

TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Executive Summary

The Council has committed to prepare a newly defined Town Centre Masterplan to help guide future sustainable development within the Town Centre. As highlighted in the Corporate Plan, the Council is establishing a stronger commitment to embedding a culture of consultation into decision making process, empowering communities and making decisions alongside communities. The Town Centre Masterplan has arisen out of this commitment and is further supported by concerns expressed by Members, residents and developers about the lack of a single planning document that sets out a positive framework to guide development and investment in the Town Centre, including guidance on heights for tall buildings. The report provides an overview of:

- the concept Masterplanning and the objectives of the Woking Town Centre Masterplan;
- the journey so far to focus most new development in the Town Centre;
- the process for preparing the Masterplan and its planning status;
- the options for the Masterplan;
- the timescale for preparing the Masterplan;
- the estimated budget for preparing the Masterplan; and
- the community engagement and consultation that would be undertaken to inform the Masterplan.

The Executive is requested to note the overview as detailed in the report and to approve the budget of £100,000 for the preparation of the Masterplan. Delegated authority should be given to the Director of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to oversee the preparation of the Masterplan to its completion and required specifications.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the overview of the Town Centre Masterplan, as set out in the report, be noted;
- (ii) the budget for the preparation of the Masterplan, which is estimated to be £100,000, be approved; and
- (iii) delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to oversee the preparation of the Town Centre Masterplan to its adoption.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To help provide a framework to guide development within the Town Centre.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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1.0 Introduction and why the Masterplan is being prepared

- 1.1 The Council has committed to preparing a newly defined Town Centre Masterplan to set out the long term vision for the Town Centre up to 2027, and to provide the necessary framework to help guide development decisions within the Town Centre. As highlighted in the Corporate Plan, the Council is establishing a stronger commitment to embedding a culture of consultation into the decision making process, empowering communities and making decisions alongside communities.
- 1.2 There are a number of different views about what the height limit of buildings in the Town Centre should be. This is impacting on decisions on planning applications with implications for future housing provision. Presently, there is no single document that sets out the framework to guide development at the Town Centre. As a result, there is uncertainty about how the Council's planned future development up to 2030 would visually manifest itself on the ground. The Town Centre Masterplan is intended to address these concerns by setting out the necessary framework to guide development decisions.
- 1.3 The Masterplan cannot concern itself only with the heights of future tall buildings. The Masterplan needs to support sustainable development and investment in the town to support the vibrancy and vitality of the centre following the soon to be completed Victoria Place development. This significant investment in the town is a catalyst for further change and presents an opportunity to bring further positive change.
- 1.4 The Council has invested a significant amount of capital and has adopted various policies and strategies to improve the overall environment of the Town Centre. This includes investment in the public realm and improved cycling and pedestrian options. The Town Centre Masterplan will bring the investment and policies together to provide a single document that could be used to showcase the opportunities that exists within the Town Centre to attract further investment.
- 1.5 The justification for the Masterplan has been well debated by the Executive at its meeting on 25 March 2021 and resolved by Council at its meeting on 8 April 2021. There is broad political support for its preparation.
- 1.6 The geographical definition of the Town Centre for the purposes of the Masterplan is the Town Centre boundary defined by the Proposals Map of the Core Strategy. The Proposals Map can be accessed by visiting: <https://www.woking2027.info/allocations/propmapinsets2018.pdf>.
- 1.7 The Council has an adopted policy, Policy CS1 (A Spatial Strategy for Woking Borough) of the Core Strategy that identifies the Town Centre as the primary focus of sustainable growth to maintain its status as an economic hub with a diverse and innovative economy, and a transport hub which provides transport services, links and communication linking people to jobs, services and facilities. The Core Strategy directs most new development to previously developed land in the Town Centre which offers the best access to a range of services and facilities to minimise the need to travel. The Town Centre is a sustainable location for the future direction of development. The Core Strategy encourages high density development that could include tall buildings in the Town Centre in a way that builds on its overall character and appearance and does not compromise that of nearby areas. This approach to the spatial distribution of development across the Borough is intended to minimise the amount of land that would be needed to be released from the Green Belt to meet future development needs.
- 1.8 In quantitative terms, Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy earmarks the Town Centre to accommodate 2,180 new dwellings, 27,000 sq.m of office floorspace and 75,300 sq.m of retail floorspace between 2010 and 2027. In addition to these figures, the Council has accepted a Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF) award of £95M to replace the Victoria Arch. The award requires the Council to deliver housing on its own sites, and use its best endeavours to deliver an additional 3,304 new dwellings in the Town Centre by 2030 over and above what has been committed in the Core Strategy. Overall, from now to 2030, taking into account housing delivery

to date, the Town Centre is identified to accommodate about 4,555 new homes. With this volume of planned development, the Town Centre is expected to undergo a significant change, which in part, had already started with developments such as Victoria Square. The change has to be managed to be sustainable, and the Masterplan will assist in achieving that. Without a Masterplan, it is difficult to engage and promote the town and how the level of development proposed will look and feel and how the level of development will support the vibrant mixed use town centre which is aspired.

- 1.9 There is no doubt about the impact of the pandemic on the economic vitality of the Town Centre. Developers, investors, local businesses and residents need certainty to invest and consistency in the decision making process of the Council. The Town Centre Masterplan would provide detailed framework and certainty on how the delivery of the development requirements of the Core Strategy and the HIF award will be managed.

2.0 What is a Masterplan and the objectives of the Woking Town Centre Masterplan

- 2.1 There is no legal planning definition of a Masterplan. It has been used by various people to mean different things. For the purposes of the newly defined Woking Town Centre Masterplan, it is an overarching one stop planning document and a spatial layout that sets out the opportunities that exists in the Town Centre for businesses to thrive, for people to live and work and as a destination to visit for cultural and other recreational activities. It is a document that will be used to structure proposed land uses and development within the Town Centre and sets out the principles and standards of what would make development acceptable. It will provide a long term conceptual layout and vision that paints a picture of how the Town Centre would look like by 2030 when the planned developments have been achieved. It will set out detailed standards and principles to guide the day to day decisions to achieve the vision. The Masterplan will be a document that is informed by a robust evidence base with an iterative community engagement central to its preparation. It would be about setting a vision for what the future could look like and working in partnership with all key stakeholders to achieve that.

- 2.2 Within the context of the above definition, the objectives of the Woking Town Centre Masterplan are:

- Provide a vision for the Town Centre that will drive investment decisions in a coherent and sustainable manner and ensure that Woking continues to be a destination of choice;
- Provide a clear framework and principles for development in the town centre to allow proposals to be assessed in a comprehensive manner;
- Provide a visual illustration of the skyline for the Town Centre, with height guidance for tall buildings, taking into account the topography and other factors that exists with the Town Centre;
- Bring uses and buildings together to create a unique sense of place for people to live, work and visit whilst enhancing the ecological value of the area and the wellbeing of people who live within it;
- Map out connectivity of people to key services and facilities such as the station and jobs and highlight opportunities to improve non car based transport options;
- Provide clear principles and standards of what would be acceptable development;
- To create a town centre environment that would attract investment to respond to the post pandemic local economic, environmental and social conditions;
- Set out the quality and quantity of open space and the public realm;
- Provide certainty to developers, local residents and businesses on the future direction of growth of the Town Centre;
- To provide an opportunity for the local community to be involved in the masterplanning of the town centre.

- 3.0 What is the journey so far – rationale for the spatial distribution of development in the Borough**
- 3.1 The story about why and how the Council had been focusing most new development in the Town Centre needs to be revisited as part of the big conversation to inform the Masterplan. The overall strategy to accommodate most new development in high density development within the Town Centre had evolved over many years with significant local community input. A knowledge of the journey so far is important to understanding why the Town Centre is earmarked to be the focus on most new development.
- 3.2 In 2009, the Council spent a significant amount of time to engage with local residents, businesses, key stakeholders and Members to understand and agree the issues that the community would like the Council to address in the Core Strategy. There was broad consensus for:
- Housing to meet the diverse needs of the community, in particular, Affordable Housing;
 - High quality jobs; in particular, support for small and medium sized enterprise formation by encouraging a range of types and sizes of premises;
 - Improved retail offer;
 - Leisure and community facilities;
 - Infrastructure and services to support development;
 - Improved transport and accessibility;
 - Measures to address and adapt to climate change and protect the environment and heritage assets.
- 3.3 The Council had understood at the time that any strategy to address the above issues would need a vision that gives a clear idea of the destination when everything had been achieved. In this regard, there was an extensive community engagement about what the community would like the Borough to look by 2027 when all the issues they had identified had been addressed. Three options for the spatial distribution of development were discussed with the community. These options were:
- Directing most new development to previously developed land in the town, district and local centres with minimum encroachment into the Green Belt as possible;
 - Intensifying development densities in the less dense areas of the Borough such as Hook Heath and Horsell; and
 - Significant extension on development into the Green Belt.
- 3.4 There was unanimous agreement to focus most new development on previously development, in well designed, high density development that could include tall buildings within the Town Centre. The spatial strategy for the Borough and the Town Centre specific policy of the Core Strategy – Policies CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy were born out of the outcome of the community engagement. Full details of the chronology of the journey so far is included in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The Masterplan will be informed by the ‘big conversation’ with the community. Part of this big conversation would be explaining to the public the journey so far, in particular, the options for the spatial distribution of development to determine if the agreed approach continue to have broad community support.

4.0 Options for the Masterplan

- 4.1 Three realistic options for the Masterplan have been identified for consultation. The description for each of them is set out in the Table below. The comments that would be received during the consultation on the concept and options for Masterplan will inform the selection of the preferred option for the Masterplan. At this stage, Members are only requested to note the options. The options identified for consultation are:

Options	Description
Option 1	<p>Woking Townscape Strategy - This Masterplan will focus on the visual illustration of an acceptable skyline for the Town Centre, with a clear definition of the limit on height of tall buildings. It will be a single themed Masterplan that is limited in scope of its coverage. It will be adopted as Planning Document with the status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It can be prepared within the existing strategic planning policy framework. It will be relatively less expensive to prepare and would take less time to prepare. It could be done within 6 months – 9 months.</p>
Option 2	<p>Town Centre Integrated Masterplan - This Masterplan will bring uses and buildings together with clearly mapped out connectivity of people to jobs, key services and facilities. It will set a clear limit on height of tall buildings and their impacts on the wider area. It will provide clear principles and standards of what would make development acceptable. It would create a Town Centre environment that would attract investment to respond to the post pandemic local economic, social and environmental conditions. It will provide a clear framework for decision making on development proposals. It will be an expression of all current commitments to 2030. It can be prepared within the context of the existing planning policy framework. There is the risk that it could be undermined by the debate on height of buildings. It will be a planning document with a statutory status as Supplementary Planning Document. It would take about 12 - 14 months to complete.</p>
Option 3	<p>Town Centre Holistic Masterplan - This Masterplan will be all-encompassing document that goes beyond planning matters. It would seek to analyse existing conditions and what had been done so far and identify what else could be done to create an environment for future inclusive growth, enhancing sustainability and liveability of the Town Centre. It will create an identity that will define the future character for the Town Centre and harness its cultural and heritage assets. It will set out proposals for blue and green infrastructure. It will articulate a new vision for the Town Centre. It will bring together the long term economic, social and environmental aspirations of the community. Given its wider scope, it will not be a</p>

	<p>planning document. There is the risk that it would not have the necessary legal planning status to defend planning decisions. It might trigger the review of the Core Strategy. There could be potential conflict with the adopted development plan for the area. It would be relatively more expensive to prepare and would take a long time to prepare. It could take between 24 months to 36 months to prepare.</p>
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5.0 Consultation and engagement and how the Masterplan will be prepared

- 5.1 Community engagement will be central to the preparation of the Masterplan. Most of the work will be done in-house, however, specialist consultants will be used to support the Council, initially for community engagement and for defining the skyline and height of buildings.
- 5.2 The preparation of the Masterplan will be used as a test to begin the process of establishing a new dialogue with the local community about what they envisage the Town Centre to be by 2030 and the role that they think the Masterplan could play to achieve that. The initial engagement will focus on the concept of Masterplanning rather than the detailed contents of a Masterplan. In parallel to this initial consultation, the story about the journey to date will be explained and discussed to seek views on whether the trajectory of the spatial distribution of development as set out in Appendix 1 should continue into the future. Given the importance of the initial engagement, and the necessity to reach as many sections of the community as possible, a specialist consultant will be engaged to work with the Council to undertake this consultation exercise. The outcome will inform the preferred option for Masterplan.
- 5.3 The Council has agreed to deliver about 3300 additional new homes over and above the Core Strategy requirement within the Town Centre on the back of the HIF award. The Council would have wished to consult the public before submitting the bid for the award, however, it was not possible to do so due to the time period that was given by the Government to submit bids. The road network under Victoria Arch is a key congestion hotspot in the Town Centre. Cycling and walking under the Arch does not meet the standard the Council aspires to. It had been a long term ambition of the Council to address the problem. This has not been possible to date due to the cost of the scheme and the inability to fund it through developer contributions and/or other public sector funding sources. The HIF award was once in a life time opportunity to secure the necessary funding to do something substantial to address the congestion in the area and unlock a number of sites for development that the Council believed added significant additional value to the vision for the Town Centre. The scheme will also lay the foundation for significant rail improvements such as the Woking Flyover. Given the scale of the housing provision, it is appropriate to seek views from the community about the overall scale of the housing to be provided and how it should be spatially managed. The initial consultation on the Masterplan will also cover this particular matter. In particular, the consultation would provide opportunity to update the community on what had been done so far to deliver the scheme.
- 5.4 The Council has adopted a digital engagement platform to provide a civic site for engagement and consultation, as highlighted in the Corporate Plan. The platform, the Woking Community Forum, will be used as the platform for the community engagement. The community engagement will be an iterative process where everyone would have the opportunity to comment on each stage of the process and for the Council to note and respond.
- 5.5 After the initial engagement, the next stage will be a comprehensive review and feasibility work to understand the social, economic and environment context within which the Masterplan is prepared. This will assist in refining the scope and objectives of the Masterplan. It will also help to define any gaps in evidence base studies that would be needed to support the Masterplan. The Woking Community Forum would allow the local community to input into this task.

- 5.6 Baseline information will be assembled, including housing, retail and employment data and future infrastructure delivery.
- 5.7 Design consultants will be engaged to create a Town Centre skyline with a defined limit on height of development taken into account the baseline data.
- 5.8 Opportunities that exist on individual key sites will be mapped out. The relationship between sites, uses and services and facilities will be mapped. This will be overlaid by the connectivity between them and existing/proposed infrastructure. A draft Masterplan will be prepared.
- 5.9 There will be significant Members' engagement. There will be a Private Members' Briefing on the emerging outcome of the Masterplan. The draft Masterplan will be reported to the LDF Working Group, Executive and Council to seek their comments and an authority to formally consult the wider public. Working communities will be given sufficient time to engage in the process. Representations received will be integral to how proposals are developed. The Final Draft Masterplan will be reported to the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group, Executive and, if required, Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

6.0 Timescale for the key stages of the Masterplan

- 6.1 The Council is keen to begin the Masterplanning process as soon as possible. The first and critical part of the process is community engagement on the concept of Masterplan and what the Town Centre Masterplan should be. Part of the community engagement would also be about how the spatial distribution of development has evolved and the role of the Town Centre in meeting future development needs. To work with and support the Council, a specialist consultant will be engaged to undertake this community engagement. It is expected that the community engagement will begin in July 2021. The outcome of this initial engagement will help determine the nature and type of Masterplan for the Town Centre and how long it will take to prepare. Members will be updated in due course on the timing of the subsequent stages of the process when that becomes clear.

7.0 Budget

- 7.1 It is estimated that the Masterplan would cost about £100,000 to prepare. This will include the cost of appointing two separate specialist consultants to support various technical aspects of the Masterplan. The budget will be funded from the Investment Programme and Planning Services' Service Plan budget.

8.0 Corporate Strategy

- 8.1 The Masterplan will provide a single document to showcase the opportunities for investment in the Town Centre. It will set a clear direction and framework to provide certainty and consistency in decisions. This is necessary to creating the necessary environment for businesses to invest. It will provide space for partnership working to deliver corporate objectives. The Masterplan directs most new development to previously developed land to ensure sustainable development and efficient use of land. It will lay good foundation for smart and strong economic growth of the Town Centre. It will facilitate the delivery of housing, in particular, affordable housing. Its preparation will be informed by continuous community and Members' involvement. The masterplan supports the following objectives of the Corporate Plan:

People – A healthy, inclusive and engaged community-

- Improving the health and wellbeing of all residents – the masterplan will set out areas of open space, health and leisure provision and support the town centre as a cultural hub. The masterplan will support the emerging Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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

Place – An enterprising, vibrant and sustainable borough-

- Promoting a strong economy – setting a vision for the town centre will promote investment, support business retention and promote Woking as a destination for business to relocate to.
- Improving the Borough’s biodiversity and green infrastructure – the masterplan will set out the quality and quantity of open space.
- Sustainable development – The masterplan will highlight the vision of a sustainable and inclusive town centre and identify further opportunities for energy efficiency and generation.

Us – An innovative, proactive and effective Council -

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

9.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 9.1 It is estimated that the preparation of the Masterplan will cost about £100,000. It is proposed for the budget to be funded from the Investment Programme. The Executive is requested to approve the budget for the Masterplan. Most of the work will be done in-house. However, there are some technical specialist aspects of the Masterplan that would require consultancy support. The quality of those technical aspects of the Masterplan could be undermined if the budget is not approved. The indirect benefits that the Masterplan is likely to generate would far outweigh the cost of preparing the Masterplan.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 9.2 There are no equalities and human resource implications. This will be monitored and reported if any arise.

Legal

- 9.3 Planning law would require the Masterplan to be prepared in accordance with the development plan for the area. Care will be taken to ensure that this is adhered to.
- 9.4 Appointment of consultants will follow due processes of the Council.

10.0 Corporate Leadership Team and Members involvement

- 10.1 The Corporate Leadership Team has identified the Town Centre Masterplan as a priority project. A Project Mandate has been agreed to start the Masterplan, subject to Executive approving the recommendations of this report. The Director of Planning is the Project Sponsor for the Masterplan and can be contacted by: giorgio.framallicco@woking.gov.uk. The Planning Policy Manager is the Project Manager and can be contacted by: ernest.amoako@woking.gov.uk. They will be willing to clarify any issues that Members might have throughout the process. Members’ involvement will be key to ensuring that the

Masterplan addresses their concerns and that of local residents. All effort will be made to ensure that the Executive is informed at each stage of its preparation.

10.2 The draft Masterplan will be reported to the LDF Working Group, the Executive and Council before it is adopted.

REPORT ENDS

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

The preparation of the Local Development Documents (LDD) have evolved over a period of time with community involvement placed at the centre of their preparation. The timelines for the process of preparing the LDDs are set out below:

Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)

Purpose – it identifies specific sites to enable the delivery of the Core Strategy

Timeline for its preparation

Stage of preparation	Date	Number of representations
Initial scoping of issues	May 2012	Not applicable
Regulation 18 consultation	18 June 2015 – 31 July 2015	32,712 representations from 1,692 individuals
Consultation of land east of Martyrs Lane	6 January 2017 – 27 February 2017	32,164 representations from 3,018 individuals
Regulation 19 consultation	5 November 2018 – 17 December 2018	3,583 representations from 2,797 individuals
Submission to Secretary of State	31 July 2019	Not applicable
Date of Hearings	2 December 2019 – 11 December 2019	Not applicable
Consultation on main modifications	14 September 2020 – 16 December 2020	To be determined at end of consultation period 16 December 2020.

Development Management Policies DPD

Purpose – it sets out detailed policies for the day to day management of development across the Borough.

Timeline for its preparation

Stage of preparation	Date	Number of representations
Initial scoping of issues	May 2012	Not applicable
Regulation 18 consultation	19 February 2015 – 3 April 2015	12
Regulation 19 consultation	26 October 2015 – 7 December 2015	29
Submission of DPD to Secretary of State	29 February 2016	Not applicable
Date of Hearings	10 May 2016	Not Applicable
Adoption of DPD	20 October 2016	Not applicable

Core Strategy

Purpose – it determines the overall quantum of development, broad spatial distribution of development across the Borough and set strategic policies to ensure acceptable standards for development

Timeline for its preparation

Stage of preparation	Date	Number of representations
Issues and Options consultation	27 October 2009 – 7 December 2009	401
Draft Core Strategy consultation	5 November 2010 – 7 January 2011	631
Consultation of Publication document	25 July 2011 – 23 September 2011	352
Submission to Secretary of State	16 December 2011	Not applicable
Examination Hearings	20 March 2012 – 4 April 2012	Not applicable
Adoption	October 2012	Not applicable

A typical example of how the community was engaged during each of the consultation exercise (Site Allocations DPD)

Direct letters/emails were sent to over 6,000 individuals and organisations on the consultation database.

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
Purpose and scope of consultation			
The purpose and scope of the consultation needs to be clear to everyone. It is solely on the proposed modifications to the SA DPD.	Pre- and during consultation	This is key to ensure the public are clear about the purpose of the consultation. Therefore helping to focus representations on the proposed modifications.	Communications Plan to help to communicate this carefully and effectively
Political engagement			

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
Members will receive a briefing note on the consultation. Members are encouraged to direct queries from members of the public to the Planning Policy team, through general contact methods (telephone & email) and to online meetings.	Pre-consultation. Briefing shortly before the start of the consultation period. Ongoing throughout consultation period for queries and discussion.	Raising awareness and ensuring Members continuous involvement	Members of the Working Group have received a Briefing Note. Officers will be on hand to answer questions from members and the public, by telephone and email.
Publicity			
Press release, general – local newspapers	Prepare beforehand. Week 1 publication.	Awareness raising of the consultation in local press.	Publish in local papers, Publish on Council's website, with link to Woking 2027 website.
Press release and updates to residents - Residents Associations - Other hard to reach groups targeting (see p5)	Prepare beforehand. Week 1 publication.	Awareness raising	Publish in Neighbourhood Forum websites and Council's website.
Public notice to press: Statement of Representation Procedure	Prepare beforehand. Week 1 publication.	Awareness raising of the consultation in local press.	Publish in local paper, Council's website as per specific details of consultation
Letters/ email mail out to notify people in the LDF database	Week 1, day 1 for emails. Letters: Wednesday/ Thursday of week before week 1	Awareness raising	Ensure mail out is posted in time to reach destination in reasonable time. Aim is for mail to reach destination on or prior to start of consultation.
Publicity – posters and banners	Prepare beforehand.	Awareness raising and pointing to where info available	Communications Team to help prepare posters to highlight key messages of the consultation.
Website: Planning Policy (Woking 2027)	Go live at or before start of consultation	Main portal to publicise and view consultation documents, obtain representation forms and find details other means of submission. Also listing of consultation events.	Ensuring website is easily accessible with clarity of what the consultation is about and where further information can be found. Website will be updated when necessary to reflect any new information that might be available.

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
Website: Main Council LDF page: news/ front page, with summary/ press release and link to Planning Policy (Woking 2027) website	Go live at or before start of consultation	Main portal to publicise and link to consultation documents, obtain representation forms and find details other means of submission. Also listing of consultation events.	As above.
Twitter and Facebook	Week 1 (publish) and throughout consultation period	Raising awareness, stimulating discussion, engaging younger people.	To be set up prior to consultation and regularly reviewed to maximise use.
Woking Magazine, delivered to all households in the Borough	W/c 22 October	Awareness raising and pointing to where info available	Communications Team to help prepare text
Publicity to hard to reach and specific consultation groups			
Older and disabled people – email and letter notification; -engagement through Residents Associations and other representative groups.	Week 1 –email Letters: Wednesday/ Thursday of week before week 1 RA/ Representative groups: contact prior to consultation	Raising awareness, engaging 'hard to reach' groups.	Updated consultation database - it includes details of representative groups. Contact these groups and the relevant RAs prior to consultation.
Ethnic and minority groups – email notification and engagement through representative groups.	Week 1	Raising awareness	As above
Woking Youth Council – email notification.	Week 1	Raising awareness	As above
Voluntary sector – email notification	Week 1	Awareness raising	As above
Climate change group - email notification	Week 1	Awareness raising	As above
Locations for publicity and consultation documents			

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
<p>Woking Library – hard copies of consultation documents to be deposited and viewed in a Covid19 secure manner -consultation posters displayed</p>	<p>Week 1</p> <p>Contact has been made prior to consultation.</p>	<p>Location where hard copies of consultation documents can be viewed, albeit in a Covid19 secure manner.</p> <p>Note there is nowhere to sit and study documents at present. There will be a display of the proposals map on a wall/board.</p> <p>Awareness raising</p>	<p>Only Woking library is open at present. This will be monitored and updated to reflect up to date guidance and operational requirements, including potential re-opening of the Borough's other libraries to the public.</p> <p>Detailed information including opening times can be found at https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/news-and-events/library-news/coronavirus .</p> <p>Provide consultation documents and posters for display.</p>
<p>Civic offices: consultation posters in front windows.</p>	<p>Week 1</p>	<p>Awareness raising and directing public to where information and consultation documents are available.</p> <p>Note the Civic Offices are closed to the public at the current time.</p>	<p>Prepare and display posters</p>
<p>Publicity (posters) at: -Railway stations (Woking, Byfleet, West Byfleet, Brookwood, New Haw) -West Byfleet Business Association.</p>	<p>Week 1</p> <p>Contact has been made prior to consultation.</p>	<p>Awareness raising and directing public to where information and consultation documents are available.</p>	<p>Posters to be sent or delivered to Station Manager</p>
<p>Publicity (posters and/or banners) in empty shops – town centre and local centres around the Borough, where possible.</p>	<p>Prepare beforehand. Display from start week 1.</p>	<p>Awareness raising and pointing to where information and consultation documents are available</p>	<p>Identify which shops are available to use</p>
<p>Village/ local notice boards or similar (posters), through Residents Associations and</p>	<p>Week 1 & make contact prior to consultation</p>	<p>Raising awareness</p>	<p>Make contact prior to consultation.</p> <p>Posters to be sent/ delivered to RA and NF contacts</p>

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
Neighbourhood Forums. To include Mayford Village Hall, Saunders Lane and similar in West Byfleet and Pyrford.			
Posters on various "Borough Boards" including town centre and on major roads.	Weeks 1 & 2, maybe longer	Awareness raising	Ensure posters are put at the correct locations and time period that posters are allowed to be displayed
Publicise via news section on Surrey CC 'Woking area' webpage	Pre- consultation and Week 1	Awareness raising	Make contact prior to consultation
Woking Chamber of Commerce -Email notification - Meeting attendance and discussion	Week 1: email Meetings (via Zoom): Pre-scheduled meetings before and during the consultation period	Targeted meeting with the local business group to explain, clarify & discuss the Site Allocations DPD. Chambers will be sent email notification to distribute to Chambers members	Attend Chambers meeting to explain and discuss detail of the consultation with key dates and request they forward email notification to Chambers members. Week 1 –email Chambers
Telephone and virtual meetings			
Meetings via Zoom	Initially, three meetings are planned. However the number and timings of meetings will be responsive to demand. Week 2: DATE & TIME Week 4: DATE & TIME Week 5: DATE & TIME	Zoom meetings to explain, clarify, discuss the proposed modifications to the Site Allocations DPD.	The team now has Premium Zoom access (ICT) to enable longer meetings. Ensure any tech issues are resolved beforehand Write guidance for participants to assist with access and the smooth running of meetings. Publicise meeting times on website and in email/letter notification in Week 1. Participants must contact PP team to obtain meeting login details. Take minutes during meeting.
Meetings by telephone	Throughout consultation period	Telephone call can be set up to explain, clarify and discuss the proposed modifications	Publicise the means of communicating on website and posters. Take notes/ minutes during telephone call.
Resident Association and Neighbourhood Forums meetings (if required) via Zoom or telephone	See above open meeting dates via Zoom	Targeted meetings via Zoom meetings for RAs and NFs to explain, clarify, discuss the proposed modifications to the	Contact each RA/ NF prior to the consultation period to establish if a targeted meeting is required.

Consultation method	Date	Purpose	Tasks
	If necessary, targeted meetings for specific RAs/ NFs	Site Allocations DPD.	
Developer/Agents Forum meetings (if required) via Zoom or telephone	See above open meeting dates via Zoom If necessary, targeted meetings for Developers/ Agents	Targeted meetings to explain, clarify, discuss the proposed modifications to the Site Allocations DPD.	Contact Forum prior to the consultation period to establish if a targeted meeting is required.
Working Chamber of Commerce	Details above	Details above	Details above
Individual meetings with residents, landowners, agents and stakeholders via Zoom or telephone, as required.	Throughout consultation period	Raising awareness	Arrange Zoom meetings on request.

Note

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy, the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been prepared and adopted with extensive public consultation:

- Parking Standards SPD – (2018)
- Climate Change SPD (2013)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2014)
- Hot Food Takeaway SPD – (2014)
- Design SPD (2015)
- CIL Charging Schedule (2014)
- Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Guidance Note (2018)

Shaping the future – how the spatial distribution of development has evolved

One of the important duties of the Council that is expected by the Government and local residents is to plan to meet the development needs of its diverse community in a sustainable manner. The Council has an adopted up to date Core Strategy that helps to achieve this aim.

The preparation of the Core Strategy started in 2009. In 2009, the Council spent a lot of time engaging with local residents and key stakeholders to understand and agree the issues that the community would like to be addressed and the challenges for addressing them. This exercise culminated in the publication of an Issues and Options document that was the subject of extensive consultation with the community between 27 October 2009 and 7 December 2009. There was broad consensus about the need for the Council to make provision for:

- Housing to meet the diverse needs of the community, in particular, Affordable Housing;
- High quality jobs; in particular, support for small and medium sized enterprise formation by encouraging a range of types and sizes of premises,
- Improved retail offer;
- Leisure and community facilities;
- Infrastructure and services to support development;
- Improved transport and accessibility;
- Measures to address and adapt to climate change and protect the environment and heritage assets.

There was a specific emphasis for the Council to provide direct investment to address pockets of deprivation that exists in neighbourhoods such as Sheerwater and the neighbouring Priority Areas of Maybury and the Lakeview Estate area of Goldsworth Park.

In parallel to this exercise, a significant amount of time was spent engaging with the community to understand the strengths and opportunities that exists to be mobilised to help address the identified issues. The prevailing weaknesses and threats were also identified to take into account. .

From 2009 to 2011, much time was spent gathering information, including carrying out numerous locally based studies to get much understanding on the scale and nature of the need that the community has identified. This included:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment – to establish the scale and nature of housing need;
- Employment land review and employment topic paper – to determine the nature and scale of employment needs;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – to assess the capacity of the urban area to accommodate identified growth;
- Retail study – to assess the scale of retail growth that would be needed to support the economy

The studies revealed a need for about 594 dwellings per year, 28,000 sq.m of office floorspace, 20,000 sq.m of warehouse floorspace and 93,600 sq.m of retail floorspace

between 2010 and 2027. The study also demonstrated that given the constraints of the borough and the capacity of the urban area to accommodate growth, only 292 dwellings per year out of the total of 594 can be delivered. This proposition was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination, and was accepted.

The above provided a useful basis and skeleton for the preparation of the Woking Core Strategy, which sets out the overall strategy for addressing the above issues in a sustainable manner and resolving some of the inherent conflicting implications for addressing the issues. For example, the policies for meeting housing and employment needs have significant transport and infrastructure implications that needs addressing too.

Right from the beginning, the Council understood that any strategy to address the issues will need a clear vision that gives an idea of how the borough would look and feel when everything has been achieved and the basis for measuring performance. A question was put out for discussion, which is – what would the community wish the Borough to look and feel like by 2027 when all the issues they have identified are delivered? Residents Forum, Developers Forum, Statutory Consultees, key stakeholders, Members and various sections of the Council were extensively engaged to develop and shape the vision. The vision that eventually commanded broad consensus was:

‘Woking will be a Borough of high environmental quality and standards where people choose to live, work and visit, an exemplar in the achievement of sustainable growth;

Woking will be a regional focus of economic prosperity centred on a vibrant, enhanced town centre that provides a good range of quality shops, jobs, cultural facilities, services and infrastructure to cater for the Borough’s needs, surrounded by distinct communities anchored by attractive district and local centres providing convenient access to everyday shops, services and local community facilities.

Woking will be a sustainable community where the benefits of growth and prosperity are shared throughout the Borough without pockets of deprivation.

New development in the Borough will be well designed to respect the character of the area. New housing development will help to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

A green Borough where people will have easy access to good quality green spaces and infrastructure for recreation and leisure.

The Borough will have a balanced and sustainable multi-modal transport system that links homes, jobs and key services and by doing so improve the overall health and well-being of all residents’

The twenty five policies of the Core Strategy were developed to enable the delivery of the vision, and they all have direct links to an aspect of the vision.

Given the quantum and nature and type of development that had been identified and needed, and the vision that was agreed, an important key issue that the Council had to work with the community to grapple with is where the quantum of development should be broadly located. Three options for the spatial distribution of the development were discussed with the

community, including Members, key stakeholders and the Resident Forum. The options were:

- Directing most new development to previously developed land in the town, district and local centres (particularly the own Centre) with minimum encroachment into the Green Belt as possible;
- Intensifying densities in the less dense areas of the Borough such as Hook Heath and Horsell;
- Significant extension into the Green Belt.

There was almost a unanimous agreement to focus most of the new development on previously development land in well designed, high density development that could include tall buildings within the Town Centre. A Town Centre specific policy was developed as a result. Of the quantum of development set out above, the following were identified to be provided at the Town Centre: 2,180 new homes, 27,000 sq.m of office floorspace and 75,300 sq.m of retail floorspace.

As demonstrated above, the policies of the Core Strategy had evolved between 2009 and 2012 when it was adopted with community involvement central to its preparation. The general thrust of what it seeks to achieve had broad community support. Formal consultation exercises included issues and options consultation between October and December 2009, Draft Core Strategy consultation between November 2010 and January 2011 and consultation on the Publication Document between July and September 2011. The Core Strategy was submitted for Examination in December 2011 with Examination Hearings between March and April 2012. It adopted in October 2012 and reviewed in October 2018. The Secretary of State agreed for the Council to make provision for the delivery of at least 292 dwellings per year against the housing need of 594 dwellings per year due to the identified constraints of the Borough. The separate attachment are Tables of how the community had been involved in the preparation of the various Local Development Documents.

The Council has since embarked upon the delivery of the Core Strategy and its vision. Some of the actions that have been achieved so far to enable the delivery of the Core Strategy include:

Infrastructure delivery - The Council has published an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out the nature, type and scale of infrastructure that would be needed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy, how it would be provided, by whom and at what cost. The delivery of the infrastructure is on-going, and much will also be delivered as site specific infrastructure when development proposals comes forward. This will be secured as part of development and/or developer contributions to enable provision. The following have been delivered or are being delivered.

- Significant investment to improve the environment of the Town Centre to make it an attractive place for businesses to locate and for people to live, work and visit. This include the landscaping of the Town Centre such as the public realm improvement at Victoria Square and Commercial Way to facilitate easy pedestrian access. This work is on-going, and the effects have been tangible and visible;

- Significant investment, about £25M to enhance sustainable transport measures such as walking and cycling and bus/rail interchange at the Town Centre;
- Partnership work with South Western Trains and Network Rail to provide a cycle Hub at Woking Station
- Investment in Green Infrastructure such as Heather Farm to connect people to Green Infrastructure and promote well-being. Work is on-going to bring forward the extended SANG land at Horsell Common and Brookwood Farm
- Improvements at the frontage of Wolsey Place and Peacocks to enhance the retail offer and create a vibrant customer experience, including market walk;
- Significant investment to expand the network of CHP infrastructure to help minimise the impact of development on climate change;
- The Government has awarded the Council £95M to replace Victoria Arch and improve the carriageway within the vicinity of the Arch. This significant infrastructure improvement will unlock the delivery of additional 3,300 dwellings at the Town Centre. 13 sites have been identified to accommodate the additional homes. Work on delivering the project has started. The project will also provide a good foundation for the delivery of significant rail infrastructure such as the Woking Flyover;
- In partnership with Surrey Heath and Runnymede Borough Councils, Runnymede BC has been awarded about £50M to improve traffic bottleneck along the A320 corridor.
- Highways England has accepted the proposed mitigation at the A245/Seven Hills Road Junction and has incorporated the proposals into their M25 J10/A3 scheme. The scheme has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate for formal Examination and is subject to a Development Consent Order;

Preparation of Local Development Documents

The Council has embarked upon the preparation of a number of local development documents to enable the sustainable delivery of the Core Strategy. This includes:

- **Development Management Policies DPD.** This DPD was adopted in 2016 and provides detailed policies to enable day to day planning applications to be determined. It ensures that day to day planning applications are to acceptable standards as envisaged by the strategic policies of the Core Strategy;
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** – A number of SPDs have been adopted to provide details guidance for the purposes of managing development across the Borough. This include Design SPD, Car and Cycle Parking Standards SPD, Climate Change SPD, Affordable Housing SPD, Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Design SPD provides clear guidance for ensuring that tall buildings achieves high quality design and acceptable standards.
- **Site Allocations DPD** – the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD is near completion. It is going through Examination. The Examination Hearings were completed in December 2019. The schedule of Main Modifications was published for consultation between 18 September and 14 December 2020. The Site Allocations DPD identifies specific deliverable sites to enable the delivery of the quantum of development identified in the Core Strategy. The commitment to focus high density development on previously land in the Town Centre has been followed through in the DPD. About 44 different sites have been identified in the main centres, most of them in the Town Centre to meet development needs. This has ensured that a minimum

amount of land would be released from the Green Belt to meet housing need between 2020 and 2027. Overall, less than 2% of Green Belt land is proposed to be released to meet development needs. However, it should be noted that the less dense development at the Town Centre would be, the more Green Belt land that would be needed to meet the identified development needs. Based on all the available evidence, the following Green Belt sites have been identified as the most sustainable to meet the number, nature and type of homes needed between 2022 and 2027 without undermining the overall purposes and integrity of the Green Belt.:

- Land at West Hall (West Byfleet)
- Land at Broadoaks (West Byfleet)
- Land at Egley Road (Mayford)
- Land at Brookwood Lye Road (Brookwood)

Each allocation includes a set of key requirements to make sure that development impacts are appropriately assessed and any necessary measures of mitigation including site specific infrastructure are introduced to address potential adverse impacts.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) - The Government has awarded the Council £95M to replace Victoria Arch and improve the transport network within its vicinity. This significant infrastructure improvement will unlock the delivery of additional 3,300 dwellings at the Town Centre. 13 sites have been identified to accommodate the additional homes. The HIF award will be part of the Big Conversation.

Built Development (housing, retail, commercial, social and community facilities and other town centre uses) – The above provides a good basis for the built development to be brought forward. It is likely that the development would comprise of varying heights of tall buildings. The Victoria Square development is a model of a tall building to demonstrate what could be achieved at the Town Centre.

At this stage it would be very difficult to speculate with precision how development on the various sites would look like across the Town Centre. The Town Centre Masterplan that the Council is preparing will provide guidance on this.

Woking is a compact urban area tightly surrounded by the Green Belt. The Council is acutely aware that when the community agreed to focus most new development at the Town Centre, it did so with the understanding that it will be of high quality design. In this regard, the Council is investing significant amount of money and effort to achieve this goal. It has published a Design SPD and a Character Study to ensure development achieves high quality design, set up a Design Panel of experts to scrutinise development proposals when they come forward for determination, invested in VU-City to enhance understanding on how development would look in its context and is investing in design training of Officers. Every bit of action that the Council is taking is intending to deliver the vision that the community has already agreed. The Council is not complaisant, it will continue to monitor its actions, and review underlying evidence to make sure that new information is constantly fed into the delivery of the vision. That underlying evidence includes a conversation with the community about their views on how the Town Centre should look and feel by 2030. The Town Centre Masterplan will provide an opportunity to understand what the community wish for the area.

