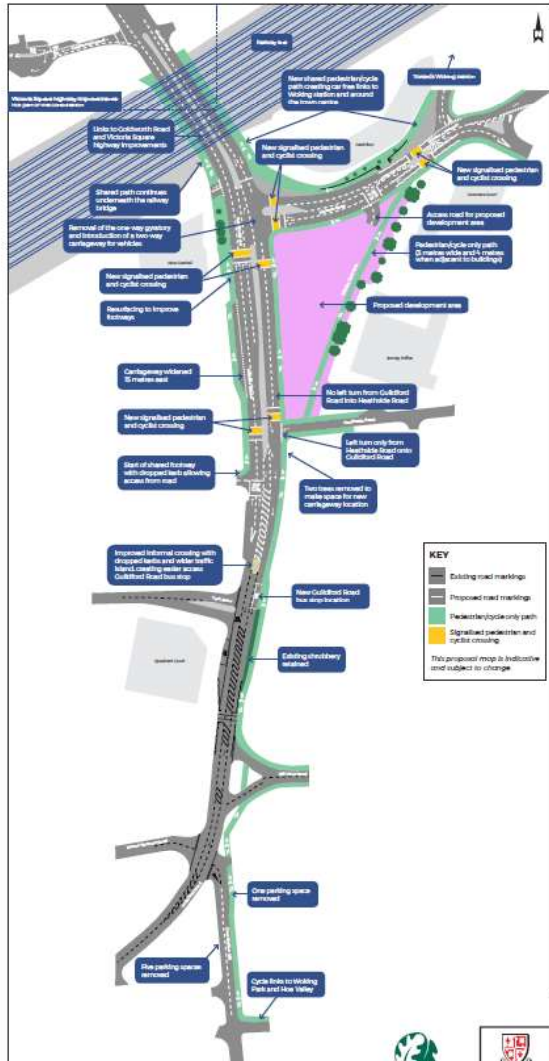
woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation



Exhibition banners continued on next page



## Proposal map



woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation



## Benefits and potential impacts

### We anticipate the following benefits of the scheme:

- Reduced and more reliable journey times to and from Woking Town Centre.
- Additional crossing options for pedestrians and cyclists without the need to dismount.
- New pedestrian and cycle links to and from Woking station and around the town centre connecting to Woking Park, Woking Leisure Centre and other amenities.
- An increase in the number of people walking and cycling, encouraging healthier living.

### Potential impacts of the scheme

In order to introduce these proposals, the following physical changes would be expected to take place:

- Widening Guildford Road by 15 metres to the east.
- Removal of direct vehicular access from Guildford Road to Heathside Road. Left-turn only for traffic exiting Heathside Road onto Guildford Road.
- Removal of access for vehicles between Station Approach from Victoria Road to Heathside Road.
- Removal of six parking spaces along Constitution Hill.
- Removal of two trees.



woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation



Exhibition banners continued on next page

**Have your say**

We would like your views on our proposals. This public consultation will be open until **Wednesday 24 October 2018**.

To have your say please complete our survey at:  
[woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation)

If you have any queries or would like to receive information in another format, please contact us on the details below.  
[guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk](mailto:guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk)  
 01483 755855\*

\*Standard network rates apply

**Victoria Road junction with Station Approach**



ARVD's impression of the scheme

**Constitution Hill junction with Guildford Road**



ARVD's impression of the scheme

[woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation)

**SURREY** COUNTY COUNCIL

**WOKING** BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Have your say on proposals to change the road layout at Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach**

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

Woking Borough Council is working in partnership with Surrey County Council to consult on proposals for Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach.

Proposals include replacing the one-way gyratory system with a two-way road for vehicles, and the introduction of safer, more convenient walking and cycling routes.

The proposal aims to relieve congestion, whilst making journey times quicker and more reliable.

**To find out more and to have your say:**

[woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation)  
[guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk](mailto:guildfordrdconsultation@woking.gov.uk)  
 01483 755855\*

\*Standard network rates apply

**Please submit your views by Wednesday 24 October 2018.**

**Public events**  
 We will be holding public drop-in sessions on the following dates:

**Thursday 20 September 2018**  
 12.30pm to 8pm

**Saturday 29 September 2018**  
 10am to 4pm

**Drop-in sessions will be held at:**  
 Middle Walk, Wolsey Place Shopping Centre, Commercial Way, Woking, GU21 6XF

Members of the project team will be present to answer any questions.

A public exhibition will also run during the consultation period at Morris House, 34 Commercial Way, Woking, GU21 6EN, with the exception of the public drop-in session dates.

If you have any queries or would like to receive information in another format, please contact us.


**#WEAREWOKING**

**SURREY** COUNTY COUNCIL

**WOKING** BOROUGH COUNCIL


Top right: Advertising banner that was left in Woking Station and other prominent locations around Woking, such as Woking leisure centre.

## 11.3 Consultation webpage



Search this site:  SEARCH [Advanced search](#) [Site map](#)

Online services: [Pay](#) [Apply](#) [Report](#) [Services gateway](#)



Home > Planning and regulation > Major developments

# Proposed changes to Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach consultation

We are working in partnership with Surrey County Council to consult on proposals to change the road layout south of Victoria Arch in Woking Town Centre.

[Tell us your views now](#)

The existing one-way gyratory system around Guildford Road, Victoria Road and the A320 Station Approach creates a pinch-point for traffic heading to and from the town centre and station, with queues often stretching back along Guildford Road.

We are proposing to replace the one-way gyratory system with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road. The proposal aims to relieve congestion around the town centre, whilst making journey times quicker and more reliable.


The proposal also includes the introduction of safer, more convenient walking and cycling routes between the town centre, residential areas and other important local places of interest.

The proposed changes could also help to unlock potential future development sites in the immediate area.

It should be noted that the widening of Victoria Arch is an integral part of our proposals. Partial road, walking and cycle route changes could be implemented south of Victoria Arch in advance of the widening, but the full scheme proposals and associated benefits could only be achieved with the widening in place.

### Our proposals

The proposals are summarised below. You can also [view our map](#) or view our fly-through video below to find out more.



### More in Proposed changes to Guildford Road, Victoria Road and Station Approach consultation

[Consultation map](#)

### Also in Major developments

- [A new vision for Sheerwater](#)
- [Hoe Stream Restoration Project consultation](#)
- [Hoe Valley School and Woking Sportsbox](#)
- [Woking Integrated Transport Project](#)



## 11.4 Copy of the press release

### **Have your say on proposals to change the road layout south of Victoria Arch**

The views of local residents and road users are being sought on a proposal to transform the road layout south of Victoria Arch in Woking Town Centre.

Working in partnership with the highways authority, Surrey County Council, the proposal will see the replacement of the existing one-way gyratory system around Guildford Road, Victoria Road and A320 Station Approach with a two-way road for vehicles, in addition to the introduction of safer, more convenient walking and cycle routes between Woking Town Centre, residential areas and other local places of interest.

As well as relieving congestion around Woking Town Centre and improving traffic flow, removing the one-way system would also make journey times quicker and more reliable.

Key elements of the proposal include:

- Replacing the one-way gyratory system with a two-way road for vehicles along Guildford Road and Victoria Road.
- Introducing new shared pedestrian and cycle paths.
- Installing four new toucan crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Adapting the junction of Heathside Road with Guildford Road so that it becomes left-turn only exit with no access for vehicles from Guildford Road.
- Improve the non-signalised crossing point on the western side of Guildford Road near to York Road.
- Resurface footways to encourage more local journeys on foot.

Cllr David Bittleston, Leader of Woking Borough Council and Ward Member for Mount Hermon, said: "Woking Town Centre has grown considerably in recent years. New homes, commercial opportunities and public spaces have underpinned the economic growth and vitality of the area. Yet to support the continued growth of the town centre, we must investigate what measures we can take to reduce congestion now and in the future.

"Working in partnership with Surrey County Council, we have developed this proposal to not only improve the existing road layout south of Victoria Arch, but also improve connectivity and encourage journeys by foot and bicycle.

Press release continued on next page

"It is now for local residents and road users to have their say on the proposal and help shape Woking's highway network for years to come."

Cllr Colin Kemp, Surrey County Council's Lead Cabinet Member for Place, and Woking Borough Councillor, said: "The A320 is a key arterial route connecting Woking and beyond with the M25. During peak hours, the area south of Victoria Arch regularly becomes a bottleneck causing delays and frustration amongst road users. Thanks to this proposal, we have the opportunity to address these issues now and open up access to Woking for all modes of transport, not only trains and cars, but also pedestrians and cyclists, in the future. I would encourage anyone who uses the A320 to get involved and have their say."

Cllr Will Forster, Surrey County Council Ward Member for South Woking, added: "South Woking currently suffers from poor transport links to both the town centre and train station. Victoria Arch and the roads leading up to it are narrow for motorists, dangerous for cyclists and unpleasant for pedestrians. This proposal put forward by Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council could alleviate these long standing problems. I would really welcome local people's views on the proposals."

#### **Public events**

A series of public drop-in sessions will be held in Wolsey Place Shopping Centre where residents can find out more about the proposal and members of the project team will be on hand to answer questions on:

- Thursday 20 September 2018 between 12.30pm and 8pm
- Saturday 29 September 2018 between 10am and 4pm

A public exhibition will also be held during the consultation period at Morris House, 34 Commercial Way, Woking, where residents can find out more about the proposal.

Alternatively, residents can view a short animated film of the proposals and have their say by visiting [www.woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation](http://www.woking.gov.uk/guildfordrdconsultation)

All feedback on the proposal should be received no later than **Wednesday 24 October 2018**.

Subject to funding, the approval of the Victoria Arch widening proposals and the outcome of the public consultation, implementation of the scheme could commence in late 2019.

## 12 Appendix E – Petitions and Campaigns

### 12.1 Petitions

12.1.1 The consultation received two petitions of 807 signatures 618 signatures, respectively, which were both organised by local business owners from Guildford Road. The petitions have not been included in our total number of responses received, as only the number of completed questionnaires and written responses are included in our final analysed figures. However, the petitions have been considered alongside other consultation responses and the issues raised within them are dealt with in section 6.

#### 12.1.2 Petition 1

The petition states that those who have signed are against the scheme proposals. A copy of the petition is below.

The Chief Executive's Office  
Woking Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Gloucester Square  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 6YL

**DELIVERED BY HAND**

19th October 2018

Dear Sirs,

**Re: Submission of Petition – Proposed Changes to Road Layout South of Victoria Arch**

We enclose signed petition in respect of the above proposed changes.

**Subject – Against the Proposed Changes**

The reasons for the objections are:

1. The widening of the road to a five lane dual carriageway of two-way traffic along Guildford Road will cause traffic to drive too fast.  
  
This will be a danger to pedestrians and cyclists.
2. The demolition of buildings nos. 1-11 are Listed Buildings with The Heritage of Woking: An Historic Conservation Compendium (2000) which identifies these buildings as being of Townscape Merit.

The Council seeks to encourage preservation and enhancement of Buildings on the Local List and there is a presumption against demolition of all buildings on the Local List.

Petition one continued:

See enclosed "The Heritage of Woking" An Historic Conservation Compendium.  
See enclosed "Locally Listed Buildings" What is a Locally Listed Building.  
See enclosed "Woking Local Development Document" Woking Core Strategy  
October 2012.

3. The loss of Local Business and Trade from the area in which some of the businesses on Guildford Road have been in business for over forty years. The businesses provide a service and resources to many of the local residents in Woking.

The loss of more shops and businesses in Woking is bad for Woking. Many of the new shop units that were built have remained empty. The larger shops and businesses are struggling with many closing.

4. The demolition of Listed Buildings nos. 1-11 would destroy the nesting sites of swifts that have nested there for over forty years.

The swift is an endangered bird that Woking Borough Council and Thameswey have a campaign in place to protect them.

5. The removal of Day's Aggregates Yard access to York Road would cause major congestion on York Road. This would add to the congestion on Guildford Road.

York Road already has existing problems with parking on both sides of the road and islands to slow traffic. Large Lorries travelling down York Road would make the problems catastrophic.

6. Widening of Victoria Arch would cause major delays for commuters travelling on the trains.

People already experience long delays commuting on the trains. Woking is already in the top 10 for being the worst in the Country for delays.

7. The removal of two trees.

The two trees have been there for over 100 years and should be preserved not cut down.

Petition one continued on next page

### **Action**

The Actions the Petitioners wish the Council to take are:

1. To deal with the through traffic heading to and from Woking Town Centre.

This is the cause of the problem on Guildford Road.

2. Put back the original crossing on Guildford Road.

The crossing allowed pedestrians and cyclists to cross the two lanes of traffic. It had been there for over forty years and worked extremely well.

3. Remove the two new crossings by Treasure Cove Play (formally Blockbusters) and The Sovereigns Pub and put up clear Give Way Signs.

The new crossings hold up the traffic and cause tailbacks. The lights turn green but the traffic can't go because a pedestrian has pressed the button to cross.

4. Put back the flashing beacon crossing by Victoria Arch.

The new pedestrian press button control crossing holds up the traffic and causes further tailbacks.

5. The parking bays by Tesco's could be used to widen the road (if necessary).

There has never been parking on this side of the road so the parking bays could be used to widen the road. This side of the road has a wider pavement which could be used as well.

6. Remove the flower display, wooden seat and parking meter from outside nos. 10-12 (wasted space) and turn into parking bays.

The parking in this area could be free which would assist the public.

7. To install a new shared pedestrian and cycle tunnel under Victoria Arch.

There is land either side of Victorian Arch which could be used. This can be done without demolishing buildings.

At the moment more traffic accumulates under Victoria Arch/Victoria Road due to the building works which has cut the traffic down to one lane which creates a "pinch-point" of traffic on Guildford Road.

### 12.1.3 **Petition 2**

Those who signed this petition opposed the potential impacts the scheme could have on local businesses along Guildford Road.



- Organisation: Shop owner
- Created: 12 October 2018 16:39:51
- Current status: **finished**
- Deadline: **2 November 2018** (user entered "2 weeks")
- Petition title: **Stop the demolition of the shops on guildford road**
- Details of petition: The shops have been in Woking for over 100 years and are currently under a local preservation order. Some of the small business that trade from these premises have operated from here for over 40 years serving the local community and do not deserve to be pulled down!
- Category: Planning Applications#
- Signatures: 618 confirmed, 82 unconfirmed

Surrey County Council	437
Guildford Borough Council	33
Mole Valley District Council	2
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	2
Runnymede Borough Council	2
Surrey Heath Borough Council	12
Waverley Borough Council	12
Woking Borough Council	374
Byfleet & West Byfleet	1
<u>Canalside</u>	22
<u>Goldsworth Park</u>	24
Heathlands	30
Hoe Valley	45
<u>Horsell</u>	56
<u>Knaphill</u>	34
Mount Hermon	122
<u>Pyrford</u>	10
St John's	30
<u>Other</u>	173
<u>Unknown</u>	8

## 12.2 Campaigns

### 12.2.1 Poster that was displayed in local businesses along Guildford Road



### 12.2.2 A copy of the leaflet that was posted through letterboxes along York Road

