

# Woking Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022

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## Our vision

***The vision for Woking, the Region's most ambitious town***

***Woking will be the region's leading economic hub, driving prosperity and growth and attracting national and international investment. With super-high connectivity, it will lead the way on smart, sustainable growth and will be a great place for people to live, work and play.***

## Our aim

Our aim is for Woking to be recognised as a premier global business location offering a connected, quality environment with a range of first class retail, leisure and cultural amenities as well as high quality, affordable housing and services for its highly skilled workforce.

## 1. Introduction

Woking is a dynamic growth town with many competitive advantages, ranked in the top 20% of UK local authorities for economic vibrancy<sup>1</sup>. Its companies, including many high-tech and knowledge based businesses, generate an estimated turnover of £23.1bn<sup>2</sup>. A major factor in attracting these businesses is Woking's location at the heart of two of the South East's main growth corridors which run north-south from London to Southampton and east-west along the route of the M25. Woking has exceptional communications; it is within easy reach of the UK's two main airports, Heathrow and Gatwick, with fast trains to London taking twenty-five minutes, access to the national motorway network via the nearby M25 and, via the M3 and A3, to the channel ports and the continent. This high connectivity gives access to extensive

<sup>1</sup> *Vibrant Economy Index 2016* Grant Thornton

<sup>2</sup> *The Woking Economy: Report and Accounts 2015/16* Woking Borough Council

markets in London, the South East and abroad. Businesses choose Woking for these locational advantages, for its skilled workforce and for its business-friendly, pro-growth agenda. Growing numbers of people choose to live in Woking because of the employment opportunities but also due to the quality of life it has to offer due to factors such as the vibrant town centre, the attractive suburbs and nearby countryside as well as access to a wide variety of cultural and leisure opportunities.

As the UK transitions to a new independent status outside the EU, Woking is ideally positioned to exploit the combination of its location adjacent to London, unrivalled connectivity by road, rail and air, dynamic cross-sectoral business base, outstanding knowledge economy and a young culturally diverse, highly educated and skilled workforce. Benefiting from substantial recent town centre regeneration and an ambitious programme of continued investment and development, Woking is ready to grasp and benefit from new global opportunities.

Nevertheless, Woking cannot take this success for granted - past growth is not always an indicator of future performance. Growth is a competitive business and nearby towns and cities are actively competing for private and public sector investment. Woking is small compared to some of these locations; there are opportunities, but there are also challenges facing the area and there is a need for decisive intervention to achieve Woking's vision.

This Economic Development Strategy sets out the main priorities for the next five years from 2017 to 2022, building on the progress made and experience gained from implementing the previous strategy<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2017*, Woking Borough Council

## 2. Our achievements

In the last five years, there has been real progress in implementing the economic development strategy 2012 to 2017. Woking Borough Council has listened and has worked with partners to:

- Significantly improve the core town public realm
- Encourage a wider and better quality range of retail in the centre
- Considerably improve the town restaurant offer
- Promote the town and wider borough via 'Celebrate Woking'
- Support the wider visitor economy via targeted interventions
- Increase hotel bed space across multiple sites
- Ensure Woking is recognised regionally as a strategic growth location
- Engage with businesses to support growth, retain existing firms, attract new companies and inward investment
- Commit to continued investment in the town, most recently Victoria Square
- Maintain its commitment to sustainable development
- Recognise the Borough's natural capital and countryside

## 3. The strategic framework and its themes

Woking aims to capitalise on its advantages and to continue to grow and to attract and retain more businesses, people and investment. This is not growth at any price, however; growth has to be good growth where the needs of communities and the environment are considered along with the future development of the area. As well as a productive and well-balanced economy, good growth means: secure jobs which pay appropriate wages; sufficient and affordable, well-designed housing; good quality transport without the need for excessively long commutes and a high quality of life.

This strategy is based on three established growth 'dimensions', each with a set of indicators, based on studies of high growth locations<sup>4</sup>:

- **economic**
- **demographic**
- **environmental/place-based.**

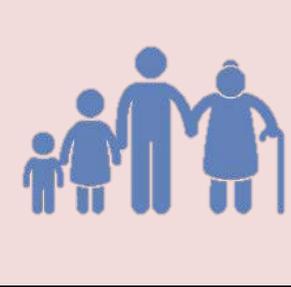
Economic indicators	Demographic indicators	Environment and place indicators
<p><b><i>Dynamism indicators</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in the business base</li> <li>• New business creation</li> <li>• Business density</li> <li>• Knowledge economy</li> <li>• Innovation levels</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Strength indicators</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High value sectors &amp; clusters</li> <li>• Growth firms</li> <li>• International outlook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce skills and qualifications</li> <li>• Knowledge economy employment</li> <li>• Economic activity</li> <li>• Workforce demographics</li> <li>• Diversity of communities</li> <li>• Education and university links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectivity: rail, road and air</li> <li>• Digital connectivity</li> <li>• Quality and availability of housing</li> <li>• Quality of the built and natural environment,</li> <li>• Quality of life including cultural and leisure amenities</li> </ul>
		

Figure 1: Growth dimensions and their indicators

<sup>4</sup> *Understanding Local Growth*: BIS economics paper no.7 2010

*Where growth happens: The high growth index of places* Grant Thornton Autumn 2014

*Investing in city regions*: D. Coyle and B. Rosewall, Enlightenment Economics Oct 14

### **Woking's Interconnectivity with London and the South East**

In spite of predictions that advances in technology and communications would lead to the “death of distance”<sup>5</sup> and that place would become much less relevant, it is increasingly accepted that cities and wider city regions are drivers of growth and productivity<sup>6</sup>. This is due to both the spatial interrelationships between places and the space of flows - interactivity between firms, people and information.



Woking is part of the wider London and the South East ‘mega city’ region where what happens in the capital could not happen without its surrounding areas and urban centres and vice versa. People, goods, services, information, knowledge and ideas are not confined to a single location but increasingly

<sup>5</sup> *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Will Change Our Lives* F. Cairncross 2001 Harvard Business School Press

interact in a polycentric networked area. Travel-to-work and travel-to-learn and leisure patterns are increasingly complicated. In this context, to continue to attract and retain the best businesses and the highly skilled people that they require, Woking will need to differentiate its offer clearly from the many urban centres in the wider city region.

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### **Our themes**

The three growth ‘dimensions’ and their related indicators underpin the framework for developing this strategy, which comprises the five headline themes:

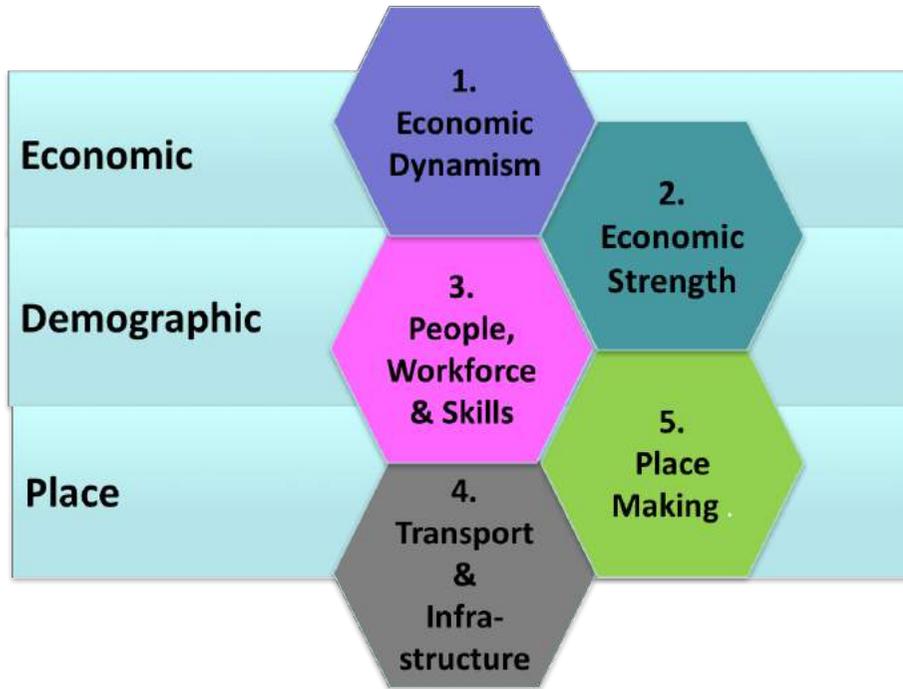
- 1. Economic Dynamism**
- 2. Economic Strength**
- 3. People Skills & Workforce**
- 4. Transport & Infrastructure**
- 5. Place Making**

These have been set out in diagrammatic form in Figure 2 and cross reference throughout this strategy.

The twelve themes in the previous economic development strategy (2012-2017) have been simplified and consolidated into five but the underlying aim remains the same – to build on success in order to become the first-choice growth location for businesses and people in Surrey and the wider South East region.

The final chapter addresses the 2050 vision for Woking’s economy.

<sup>6</sup> *Locational Investment – where to target investment for maximum economic returns* RICS Research Report May 2012



**Figure 2: The five themes for the economic development strategy**

The following sections assess Woking's performance under each of these five themes against the appropriate indicators, identify the challenges and set out the priorities for action over the lifetime of the economic development strategy.

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## Theme 1: Economic dynamism: enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship

### Economic dynamism indicators

- Growth in the business base
- New business creation
- Business density
- Knowledge economy
- Innovation levels

### Overview

The benefits of increased scale are nowhere more apparent than in the competitive performance of the business population. Larger, denser urban business populations tend to be more dynamic with higher growth, innovation and productivity rates than more dispersed ones<sup>7</sup>. The benefits for businesses of “agglomeration” or locating together include a bigger pool of skilled labour, access to stronger supply chains and knowledge spill-overs which help to stimulate innovation. A greater range of high quality businesses providing services and goods improve the urban offering and attract more highly skilled people to live there, creating a virtuous circle and stimulating further growth.

Dynamism is not just about growth and increased scale, - growth in the business base will tend to occur in any case due to population increases and rising GDP. Dynamism, therefore, looks at how enterprising, innovative and knowledge-intensive businesses are, the indicators for this are, as well as growth in the stock of businesses, the relative density of the business population, the size of the knowledge economy, the rates of business formation and the extent of innovation. The evidence shows that Woking performs relatively well or very well on nearly all these measures although it does less well on business formation rates.

<sup>7</sup> Duranton 2004, Fujita, Krugman and Venables 1999, Glaeser 2008.

### What the evidence shows

#### Growth in the business base

Woking has a business population of just under 5,000 enterprises<sup>8</sup>. In common with the rest of the South East this is largely made up of micro enterprises with fewer than 10 employees which account for just under 90% of registered businesses (Table 1).

Size (employees)	Number of businesses	%
Micro: 0-4	3,960	80.5
5-9	465	9.5
Small: 10-19	245	5.0
20-49	145	2.9
Medium: 50-249	85	1.7
Large: 250+	25	0.5
	4,925	100

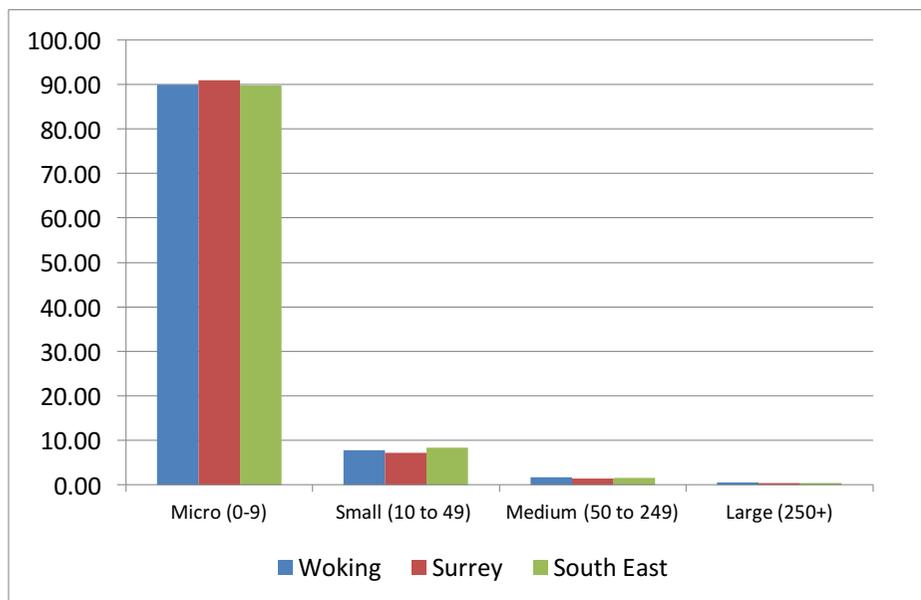
**Table 1: Woking business size profile**

Source: UK Business, Activity, Size and Location ONS 2015/Matthews Associates

	Micro (0-9)	Small (10 to 49)	Medium (50 to 249)	Large (250+)
Woking	89.94	7.83	1.73	0.51
Surrey	90.99	7.25	1.39	0.38
South East	89.79	8.34	1.50	0.37

**Table 1a: Percentage of businesses by size band in Woking, Surrey and the South East.** Source: Source: UK Business Counts: Enterprises 2016 ONS/Matthews Associates

As Table 1a, Woking has slightly fewer micro businesses than Surrey, but proportionately more small businesses than Surrey, but fewer than the South East as whole. However, Woking does have proportionately more medium and large sized businesses than both Surrey and the region as whole, indicating that it may be better at growing and/or attracting medium and large sized companies.



**Figure 3: %age of businesses by size band in Woking, Surrey & S.E.** Source: UK Business Counts: Enterprises 2016 ONS/Matthews Associates

In Woking, the business population is growing rapidly and has increased by a quarter since 2010. This is a much faster rate of growth than in Surrey, where the business base has still grown significantly by more than a fifth. In the South East, although the business base has also increased over the same period, its rate of growth is nearly six percentage points behind that of Woking. (Table 2.)

	2010	2016	Net gain	% growth
Woking	3,950	4,920	970	25%
Surrey	52,285	63,140	10,855	21%
South East	33,0375	39,2085	61710	19%

**Table 2: Business population growth in Woking, Surrey and the South East from 2010 to 2016**

Source: UK Business Counts 2016: Enterprises/ Matthews Associates

In terms of size band, the greatest percentage increase in Woking has been in the medium size bracket (50 to 249) which grew by over 30% between 2010 and 2016, followed by micro businesses (26%) as Table 3 shows. Woking outperforms Surrey and the South East in both these size bands and in the large companies size band (250+).where Woking's stock of businesses has increased by a quarter.

	Micro 0-9	Small 10-49	Medium 50-249	Large 250+
Woking	26%	7%	31%	25%
Surrey	21%	13%	22%	12%
South East	19%	15%	20%	10%

**Table 3: Percentage growth in the business base 2010 – 2016**

Source: UK Business Counts: Enterprises 2016 ONS/Matthews Associates

However, Woking appears to be less good at growing small businesses in the 10 to 49 size band. Although this size band has increased by 7% between 2010 and 2016, this is circa half the rate of increase in the stock of small businesses in Surrey and the South East, a finding which is investigating further in Theme 2: Economic Strength.

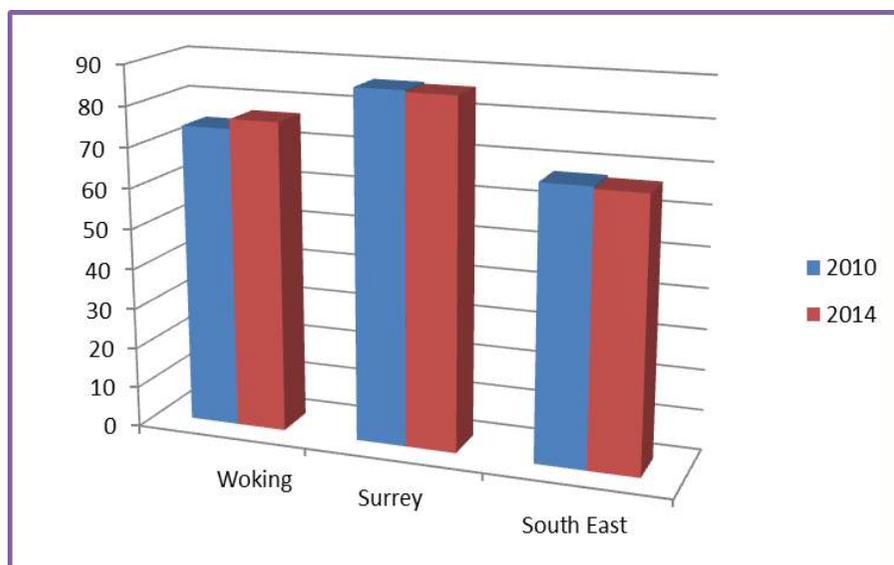
#### ***New business creation rates***

Business creation rates are a good measure of the dynamism of the local economy. Although the new business formation rate in Woking at 77% in 2016 is ten percentage points higher than that of the South East, it is significantly below that of Surrey as Table 4 and Figure 4 show. This gap has not narrowed significantly since 2010.

	2010	2016
Woking	74%	77%
Surrey	86%	86%
South East	67%	67%

**Table 4: New enterprises per 10,000 Working Age Population**

Source: UK Business Demography, ONS population estimates 2016/ Matthews Associates



**Figure 4: New enterprises per 10,000 Working Age Population**

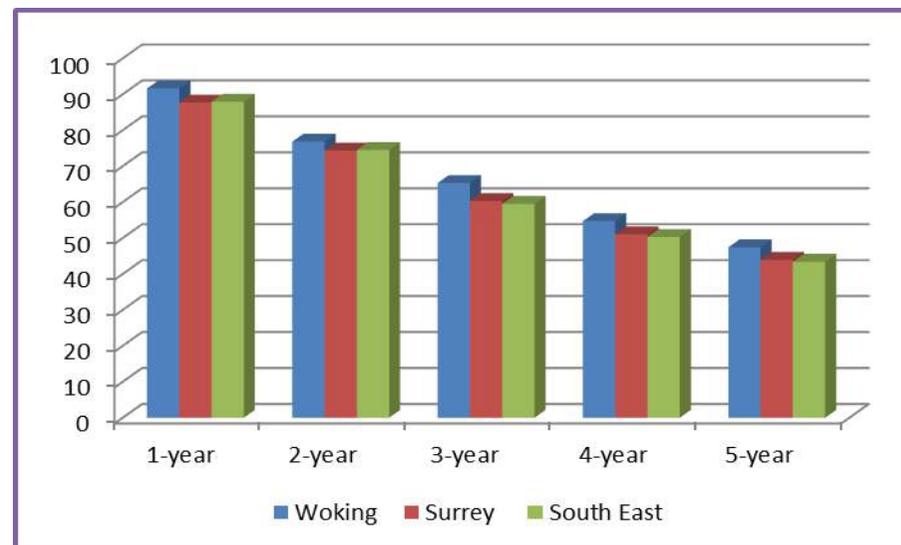
Source: UK Business Demography 2015, ONS population estimates/ Matthews Associates

However, Woking performs well on business survival rates as Figure 5 shows. Businesses started in Woking in 2010 have consistently outperformed Surrey, the South East and England for each of the following five years in terms percentage surviving. So although Woking does not have the same success in starting up businesses as Surrey, it does seem to be better at creating businesses that survive and is 6% above England at the five year mark.

	1-year	2-year	3-year	4-year	5-year
Woking	92	77	65	55	47
Surrey	88	74	60	51	44
South East	88	75	60	50	43
England	87	73	57	48	41

**Table 5: Percentage of businesses born in 2010 surviving by year in Woking, Surrey and the South East** Source: UK Business Demography 2015/Matthews Associates

<sup>9</sup> ONS population estimates 2015/ UK Business Counts ONS 2015



**Figure 5: Percentage of businesses born in 2010 surviving by year in Woking, Surrey and the South East**

Source: UK Business Demography 2015/Matthews Associates

### **Business density**

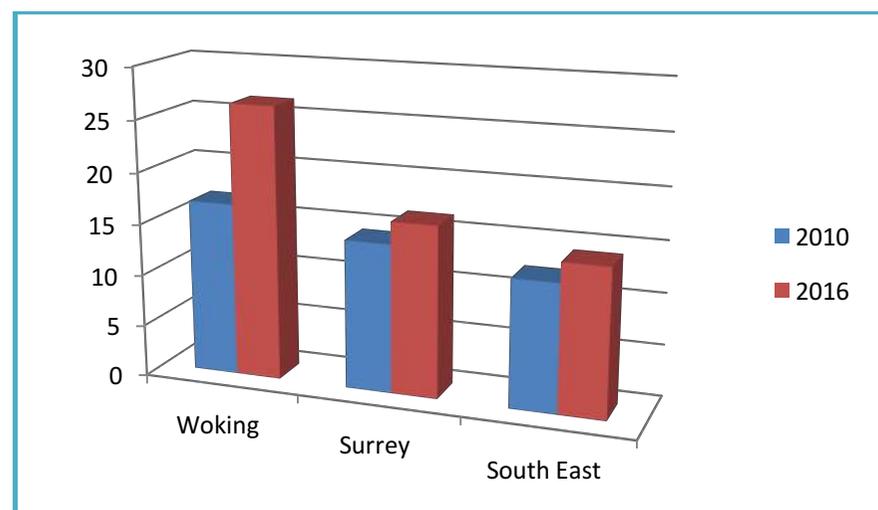
A key measure of the dynamism of a local economy is business and employment density. In the South East in 2015 there were 705 enterprises per 10,000 working age population whereas in Woking there were 795<sup>9</sup>, very similar to that of Surrey (794), indicating that Woking has a relatively high business density compared to the South East.

In keeping with this, Woking's jobs density is at 0.92 per 10,000 working age population, similar to Surrey at 0.91 but considerably higher than the South East as a whole (0.85). Businesses and jobs are concentrated in Woking to the same extent as they are in Surrey but not currently to a greater extent than the county on this measure.

### Knowledge economy

Where Woking is significantly different is in the very high concentration of the knowledge economy in the borough. Woking's business population is notably more knowledge intensive than those of both Surrey and the South East; in 2016, the proportion of knowledge-based businesses in Woking was 27% compared to 17% in Surrey and 14% in the region as a whole<sup>10</sup> as Figure 5 shows.

Furthermore, Woking's knowledge economy has grown at a significantly faster pace in since 2010 than that of both Surrey and the region as a whole. (Figure 6). The biggest growth appears in terms of the number of enterprises has been in computer consultancy from 330 firms in 2010 to 515, in 2016 although software development has also risen significantly from 75 to 125 companies.



**Figure 6: Knowledge economy %age of business population in Woking, Surrey and South East 2010 and 2016**

Source: UK Business Counts: Enterprises, ONS 2016/ Matthews Associates.

<sup>10</sup> ONS UK business counts: enterprises 2016 using ONS Knowledge Economy definition: Aerospace & Transport; Communications; Computing; Creative content; High Tech Financial Services; IT Services; Medical devices; Other Tech Consultancy; Pharma/ Biotech; Software

<sup>11</sup> Source: Surrey Business Survey 2014: Surrey Connects, GFK

It is difficult to measure innovation without carrying out primary research. The Surrey Business Survey 2014<sup>11</sup> found that 52% of Woking business respondents were prioritising research and development of new products and services in the year ahead compared to 46% of Surrey businesses as a whole. In the absence of detailed survey data, research and development expenditure is used as a proxy measure for innovation. Woking's top 12 companies on R&D expenditure collectively invested over £71.3 million in R&D during 2015/16, a 17% increase on the previous year<sup>12</sup>. Chief among them was the Fidessa Group which invested over £26m in R&D (Table 6).

Company	Sector	R&D 2015/16 £s	R&D 2014/15 £s
Fidessa Group plc	Financial Technology	26,224,000	23,794,000
Platform Specialty Products plc	High Tech chemicals	15,200,000	16,000,000
Independent Technology Systems	Software	12,241,000	8,035,000
FMC Technologies <sup>13</sup>	Oilfield Equipment	8,680,000	4,131,000
SAB Miller plc	Brewers	3,300,000	2,640,000
McLaren Automotive	Supercar manufact.	2,593,000	3,582,000
Vision Engineering	Optical instruments	1,140,948	788,466
Microsaic Systems plc	Analysis equipment	854,486	927,379
Conject Ltd.	Software	712,666	781,725
Innovate Services Ltd.	School restaurants	277,322	145,004
STL Group	Property services	62,410	46,925
Peritus International	Subsea engineering	59,181	88,435

**Table 6: Examples of stated R&D Investments 2015/16 and 2014/15**

Source: Source: The Woking Economy Report and Accounts 2015/16 Woking Borough Council, Arcom, Hamlyns LLP & Morrisons Solicitors

**NB: Above excludes separately accounted for subsidiary companies**

<sup>12</sup> Source: The Woking Economy Report and Accounts 2015/16 Woking Borough Council, Arcom, Hamlyns LLP & Morrisons Solicitors

<sup>13</sup> Now part of Technip FMC plc

The relative strength of sectors with known high expenditure on research and development can also provide an indication of innovation propensity. The top five sectors performing nationally on this measure are pharmaceuticals, motor vehicles and parts, computer programming, information services and aerospace. Woking has some notable businesses in these sectors including:

- **Pharmaceuticals:** Pharsafa, GlucoRX, Nextpharma Holdings
- **Motor vehicles and parts:** McLaren
- **Computer programming and software:** Wickhill plc, Rubicon Software, Fidessa Group, Capgemini technology consulting, SFW, Optimus Group, Financial Express Holdings, Independent Technology Systems
- **Aerospace:** Pattonair, AIM Aviation, Supercraft

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#### ***What the consultation has found***

*Woking has many strengths as a business location including its excellent communications and transport infrastructure.*

*There is a range of business accommodation and some good quality business parks in the surrounding areas.*

*The council is business-friendly and was described by one respondent as “forward thinking and proactive”*

*The Council’s strategy of making sure business needs for premises and business support are met and that the town is as business friendly as possible is paying dividends with a rapidly growing business population.*

*The Council has improved public spaces in the town centre which is relatively crime free. Free wifi, business support, including Woking Works with support for start-ups and existing businesses, and a range of business to business networks, including Asian Business Forum, add to the offer for businesses.*

*The Council’s work in supporting start-up businesses was acknowledged but it was felt that helping successful businesses grow should be a greater priority.*

*Some respondents felt that the advantages are not, perhaps, promoted enough and the perception of Woking as a business location could be further improved.*

*Although there are some global brands in the town, Woking is not yet generally seen as the major growth hub it has the potential to be.*

*Recruiting and retaining skilled people and particularly graduates are an issue for employers in Woking as elsewhere in Surrey and the wider region and the competition for skills and talent is strong. (This issue is dealt with more fully under Theme 3.)*

*Consultees also suggested that there is a need for Woking to be known as a ‘Centre of Excellence’ for something and that there was an opportunity to exploit McLaren brand and reputation in advanced engineering.*

*Some respondents also felt that there was a limited amount of commercial space available and although the Council is addressing this, there may also be a need to exploit more agile working opportunities in the future.*

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**Theme 1. Economic Dynamism: Summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities and priorities**

Woking is rapidly growing as a business location with an increase in the business base of over a quarter in the last six years, outperforming both Surrey and the South East. Its ratio of both businesses and jobs to population is also significantly higher than average. Knowledge-based businesses are strongly in evidence and its strength as a centre of knowledge-based employment is increasing, particularly in the IT sector.

Innovation, measured by investment in research and development, appears to be strong, helped by the presence of companies in sectors with high innovation propensity such as software development. It is not known how strong the linkages are between the innovative, knowledge intensive companies in Woking and nearby universities are and how much collaborative activity is taking place. In the absence of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships it might be a good idea to carry out some further investigation in this area to see if HEI business links on R&D require further support.

Woking businesses value their town and are good at networking, making the most of what Woking has to offer.

Business start-up rates, however, are below the county average and growth in the critical 10-49 size band is below average for the county and region. Growing the businesses of tomorrow should be a priority. Woking Works does an excellent job in supporting start ups and micros but its remit may need to be extended to supporting the pipeline of growth companies.

Monitoring employment space is carried out annually, should there appear to be an excessive loss to residential use via Permitted Development/Prior Notification, further protection of key sites should be considered.

Ref:	Economic Dynamism: Priorities for action - summary
ED 1	Continue to actively promote business start-up through Woking Works.
ED 2	Extend Woking Works' remit to supporting new business to business growth and ensure that start-ups are developed to the next stage.
ED 3	Help to ensure there is sufficient commercial stock of the right quality to meet demand from the growing business population e.g. move on space and easy-in, easy-out space such as C2I incubator
ED 4	Investigate whether Woking can host a technology hub/incubator linked/aligned to local key technology sectors
ED 5	Review University business links on Research & Development and innovation for high Research & Development investors
ED 6	Support and review the range of networks for existing businesses, especially those aligned to Woking's key sectors
ED 7	Help to ensure that supporting business infrastructure is in place both physical and wider business support e.g. conference centre
ED 8	Work closely with Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership to maximise local investment within the Borough
ED 9	Promote Woking as a regional "Growth Hub" location, consider Enterprise Zone designation should the opportunity arise

## Theme 2: Economic strength: Business clusters, growth companies, retention, internationalisation and resilience

### Economic strength indicators

- Presence in high value sectors and clusters
- Performance and growth-orientated companies
- International outlook
- Business retention and inward investment
- Resilience

### Overview

A strong economic base will stand the area in good stead, be more resistant to adverse conditions and economic shocks and provide a platform on which to build for the future. This means:

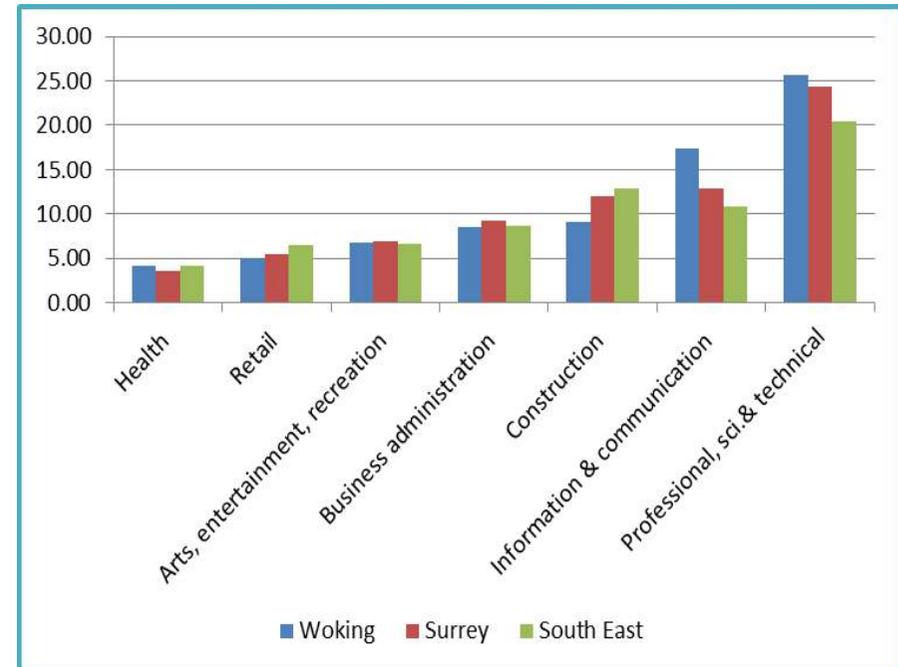
- A good sectoral balance
- Some degree of specialisation or clusters of companies, preferably with university linkages and strong local supply chains, as this has been shown to help to embed clusters and retain businesses in areas
- The presence of ambitious, growth-orientated companies
- Good business retention rates
- Buoyant inward investment levels
- Businesses with an international outlook and/or businesses who are trading outside the local market.

This strong base with good employment prospects will in turn attract people with skills who will be followed by more business investment, creating a virtuous cycle.

### What the evidence shows

#### High value sectors and clusters

Woking's two biggest sectors are: *Information and Communication* and *Professional, Scientific and Technical*. Woking's business base has a significantly higher share of businesses in these sectors in percentage terms than Surrey and the South East. (Figure 7)



**Figure 7: Businesses by broad industrial group as a percentage of the whole, Woking Surrey and the South East**

Source: UK Business Counts: Enterprises 2016 ONS/Matthews Associates

## **High value sectors and clusters**

### **Oil and gas**

Woking has a significant oil and gas cluster including a number of major oil companies such as Kuwait Petroleum International, Petrofac, and Wood Group Mustang. There is evidence of a strong local supply chain with around 20 companies in the sub-sector: *Support activities for petroleum and natural gas extraction sector and related activities* as well as a number of specialist consultancies supporting the cluster. This sector is vulnerable to fluctuations in the oil price, especially short-medium price deflation. The sector is currently refocussing itself as an 'energy' sector incorporating more renewable energy sources within its portfolio.

### **Financial and business services**

Woking also has strong representation from financial and business services companies, including Capgemini (consulting, IT and outsourcing), Fidessa (financial technology) and Old Mutual (financial services & wealth management). This sector has been identified as being at risk should a 'hard' exit from the EU take place. Close monitoring of this sector is recommended.

### **Advanced engineering**

Woking's dynamic advanced engineering cluster is driven by McLaren's world-class corporate production, racing and applied technology facilities and also includes major engineering and engineering consultancy companies. There is some evidence of a local supply chain, but the wide sectoral reach of McLaren across many SIC categories and its relatively secretive operation prevent us evidencing a strong local supply chain.

### **Environmental Technologies**

There is also a growing cluster of environmentally-focused businesses such as Word Wildlife Fund-UK, which has its international headquarters, the Living

Planet Centre, in Woking and Thamesway Group (a subsidiary of Woking Borough Council)

### **Technology**

Woking has a strong cluster of technology enterprises with numerous IT and software development companies including those already referred to under Theme 1 but also optical instruments, electronics, analysis and laboratory equipment, technical consultancy and advanced engineering.

### **Other specialisms**

Location quotients (or LQ) are a valuable way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster or occupation is in a region or area compared to the country as a whole. It can reveal what makes a particular area unique.<sup>14</sup> A score of more than 1 using this method indicates that there is a degree of specialism in a particular industry in a given area. Analysis reveals that Woking has some highly specialised sectors. In fact, there are more than 20 with an LQ higher than 2.0. as Table 7. demonstrates.

What is also striking is that so many of them are knowledge intensive and/or high tech and are growing. It will be important to track and nurture the smaller, knowledge intensive sectors so that the balance is maintained.

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<sup>14</sup> LQ<sub>i</sub> = location quotient for the sector in the regional/ economy.

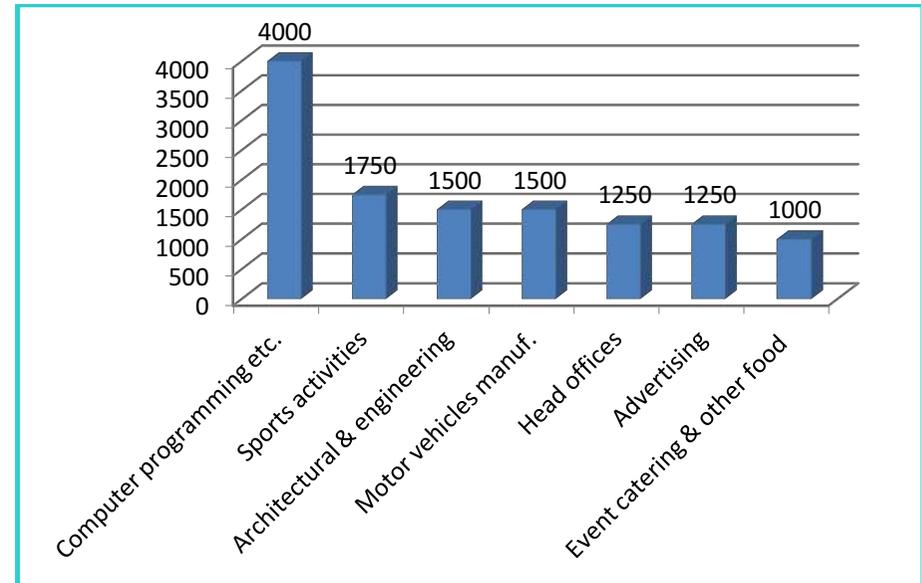
$LQ_i = (e_i/e) / (E_i/E)$  where  $e_i$  = employment in sector in the regional economy;  $e$  = total employment in the local region;  $E_i$  = employment in industry  $i$  in the national economy and  $E$  = total employment in the national economy

SIC and Sector	Woking employ	LQ 2015	LQ 2011	+/-
267.Manufacture of optical instruments & photographic equipment	50	8.82	!	
731.Advertising	1,250	5.38	5.93	-
291.Manufacture of motor vehicles	1,500	4.70	!	
265.Manufacture of instruments & and appliances for measuring, testing & navigation; watches and clocks	300	3.78	1.74	+
620.Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	4,000	3.66	3.85	-
582.Software publishing	75	3.31	2.41	+
205.Manuf of other chemical products	100	3.31	!	
821.Office administrative & support	200	3.21	5.6	-
016.Support activities to agriculture	100	3.11	1.13	+
931.Sports activities	1,750	3.08	2.67	+
900.Creative, arts and entertainment	400	2.94	2.23	+
256.Treatment & coating of metals; machining	600	2.94	1.62	+
271.Manufacture. of electric motors, generators, transformers, electricity app.	150	2.83	!	
732.Market research & opinion polling	250	2.76	3.63	-
701.Activities of head offices	1,250	2.60	2	+
491.Passenger rail transport,	200	2.46	!	
562. Event catering and other food service activities	1,000	2.43	2.09	+
479. Retail trade not in stores or markets	500	2.13	2.73	-
461.Wholesale, fee or contract basis	175	2.10	1.63	+
711.Architectural & engineering activities and related technical consult.	1,500	2.06	2.17	-

**Table 7: Woking business sectors with an LQ quotient > than 2.0**

Source: Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES) 2016 ONS/ Matthews Associates

Given the relatively small size of Woking's local economy, some of these specialised sectors have relatively small numbers of employees and may be formed of just one or two firms. Woking's sectors where there is both a high location quotient and a reasonably high number of employees (i.e. >200) are highlighted in yellow in Table 7. In employment terms the 7 largest sectors with LQs above 2.0. are illustrated in Figure 8. below.

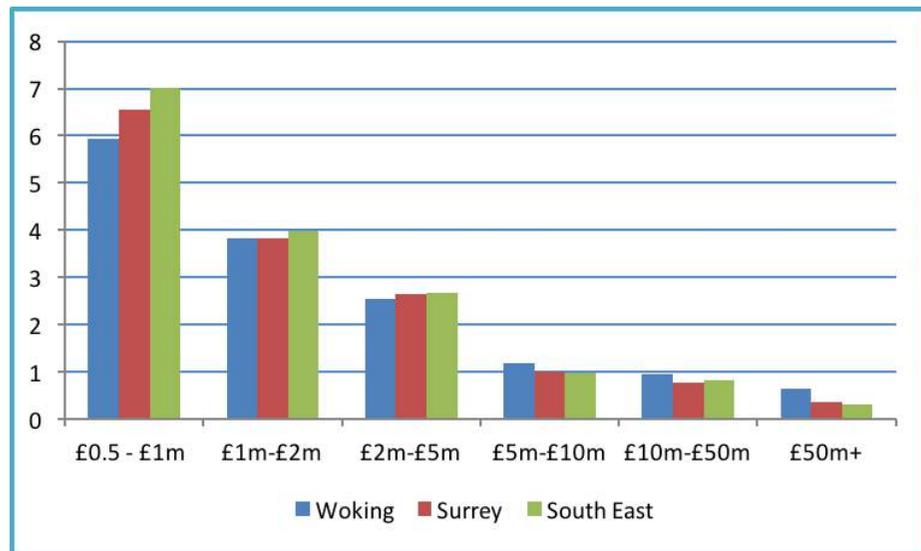


**Figure 8. Woking sectors with LQs >2.0 and 1000+ employees**

Source: Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES) 2016/ Matthews Associates

**Performance and growth orientated companies**

Turnover size bands are a good indication of growth orientation, particularly the band between £1m and £2m. Once companies are over this threshold, the critical mass necessary for growth is likely to have been established, although other financial measures are also important. Woking performs reasonably well on the higher turnover bands of £5m and above. However, it is a potential cause for concern that Woking has proportionately fewer businesses in the £0.5-1m bracket, key £1-2m and £2-5m brackets (Figure 9.) than both Surrey and the South East.



**Figure 9: Percentage share of businesses by turnover size band in Woking, Surrey & the South East.**

Source: UK Business Activity dataset F01: Enterprise by turnover, size band and UK Local Authority Districts ONS 2016/ Matthews Associates

This indicates either that the growth conditions in the Borough are not right for businesses within these brackets or they are still growing but relocating out of the Borough when they hit these turnover bands. One of the most

<sup>15</sup> A significant business presence has been defined as sectors where Woking has an LQ greater than 1.0.

common cited reasons for relocation out of an area is lack of suitable move-on space to accommodate business growth and expansion.

**International outlook**

At the level of the business, there is a correlation between exporting and employment growth and between exporting and productivity as well as longer term resilience and survival. However, national data on exporting is only available at regional level and has to be supplemented by primary survey work, if local data is required.

The Surrey Business Survey 2014 found that 26% of Surrey’s companies export regularly and that those more likely to export were in the following sectors:

- Information and communication (46%)
- Professional scientific and technical (37%)
- Manufacturing (37%)
- Transport and storage (35%)

Enterprise M3 LEP have a stated aim to create £2bn of new export markets in the EM3 region. Surrey Chambers of Commerce have been running a series of export readiness events and offer export support service for businesses within Surrey. With easy access to both Heathrow and Gatwick airports and close adjacency to the main Channel ports, businesses within Woking have a number of locational advantages which could be further exploited.

The Department of Business Innovation & Skills (now BEIS) has mapped sectors where the UK has capability against sectors where there is increasing global demand and identified the following 18 sectors as being likely to perform well on internationalisation.

These are set out in Table 8. below and those where Woking has a significant business presence<sup>15</sup> are highlighted in yellow.

Advanced manufact.	Defence and security	Infrastructure	Healthcare and Life Sciences	Services
Aerospace	Defence	Construction	Healthcare	Creative industries
Agrifood	Security	Environment and Water	Industrial biotechnology	Education, skills and training
Automotive		Transport (airports, marine, ports, railways)	Pharmaceuticals and medical biotechnology	Financial services
Chemicals				Professional and business services
Energy				Retail
Cross Cutting sectors: technology				
Cross Cutting sectors: Low carbon				
Sectors shaded in yellow indicate significant presence in Woking				

**Table 8: UK sectors where UK has capability and global demand is forecast to rise.**

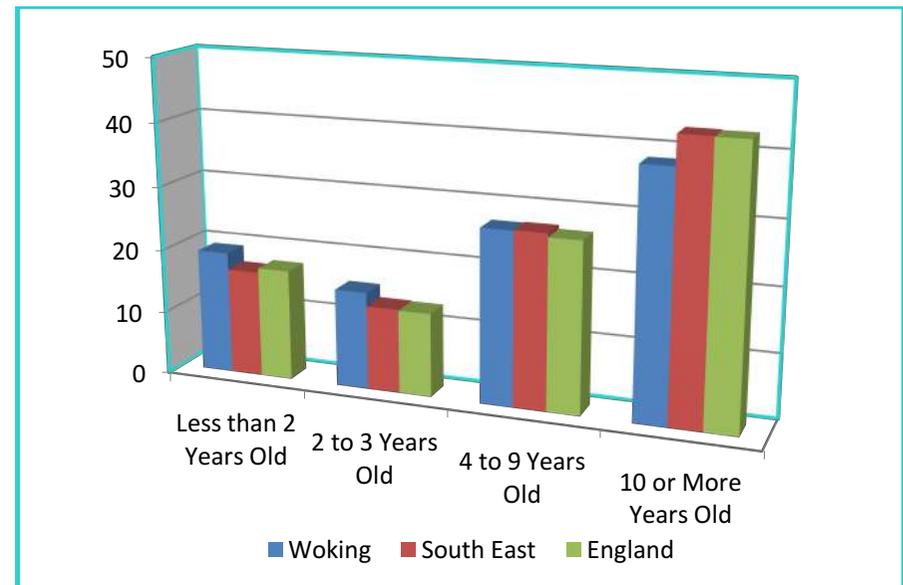
Source: BIS Economics Paper No. 17 UK trade performance across markets and sectors/ Matthews Associates

In the absence of more comprehensive local data on exporting, it seems reasonable to assume that, as Woking’s businesses are relatively well represented in sectors with a high degree of globalisation and high export propensity, that Woking would score reasonably well on this indicator.

***Inward investment and business retention***

There is an absence of local data on these measures. Woking’s higher survival rates and strong representation of larger and higher turnover companies may indicate that business retention and inward investment are reasonably good. Larger firms tend to make choices about where they locate, whereas smaller firms and micro businesses have stronger connections to the birth place of the business. On the other hand, Woking’s businesses are somewhat younger than

those of the region as a whole as Figure 10 shows, which may indicate a more changeable business population.



**Figure 10: Percentage of business population by age of business for Woking, the South East and England 2013.**

Source: Neighbourhood statistics 2016,/ Matthews Associates

In terms of continuing to attract and retain businesses, it is helpful to understand why businesses locate where they do in order to underpin Woking’s strategy for inward investment and business retention. Outward-looking, growth businesses that sell outside their immediate market, regionally, nationally or internationally, tend to have strong preferences relating to location. Service “exporters” in the sense of businesses trading outside their local market, show strong preferences for urban locations – 61% of them are located in cities<sup>16</sup>. Foreign firms are even more likely to choose a city centre location.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Trading Places: Why firms locate where they do. Centre for Cities 2016

Goods “exporters”, on the other hand, tend to locate outside cities and prefer the urban hinterland; 44% of them are based in this type of area nationally. Urban environments offer access to knowledge, skills, infrastructure and support services but can be congested and more expensive. Goods firms prefer cheaper locations with more space and easier transport links. Cities and urban business locations in the UK are tending to grow because of globalisation and the overall shift to services in the economy.

Therefore, promoting and supporting access to markets, knowledge, skills, premises and infrastructure can deliver competitive advantage to one area over another. Supply chains also help to anchor firms in particular locations and supply chain initiatives may help in this respect.

### Resilience

A context of uncertain forecasts for the UK economy in 2017 means

- A likelihood of reduced business investment due to Brexit, although some high profile investments have been announced post referendum
- Rising prices and potentially slowing growth will mean interest rates are likely to remain low, against inflationary pressures
- Some sectors will be more vulnerable than others as they are more dependent on EU trade
- The UK’s reputation as a key location from which to access EU markets is weakened in light of Brexit uncertainties
- Potential opportunities and benefits from a new independent trading position remain unquantified until post-Brexit
- Global uncertainties in terms of other EU nations political instability and potential protectionist measures being adopted in the US

The most vulnerable sectors with a high percentage of exports to the EU are illustrated in Figure 11.

Initial impact of Brexit?

oe	Sector	% exported to EU	Trade deficit/Surplus with EU (£bn)	Potential barriers to EU markets	Risk of disruption	Chances of similar EU access	Possible conditions attached
Goods	Cars	35.0	-13.95	10% tariff	High	High	Basic standards
	Chemicals	56.6	-7.82	4.6% tariff	High	Medium to high	Adhering to EU's regulatory standards
	Aerospace	44.6	2.56	Zero tariffs	High	High	Basic standards
	Machinery	30.7	-5.47	1.7% to 4.5% tariffs	Medium	High	Basic standards
	Food, Beverages & Tobacco	60.5	-16.56	Average tariffs over 20% and higher	High	Medium to high	Keep external tariff with rules on foreign content
Services	Financial services	41.4	16.06	Various EU market access regulations	High	Low	Equivalent regulation; possibly still with patchy access
	Insurance	18.4	3.85	Various EU market access regulations	Medium	Medium	Equivalent regulation; possibly still with patchy access
	Professional services	29.8	-1.92	Primarily national market access regulations	Medium	Medium	Mutual recognition, free movement of professionals

Figure 11: UK sectors with high dependency on EU trade.

Source: Open EU 2016

Woking would seem to be fairly highly exposed to disruption according to this analysis, although there may be a medium to high chance of obtaining similar EU access for its important, high-tech and high-value sectors including:

- Car manufacturing
- Professional, scientific and technical companies.
- Aerospace

However, it is not just exporters who will feel the impact; Treasury, Oxford Economics and LSE are forecasting between a 3% and 8% drop in GDP following departure from the EU which will have an adverse impact on consumer spending and sectors such as retail and food/restaurant are likely to be affected. However these forecasts are subject to regular revision.

### ***Opportunities of Brexit***

Although the downside risks of Brexit have been widely publicised, many commentators and researchers believe that Brexit could present the UK with significant new economic opportunities that independence from the bureaucracy and membership costs of EU membership could bring.

Re-establishing closer links with historically important trading partners, re-visiting the trading opportunities with current and former Commonwealth countries and forging closer trading links with the new US administration, have all been cited as offering new post EU membership economic opportunities.

Both the Bank of England and Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) have positively revised their pre-referendum growth predictions. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has also revised up its UK 2017 growth forecast due to a less severe impact from the referendum vote, although was tempered by a lower forecast for 2018.

The post-referendum fall in value of sterling has reportedly helped exporters and specifically the inbound tourism trade, although some UK manufacturers are reporting cost imported components is largely offsetting the export cost advantage. Woking based manufacturer Harvey Water Softeners with an annual turnover of £24m predict opportunities for UK manufacturers arising from Brexit but have concerns over the terms of the exit deal<sup>17</sup>.

At the time of writing (January 2017) prior to Article 50 being triggered it is not known whether the UK's exit from the EU will be 'soft' or 'hard'. A recent report by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) predicts the main negative impacts of Brexit will be felt between now and 2020, with the UK post 2020 returning to a long-term positive trend in-line with predicted Global trends.

The PwC report states: "The UK is projected, despite the medium-term drag from Brexit, to be the fastest growing economy of the G7 on average over the whole period to 2050, with annual average growth of around 1.9%. This is

mostly due to demographic factors but also the UK's relatively flexible economy. This depends, however, on the UK being successful in the long run in developing its trade and investment links with faster-growing emerging economies, to offset a likely weakening of trade and investment links with the EU after Brexit".

### ***What the consultation has found***

*Consultees endorsed the findings of the data analysis and agreed that Woking is a first-class business location which has a strong economy that should be built on with key businesses, partners and stakeholder organisations.*

*There is an aspiration to foster further high-tech innovation through a University School of Innovation, Advanced Engineering & STEM.*

*Some respondents felt that more could be done locally to engage with large employers and to promote inward investment through the Invest in Surrey initiative, or Woking's own inward investment proposition*

*There was a recognition that Woking is highly dependent on what happens in London and particularly in relation to the departure from the EU, that Woking might be vulnerable.*

*There was feedback over encouraging local supply chains, including the Council, supporting local businesses via 'meet the buyer' events*

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Hurworth, MD, FT 23/01/17 & Manufacturer Magazine/Business Census 13/01/17

## Theme 2. Economic Strength: Summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities and priorities

Woking has a relatively highly specialised economy with a number of high value sectors and clusters with particularly strengths in IT and technology-based business. It has a strong presence in sectors with a high export propensity including IT and technology and professional, scientific and technical. It has above average proportion of companies in the higher turnover bands above £5m, indicating the presence of ambitious, growth-orientated companies.

There is a lack of local data on inward investment and business retention but the presence of larger companies which tend to make choices about where they locate, together with the rapidly growing business population referred to in the previous chapter, gives an indication that Woking is good at attracting and retaining businesses.

However, the dependence on larger companies could make it less resilient. The loss of Woking's largest company in terms of turnover, the brewing company, SAB Miller, due to a takeover has highlighted the fact that Woking's success in attracting large companies and headquarters also leaves it vulnerable to large scale employment losses if companies relocate. In this case Woking secured Japanese brewer, Asahi<sup>18</sup>, which is retaining some of the jobs, although on a much-reduced scale.

Similarly, the presence of sectors with a high export propensity could also increase exposure to the effects of UK's decision to leave the EU, depending on the terms that are ultimately agreed.

Woking's strength of providing cost effective, high quality, space for central London based businesses and the strong presence of financial and IT support companies could be developed to provide knowledge intensive supply chains for new sectors such as diplomatic and embassy support functions.

Nine-Elms in south-west London will be the new location for the prestigious US embassy, with other international embassies reportedly looking at relocating nearby to it<sup>19</sup>. Woking's combination of quality office space, multicultural mix, comparatively cheaper housing and fast train times to Vauxhall (circa 30 mins) could offer this new diplomatic cluster an ideal support function and back-office location.

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.

Ref:	Economic Strengths: Priorities for action - summary
ES 1	Monitoring and supporting Woking's high tech knowledge intensive sectors and clusters
ES 2	Identify and help promote local supply chains
ES 3	Help support businesses export and become export ready, focussing on businesses in high export propensity sectors
ES 4	Develop a proactive 2017-2022 'business retention' strategy
ES 5	Develop a quality 2017-2022 inward investment proposition
ES 6	Proactive engagement strategy with key Borough businesses
ES 7	Map & nurture high growth companies & stimulate University links
ES 8	Investigate further why Woking is below Surrey and SE levels for £0.5-1m, £1-2m and £2-5m share of companies.

<sup>18</sup> Asahi purchased Miller Brands and has chosen to locate in Woking

<sup>19</sup> "Embassy" magazine issue 46, Nine-Elms could become home to Dutch and Chinese embassies, with a poll stating area could become a new diplomatic district.

### Theme 3: Workforce skills, education & employment

#### Indicators

- Workforce skills and qualifications
- Knowledge economy employment
- Economic activity
- Workforce demographics
- Diversity of communities
- Education and university links

#### Overview

A skilled and productive workforce is a prerequisite for a competitive and productive economy. Higher levels of skills are associated with higher levels of innovation, productivity and growth.

Skilled and qualified individuals are able to compete more effectively in the labour market and to take advantage of economic opportunity. Opportunities to learn and progression pathways are important for those who are less well qualified and those who are not engaged in the labour market, as well as for young people about to enter the labour market.

#### What the evidence shows

##### Qualifications

The resident population of Woking is highly qualified with 46% of its working age population qualified to Level 4 and above. This is on a par with Surrey (46%) and higher than the south east (40%) as Figure 12 shows.

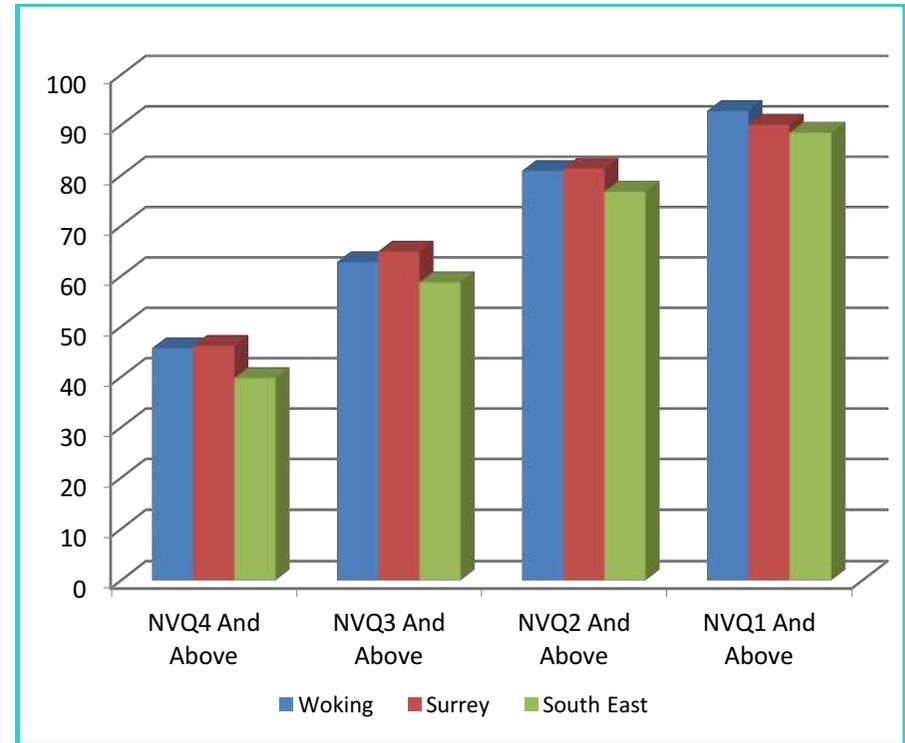


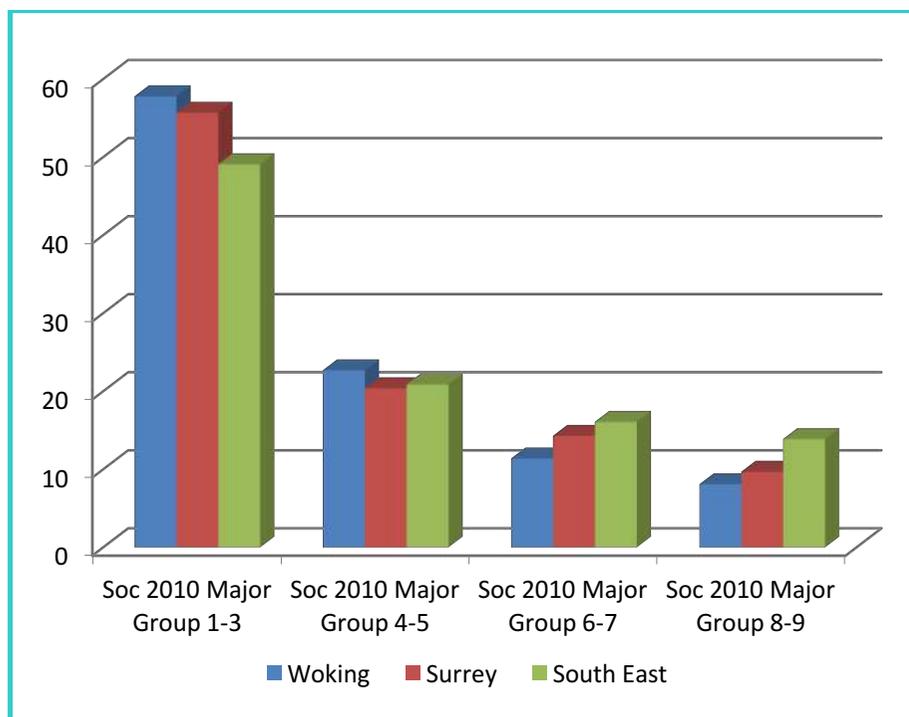
Figure 12: Qualifications of the working age population (16-64)

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey Jan 2015 to Dec 2015 ONS/ Mathews Associates

##### Employment by occupational group

In line with its relatively highly qualified resident population, Woking has a high percentage of people employed in the top five occupational groups and a lower percentage in the bottom four than both Surrey and the South East as Figure 13 demonstrates.

Occupational groups are classified in table 9 below but Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Major Group 1 includes Managers, Directors and Senior Officials, Professional Occupations and Associate Professional and Technical occupations.



**Figure 13: Employment by occupational group Woking, Surrey and the South East**  
 Source: ONS Annual Population Survey July 2015 to June 2016/Matthews Associates

Woking has a lower percentage of *Major Group 1: Managers, Directors and Senior Officials*, resident in the Borough but a higher proportion of *Major Groups 2 and 3, Professional and Associate Professional & Technical* than Surrey and the South East as Table 9. shows.

Woking also has a higher representation of *Group 5: Skilled Trades* than both Surrey and the South East.

Occupational Group	Woking (%)	Surrey (%)	South East(%)
<b>Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>49.6</b>
1 Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	12.6	14.2	12.0
2 Professional Occupations	25.7	24.5	22.1
3 Associate Professional & Technical	18.0	17.6	15.4
<b>Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>20.9</b>
4 Administrative & Secretarial	11.4	11.7	10.7
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	11.5	8.3	10.2
<b>Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>16.1</b>
6 Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	#	8.4	9.0
7 Sales And Customer Service Occupations	#	5.7	7.1
<b>Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>13.4</b>
8 Process Plant & Machine Operatives	#	3.7	4.8
9 Elementary Occupations	#	5.6	8.6

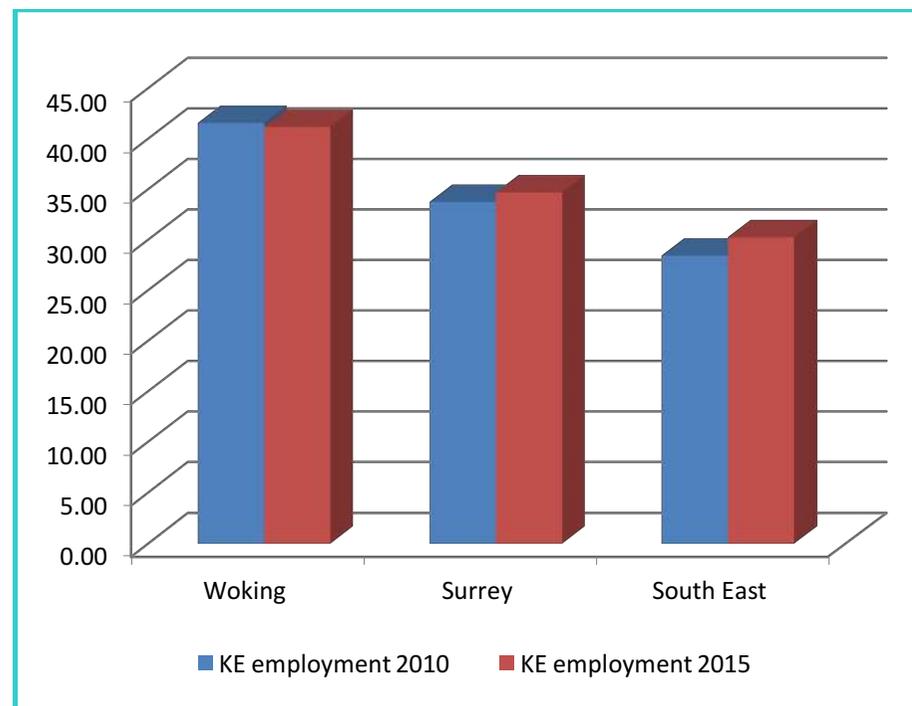
**Table 9: Employment by occupational group in Woking Surrey and the South East**<sup>20</sup>  
 Source: ONS Annual Population Survey July 2015 to June 2016/ Matthews Associates

<sup>20</sup> # = Sample size too small for reliable estimate

% is a proportion of all persons in employment, residence based

### Proportion of knowledge workers

Woking has a significantly higher percentage (41%) of employees in the knowledge economy (KE) than both Surrey (35%) and the South East (30%) as Figure 14 demonstrates. This very high knowledge economy employment is a real strength and demonstrates the importance of Woking's high value business base.



**Figure 14: Percentage of knowledge workers in Woking, Surrey and South East 2010 and 2015**

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2016/ Matthews Associates

However, wages for Woking residents do not reflect this high value employment locally. Table 10 shows that, although the median weekly wage in Woking is higher than that of the South East, it is about 4% lower than that

of Surrey. While females earn about 3% less than their Surrey counterparts, Woking males earn nearly 8% less and appear to be missing out, to some extent, on the benefits of the local knowledge economy.

Area	Male £s	Female £s	Total £s
Woking	621.3	427.3	523.1
Surrey	675.0	440.0	545.9
South East	583.1	376.6	479.1

**Table 10: Weekly median full time wages in Woking Surrey and South East 2016**

Source: Annual Survey of Household Earnings 2016, residence based. ONS/ Matthews Associates

A number of factors may be involved here but it would seem that the very highest Occupational Group *SOC Group: Managers, Directors & Senior Officials* do not live in Woking in such high concentrations as in Surrey, whereas Woking residents are somewhat overrepresented in SOC 5: Skilled Trades. These lower wages may also be linked to the fact that Woking is a net exporter of labour; 53% of residents commute out of the borough on a daily basis<sup>21</sup> and, although the second most popular destination is the City of London, the other destinations in the top five for outward commuting numbers are Guildford, Runnymede, Elmbridge and Surrey Heath which may not pay premium wages. (See also *Theme 4: Connectivity* for a fuller explanation of commuting trends). Higher levels of self-employment may also be a factor in Woking.

This factor was reflected within the consultation where some businesses cited higher wages (and better career prospects) in other locations (mainly London) as issues impacting on local staff recruitment and retention.

### Employment

85% (51,800) of Woking's working age population (age 16-64) is in employment, which is higher than for Surrey (80%) and the South East (77%).

### Self-employment

<sup>21</sup> Source: Census 2011

Woking's self-employment levels at 14% are also higher than those of Surrey (12%) and the region as a whole (12%). Woking males have particularly high self-employment rates (18%) whilst female rates are significantly lower at 12%. However, more females are self-employed in Woking than Surrey (9%) and the South East (8%)<sup>22</sup>. These relatively high self-employment rates contribute to Woking's high employment and indicate an entrepreneurial workforce.

**Unemployment**

Conversely, there is lower than average unemployment in Woking. 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<sup>23</sup>. Woking fares well on young people's unemployment; Surrey County Council data (2013), found that Woking had only 92 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

**Workforce demographics**

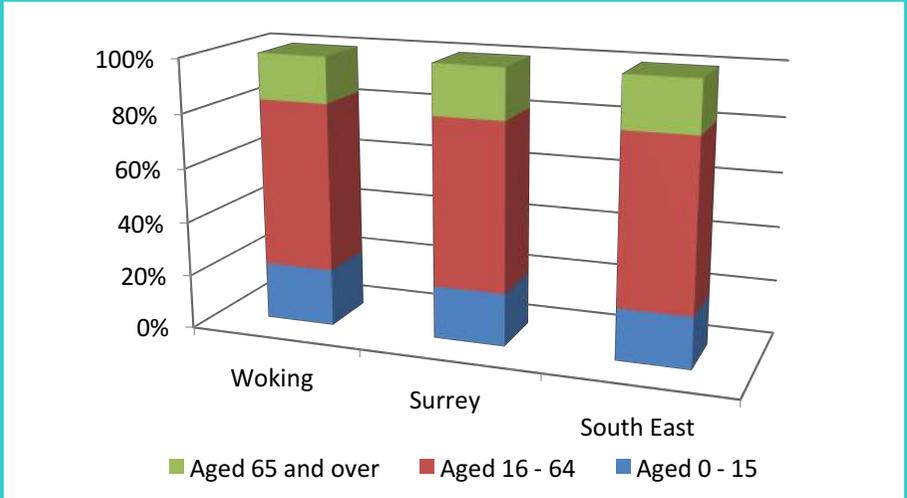


Figure 15: %age of population by age group in Woking, Surrey & S.E 2015. Source: ONS population estimates 2017/Matthews Associates

Woking has the same percentage of people of working age as Surrey and the South East but slightly more young people aged 0-16 and slightly fewer old

<sup>22</sup> Source: Annual Population Survey July 2015 – June 2016

people 65+ as Figure 15 shows. However, Woking's working age population is notably younger as the blue line in the graph in Figure 16. shows.

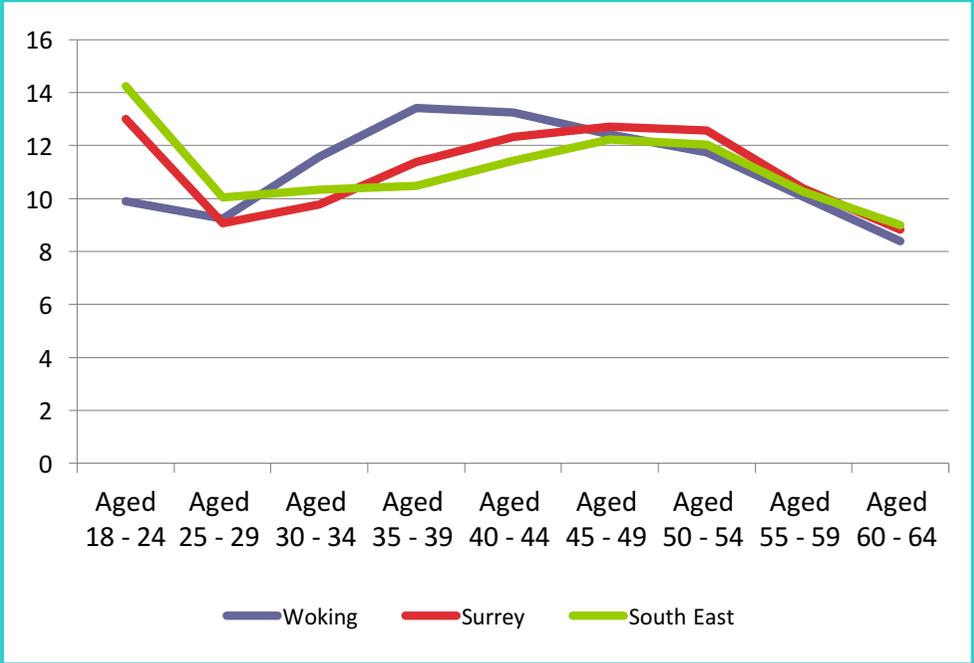


Figure 16: Percentage of working age population by age band in Woking, Surrey and South East, 2015

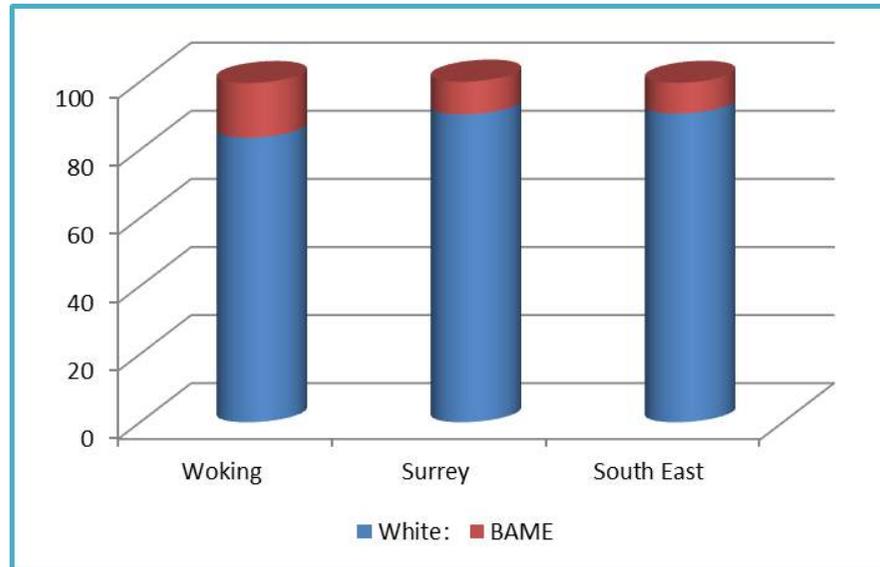
Source: ONS Population estimates 2017, Matthews Associates.

This significantly younger working age population is an asset not only for its employers, as ageing workforce will be less of an issue here than it is regionally, but also for Woking, since this age group tend to be more positive about the town and what it has to offer in retail and leisure activities. Consultation feedback supported this hypothesis with younger workers expressing a greater affinity to Woking's modern urban grain than some older workers.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Annual Population Survey July 2015 – June 2016

### **Ethnic diversity**

Woking's population is more diverse than the county or the regions as a whole: 16% of Woking residents are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups compared to 10% in Surrey and 9% in the South East. (Figure 17.)



**Figure 17: BAME groups as a percentage of the resident population in Woking, Surrey and the South East** Source: ONS Census 2011/ Matthews Associates

Among the BAME groups, the highest percentage is of Asian and Asian British ethnic background. This group makes up 70% of the non-white population in Woking compared to 58% in Surrey and 56% in the South East.

This ethnic diversity of population affords Woking a multi-cultural advantage, where businesses and workers from outside the UK can feel 'at home'. Diversity often leads to greater vibrancy especially across food, drink, clothing

<sup>24</sup> Phillipe Legrain political economist: *Immigrants—Your Country Needs Them* (2006)

<sup>25</sup> "The Economics of Cultural Diversity: Lessons from the British Cities" Max Nathan London School of Economics

and cross-cutting cultural events such as Diwali, closer aligning with the diversity and vibrancy experienced in major cities such as London.

The economic benefits of migration are much debated, academic papers regularly cite that highly-skilled migrants often filled shortages in key occupations and brought new and diverse skills, complementing host workers and boosting innovation and economic growth. The advantages that diverse workforces could bring in terms of creativity and innovation are also cited<sup>24</sup>.

Woking's ethnically and culturally diverse population brings economic advantages, offering protection against the labour shortages and ageing workforces that less diverse areas are already experiencing due to falling birth-rates and increased longevity. There is also evidence that more diverse populations stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation<sup>25</sup> in industry as well as other fields such as arts, cuisine and sports.<sup>26</sup>

### **Education and university linkages**

#### **Secondary education**

Woking offers a range of excellent state and independent secondary schools with popular schools creating strong housing demand locally. Educational attainment rates are above average for pupils resident in Woking. In 2014, 61% of pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics. This compares favourably to Surrey as a whole (60%) and the South East (57%).<sup>27</sup>

At state secondary level (years 7 – 11) there are seven schools in Woking, two of which offer sixth form options:

- St John the Baptist Catholic Comprehensive School (became an Academy in September 2016 with plans to expand in 2018<sup>28</sup>)

<sup>26</sup> International Organisation for Migration quoted in *House of Lords Library Note: Immigration* Oct 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Source: DfE statistics 2016

<sup>28</sup> Woking Borough Local Transport Strategy & Forward programme September 2014

- Hoe Valley School currently on an interim site will be opening its new site in 2018/19, there are future plans to offer a sixth form on the new site
- Adjacent to (although not technically in) the Borough is Fullbrook School in New Haw, and Gordons School in West End both serving the Borough for secondary and sixth form education.

Surrey has a significant independent education sector, Woking has five independent secondary schools, one of which provides sixth form study.

Access to international schools is an important part of Woking's locational offer, helping to attract and retain foreign-owned and global companies in the Borough, directly aligning with the ambition to be a global business location.

Woking is located adjacent to a natural cluster of respected international schools including: The International School of London (ISL) in Woking, offering education from 2-18 for 250 students; ACS Cobham with 1,500 students from 2-18; ACS Egham with 600 students from 3-18 and TASIS American School in Thorpe with 740 students from 3-18. All these international schools offering education up to International Baccalaureate (IB) level and many offering key international and US educational qualifications. Woking's inclusion in and adjacency to this cluster adds another unique selling point towards positioning it as a global location from businesses to be based.

Further school expansions are likely to be required in Woking to meet the future need for additional school places. Over the period 2015 - 2020, it has been estimated that an between 630 and 840 additional primary school places will be needed in Woking and, to meet the primary age 'bulge' coming through the system, nine additional forms of entry at secondary will be required (i.e. 1350 secondary school places in total)<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> Woking Borough Local Transport Strategy & Forward programme September 2014

<sup>30</sup> Abelio bus services have recently resigned from SCC contract, there is uncertainty about future provision.

### **Further and Higher Education**

Woking College (1280 students, with capacity for 1380 students) is the only dedicated, non-selective state sixth form college in the Borough, which was cited within the consultation as a significant issue, as many sixth form students are required to travel outside the Borough to continue their education in selected subjects. Brooklands (Weybridge) and Farnborough and Guildford all adjacent to the Borough offer further education.

The location of the college has also been cited as an issue, over 20mins walk from the town centre, currently with an uncertain dedicated bus service to the campus<sup>30</sup>. Previous aspirations to relocate the campus to central Woking were halted with the economic downturn, although these aspirations to be centrally located remain should the right site become available.

There are currently no Higher Education facilities within the borough although there remains interest in exploring the option of developing a Surrey University campus in Woking in the future. Woking does have reasonable geographic access to nearby HE provision with Surrey University in Guildford, University of London, Holloway Campus, Egham and Kingston University in Kingston, although with such a knowledge based workforce a lack of dedicated HE provision it is certainly a gap with Woking's educational offer.

### **Deprivation**

Although Woking is a relatively affluent town, this affluence can hide families and individuals who are struggling to cope with the high housing costs and cost of living in the area. There are also a number of areas of deprivation: two areas in Sheerwater are within the 14% most deprived nationally and are the most deprived in Surrey. The regeneration of Sheerwater including the provision of housing and employment as well as better access to transport is aimed at addressing this issue.

## **What the consultation has found**

*Consultees were proud of the local diverse workforce offering a good mix of ethnicity, skills and ages.*

*However, recruiting suitably qualified people to senior level positions and entry level jobs is challenging for many employers and Woking suffers from the perception (and often reality) that nearby London pays significantly higher wages and offers enhanced career prospects.*

*Some consultees cited past perceptions of Woking was a barrier to recruiting quality staff, Woking needed to continue to promote itself as a modern attractive place to work.*

*Housing costs and availability are considered a critical threat to recruiting and retaining staff in the area.*

*Education provision is generally good. However, the sixth form provision tends to be highly selective and some consultees felt that this could disadvantage some Woking students who may not be able to access local, high quality provision.*

*Surrey Skills Board has also pinpointed the lack of students following STEM subjects as an issue.*

*Younger professionals stated a greater affinity to Woking's more urban environment than older professionals.*

*A major employer that recently relocated to Woking stated that the loss of staff (as a result of the move) was significantly lower than expected, with staff soon adapting to and now embracing the benefits of their new location.*

*Woking not being a 'University' town was cited as being a disadvantage, that nearby Guildford exploited. The siting of a HE campus closely aligned with one of Woking's key sectors such as advanced engineering was suggested.*

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## **Theme 3: Workforce, skills, employment and education: Summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities & priorities**

The Woking resident population is highly qualified and a high percentage is employed in the top occupational groups. Knowledge economy employment in the borough is markedly higher than average, well above that of both Surrey and the South East.

However, high levels of out-commuting and somewhat lower wages indicate that Woking residents may not be benefiting as much as they might from the local knowledge economy.

Woking residents are entrepreneurial with higher than the regional and county rates of both male and female self-employment. High employment and low unemployment contribute to the dynamic local labour market.

Woking's population is ethnically diverse and Asian and Asian British groups make up 70% of BAME residents.

The working age population is significantly younger than that of both Surrey and the South East which is a benefit to employers for whom the ageing workforce will be less of an issue than in the region as whole, provided they recruit locally. However, the numbers of students following STEM subjects and the accessibility of high quality sixth form provision may be issues.

Primary and secondary education provision is a strength and attainment rates are above average. Access to International schools are an important part of the offer to employers, especially foreign owned/managed.

However, the growing population means more school places may be required and there are some concerns about the very selective nature of local sixth form provision.

The lack of FE and HE provision in the Borough may mean it is more difficult to foster education business links beyond school level, although FE and HE facilities are available relatively close by in Guildford, for example.

Considering Woking's knowledge based economy and key sectors we believe there is an opportunity to encourage a specialist HE campus to the town, possibly aligning with or being in partnership with a number of key employers, such as McLaren.

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Ref:	Workforce Skills: Priorities for action - summary
WS 1	Prepare for possible devolution of adult skills budget to Local Authorities by identifying priorities – skills for productivity, employment and progression (Autumn Statement 2016)
WS 2	Promote STEM skills, encourage links with organisations such as SATRO, events such as 'The Big Bang' and initiatives such graduate placements, such as SEPNET
WS 3	Form a locally-focused, employer led Woking skills group, possibly as a strand within Woking Works
WS 4	Encourage key local employer input into the wider Surrey Skills Board to influence the county-wide strategy
WS 5	Encourage linkages with the Further & Higher Education sector and help facilitate and stimulate employer engagement
WS 6	Encourage local recruitment, particularly by knowledge economy employers
WS 7	Encourage secondary schools to promote new opportunities available via apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships
WS 8	Support aspirations to relocate Woking College campus within the town centre
WS 9	Work with nearby International Schools cluster to promote Woking as a location for international businesses.
WS 10	Work with Surrey University and others to investigate options for siting a HE campus within the Borough

## Theme 4: Connectivity and Infrastructure

### Indicators:

- **Connectivity: rail, roads and airports**
- **Digital connectivity (broadband & mobile)**
- **Quality and availability of housing**

### Overview

Connectivity and infrastructure are key factors in economic competitiveness. Connectedness influences locational decisions by people and businesses and attracts further investment and higher skilled workers. However, this can place strain on the infrastructure and lead to increased congestion and other adverse impacts which have to be addressed or the competitive advantage may be eroded.

### What the evidence shows

#### *Travel to work patterns*

Due to its excellent transport connections, Woking is a net exporter of labour and the Borough experiences outward commuting of 27,409 people per day and inward commuting of 20,304. 53% of Woking's resident population commutes out of Woking to work with Guildford (11.2%), Westminster/City of London (7.9%), Runnymede (7.2%) and Elmbridge (6.8%) being the principal destinations. 27% of Woking residents work in Woking and a further 12% work from home.

2011 Census data also shows that the average commute is just over 16km. 62% of Woking residents in employment travel by car to work and 16% commute by train. A total of 9% travel to work on foot and just 3% by bicycle.

Figure 18. clearly shows Woking has a high rate of inflow and outflow which increases the pressure on the transport infrastructure.



**Figure 18: Woking Inward and outward commuting flows**

Source: Nomis: Census 2011 data / Matthews Associates

#### **Connectivity: rail roads and airports**

**Rail:** Woking's rail connectivity gives it a competitive advantage but is also a factor in its high level of outward commuting. The rail infrastructure is almost at capacity and growth of 24% is forecast on the South West Main Line over the period to 2031, Woking station is the second busiest in Surrey and, during peak hours, commuter trains operate with very little spare capacity.

Crossrail 2, is the proposed new high-frequency, high-capacity line connecting the capital with Surrey. The possibility of extending Crossrail 2 to Woking and Guildford is being assessed by Surrey County Council in order to see how Surrey would benefit. The impact of Crossrail 2 can be contentious locally as it is felt it could slow down the regular fast daily train times of 25 minutes, the economic benefits are felt by some to be outweighed by possible further pressure on housing and other infrastructure, possible increases in outward commuting and loss of Woking's under 30 min train time to London USP.

**Road** The motorway system is nearby with the M25, M3 and M4 all in close proximity, although access is not necessarily very straightforward and involves traveling down local roads, rather than direct routes. This is also true in relation access to the A3 which is a major artery to the South Coast and ports.

Woking's connectivity to other local towns is also not particularly good and it lacks an easy fast trunk road access, in the same way that Guildford has the A3. The local road network is relatively weak and there is local congestion especially at peak times. All road routes to Woking into involve relatively small roads and roundabouts. North-south vehicle movements across the railway in Woking are limited to the two available crossings in the town centre: Victoria Arch Railway Bridge (A320) and Maybury Hill Railway Bridge to the east. Both routes suffer from congestion, particularly at peak times.

The Enterprise M3 Board awarded £2 million to Woking Borough Council towards the improvement of road access to the Sheerwater Business Parks. The aim of the scheme was to reduce congestion in the area and improve direct access to the site. The scheme also received £1 million of grant funding from Surrey County Council's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and cost £4m in total. It is estimated it could create between 600 and 1,250 direct jobs across a variety of sectors including engineering and retail.

**Airports.** Proximity to airports brings economic benefits and has been shown to stimulate agglomeration and clustering, increase FDI, exporting and innovation in the local economy<sup>31</sup>. Woking lies between Gatwick and Heathrow which provides it with exceptionally good access to the UK's main airports. There is a direct rail service to Heathrow with journey times of 45 minutes as well as bus and coach services. There is no direct rail link to Gatwick although there are trains to nearby Guildford which take 49 minutes. The economic benefits can be seen in Woking's business performance and particularly the presence of large global companies and headquarters.

Woking Borough Local Transport Strategy & Forward Programme September 2014 identifies a number of transport infrastructure schemes which could be implemented over the next 15 year period, subject to feasibility and funding which would help to address current and issues meet the growth in future demand.

Priorities include:

- Improving linkages between residential areas and retail and employment centres
- Reducing community severance
- Improving surface access to Heathrow
- Improving sustainable transport including walking and cycling
- Developing Woking station as a public transport interchange hub
- Addressing rail capacity issues on the South West Main Line
- Managing congestion through Woking town centre and at other identified congestion hotspots through for example, traffic signal optimisation

Much of this will depend on the outcome of feasibility studies and the availability of funding. The Government is committed to improving transport and has recently announced a further £500bn investment in productivity enhancing infrastructure including transport which may help, as may further rounds of Local Growth Fund through the Enterprise M3 LEP or possible underspend.

Some of the schemes under consideration in and around Woking are set out in the following paragraphs.

**Rail:** The Surrey Rail Strategy sets out options to address capacity on the South West Main Line which include construction of a 'Woking flyover' railway grade separation at Woking, and the reinstatement of the Woking-Camberley (Sturt Chord) link.

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<sup>31</sup> Source: Airports Commission. Economy: Wider Impacts Assessment 2014 PWC

**Road:** The Highways England M25 SW quadrant study is looking at how to improve the South West section of the M25 and improve performance between junctions 10 and 16, a stretch which is regularly congested.

The Woking Integrated Transport Package scheduled to run to 2020 will make a further £23.5m investment in significant town centre highway infrastructure improvements, co-funded by Enterprise M3 LEP, Woking Borough Council and commercial partners via S106 receipts. A major scheme to address capacity problems at Victoria Arch (A320) is also planned.

**Heathrow Runway 3:** Following the Government’s recent announcement preferring Heathrow runway 3 a Southern Rail Access to Heathrow Study has been commissioned and working group formed. The importance of Woking within the study parameters has been acknowledged. Options to improve access are being considered.

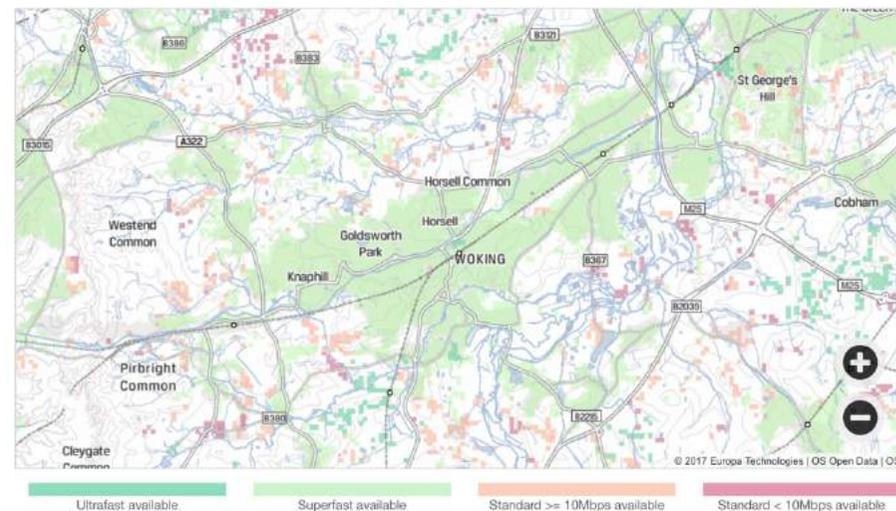
**Sustainable travel:** Woking Borough Council is committed to increasing the opportunities for sustainable travel in the Borough and has continued to build on the legacy of the successful 2008 bid to Cycling England which obtained £1.82 million in funding to improve cycling facilities in the area. Woking is a cycle demonstration town.

The Surrey Transport Plan identifies that there are still gaps in the strategic walking and cycling network in Woking but notes that a successful bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) will benefit Woking’s walking infrastructure by implementing pedestrian and cycle improvements on the approach to Woking Station (e.g. a wayfinder mapping programme at both exits of the railway station).

**Carshare:** Woking Borough Council is collaborating with Enterprise Rent-a-Car Ltd to offer CarShare, an innovative way of providing car hire to businesses and residents that is convenient, affordable and easier on the environment. CarShare is a membership- based car club scheme that offers short-term, affordable access to a car, while positively contributing to the objectives for a cleaner, greener Borough.

### **Digital connectivity**

In Woking Borough superfast (30Mbps) broadband connectivity is generally good, especially in the urban centres, although there are some areas within rural Woking receiving under 10Mbps.



**Figure 19: Broadband coverage map Woking and surrounding areas**

Source: Ofcom/Matthews Associates

The Borough also has its own fibre network which could be expanded and developed further with additional capital investment. Free wifi in Woking town centre adds to the Woking Shopping and Leisure offer.

Mobile phone connectivity is also generally good for voice (2G), and data (3G & 4G) although there are some operator not-spots, causing interrupted service provision, which can be frustrating to both business and residential users.

There is a stated aspiration for Woking town to become an Ultrafast ‘superconnected city’ (+100Mbps) which would be in keeping with Woking’s global growth aspirations and in-line with many competing UK towns.

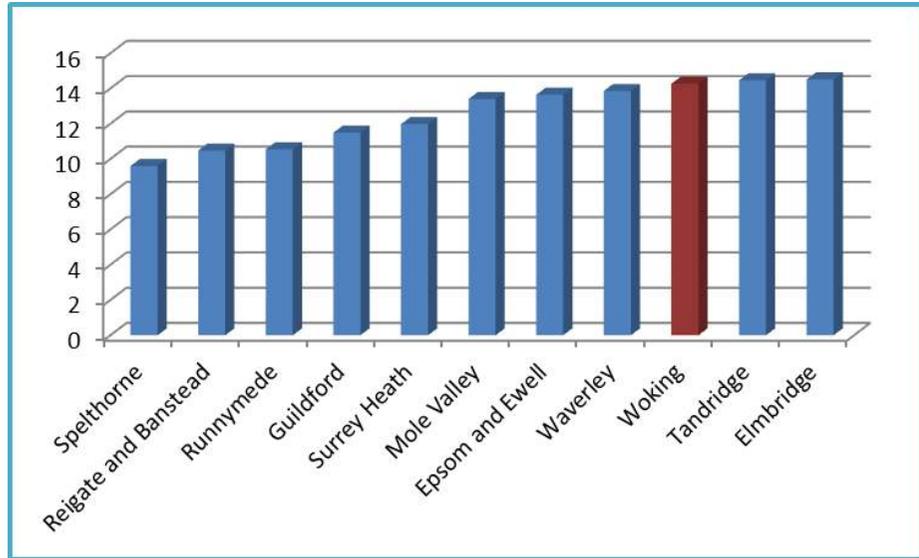
At Surrey University Research Park, the nearby 5G mobile testbed offers an opportunity for next-generation mobile, as it is developed and rolled-out.

**Housing**

The range and availability of affordable housing remains a vitally important component for a successful Woking economy for businesses, their employees and future generations of employees.

Woking continues to have the third highest ratio of house price to earnings of all Local Authority Districts and Boroughs in Surrey. The average lower quartile house (i.e. valued in the bottom 25% of all houses in the Borough) is valued at 14.27 times the average yearly earnings of those in the lower quartile of earnings. (Figure 19).

This compares to a ratio of 11.78 in 2013, indicating that homes have become less affordable for Woking residents over this period. In England the ratio is 7.2 times the lowest quartile salary for the average lowest quartile house<sup>32</sup>

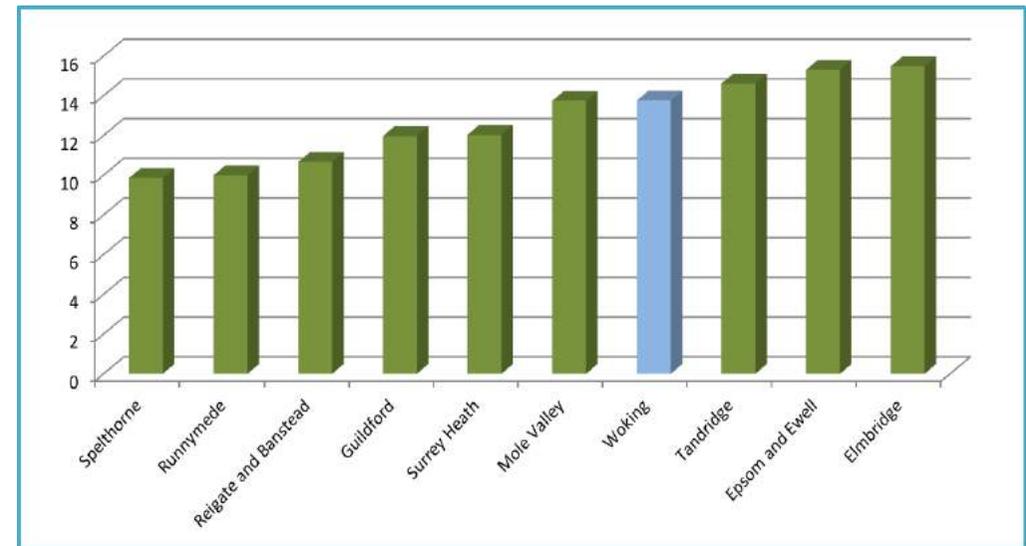


<sup>32</sup> DCLG Live Tables

**Figure 20: Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by Local Authority in Surrey in 2015** Source: DCLG Live Tables /Matthews Associates

The average house price in Woking in Q1 2016 was £434,331 (rising to £746,715 for a detached property). This compares to a mean house price of £427,472 for the Enterprise M3 region as a whole. Since Q1 2012, the average house price in Woking has increased by 29%.

For median house price to median earnings, the situation is therefore much the same as for the lower quartile house price to earnings ratio although in this case, Woking is slightly less unaffordable with a house price to earnings ratio of 13.76, making it the 5<sup>th</sup> most expensive of the Surrey Districts and Boroughs (Figure 20)



**Figure 21: Ratio of median house price to median earnings by Local Authority in Surrey in 2015** Source: DCLG Live Tables /Matthews Associates

Demand for affordable housing is very high in the Borough but supply and availability tends to be low due to a lack of land for development and limited residential construction opportunities on which the Council can negotiate the inclusion of affordable housing.

The West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015) indicates that between 2013 and 2033, Woking will need an additional 375 affordable housing units per annum to meet housing need.

The Woking Borough Core Strategy identifies a spatial strategy for Woking (2010-2027) that includes a target of 5,000 new homes to meet the future needs of residents and incoming workers. The Strategy also includes a target of at least 292 net additional homes a year.

In spite of land and other constraints, Woking Borough Council is proactive in meeting housing demand and the following schemes are planned to help meet demand:

Kingsmoor Park is a new development of 224 affordable rented homes and 147 homes for private sale on the 9.5ha development site north of Moor Lane in Westfield. In November 2013, a consortium made up of Kier and Thames Valley Housing, signed a contract with Woking Borough Council to deliver the mixed-tenure housing development.

Affordable housing schemes and shared ownership options are part of Woking Borough Council's goal to help more people live and work in the Borough for example. Brookwood Heath and Knaphill where Paragon Community Housing Group is working in partnership with Woking Borough Council) to offer opportunities for first time buyers to purchase their own home.

However, one of the major constraints facing Woking in increasing the scale and pace of housing delivery is land availability. Much of the Borough lies within the Thames Basin buffer and flood risk is a major issue.

### ***What the consultation has found***

*Respondents acknowledged that the Borough's transport infrastructure is a strength, but it also that it is ageing and urgently needing investment.*

*There are concerns that continuing loss of bus services will increase car use.*

*For young people, ease and affordability of travel in the Borough is key. Suggestions included options for 'Oystercard' type programme, better bus service and 'Boris' type bikes.*

*Congestion, especially at peak times, was raised although respondents acknowledged that much of it is a county or even region wide issue and that the Council's ability to directly address it is limited.*

*The cost and availability of parking was raised frequently, particularly parking for those who work in Woking. Season ticket prices were referenced.*

*As numbers of people and cars on the road are growing rapidly in the Borough there is danger that people will feel that Woking is a 'difficult commute' and other locations will become comparatively more attractive.*

*Links to the main motorways and A3 are still poor and roads in and around Woking do not provide good access to the main motorway and trunk road systems. Local roads are often congested. There is little chance of the situation improving in short-medium term.*

*The Council's aim to modal shift away from car is recognised but some consultees felt cars are likely to remain the primary mode of transport for most people and the Council should recognise this.*

*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.*

#### Theme 4: Connectivity and Infrastructure: Summary of strengths, challenges and opportunities

Located in central Surrey, just 25 miles south west of London, Woking’s regional and national road and rail linkages, plus proximity to Heathrow and Gatwick airports, continues to make it an attractive base for businesses and residents alike. Fast trains to London in 25 minutes are a major advantage compared to many Surrey commuter belt towns which are broadly the same distance from London but have much longer rail commutes e.g. Reigate and Dorking with 45 and 55 minutes respectively

Communications by road are relatively good in that the main motorways and A3 trunk road are nearby. However there are issues to do with access as junctions do not provide direct access to Woking and routes via local roads can be tortuous. The local roads network is relatively weak. Access to the UK’s two main airports is a major asset, particularly rail and bus routes to Heathrow.

The transport network is already at or near capacity and aspirations for growth will require significant improvements to meet future demand. The solution will lie partly in improvements to the existing infrastructure and partly in encouraging modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

Housing, as elsewhere in the South East, is a major issue as the surge in demand leads to rising prices, making both buying and renting unaffordable for many and making it difficult for employers to recruit and retain staff. Although Woking Borough Council is proactively trying to meet demand, particularly for affordable housing, they are constrained by availability of land and other issues.

The Governments White Paper on Housing “Fixing our broken housing market” published in February 2017 reflects many of the issues facing the Woking housing situation, although many suggested solutions contained within the paper are still for consultation rather than demonstrating firm Government policy. It is still too early to predict whether the White Paper will have a significant impact on the Woking housing situation.

Ref:	Connectivity & Infrastructure: Priorities for action - summary
C&I 1	Maximise Woking Borough Council County and Enterprise M3 investment in infrastructure to deliver the priorities in the Local Transport Strategy & Forward Programme
C&I 2	Work with national partners such as Highways England and National Rail to promote the improvement of linkages to the motorway and trunk road networks including Heathrow
C&I 3	Maintain pressure on SCC Highways for SMART travel initiatives within the Borough including integrated management systems
C&I 4	Continue to support the aspiration for ultrafast 100Mbps connectivity + & enhanced 5G connectivity when rolled-out
C&I 5	Continue to proactively develop housing in the borough and enter joint ventures & partnership arrangements as appropriate
C&I 6	Explore densification of new developments, to maximise occupation levels on scarce land availability
C&I 7	Review and promote innovative construction methods and innovative more sustainable buildings
C&I 8	Maximise the development of and upgrade to Grade A commercial space to meet inward investment requirements
C&I 9	Closely monitor loss of commercial space to residential use and consider use of planning powers if necessary
C&I 10	Encourage the supply of commercial space across all uses/grades in line with user demand
C&I 11	Update local housing policies in line with emerging Government policy via the February 2017 Housing White Paper

## Theme 5: Place Making

### Indicators:

- **Quality of the built and natural environment,**
- **Quality of life including cultural and leisure amenities**
- **Perception of place by local and external users**
- **Desirability of the town as a 'destination'**
- **External surveys such as Halifax & Legatum Index**

### Overview

Place-making is a collaborative process that brings together design, development and regeneration to create environments in which people want to live, work and play and that harnesses the distinct characteristics and strengths that make a place special and unique.

Woking already has a number of assets that contribute to the sense of place including:

- Natural assets: Woking's waterways including the Basingstoke Canal and River Wey Navigation; Woking Park; Brookwood Country Park; Horsell Common; Pyrford Common; Heather Farm and easy access to surrounding countryside
- Cultural and heritage assets: the Lightbox, the Ambassadors Theatre, the Cultural Zone, the Muslim Heritage Centre, the Surrey History Centre, the World Wildlife Centre, Woking Palace, Brookwood Cemetery
- Festivals including Celebrate Woking, Woking Dance, Woking Drama, Woking Music, Woking Food and Drink and Woking Canal Festivals
- Sport and leisure facilities including eleven golf courses, three at Par 72

### What the evidence shows

#### ***Quality of the built and natural environment***

The town centre is undergoing a major transformation, with an estimated £500m of public and private funds committed over the next five years. The

aim is to create a high-quality, modern environment where businesses choose to locate, people aspire to live and visitors choose to visit for leisure, culture and shopping.

An innovative partnership between Woking Borough Council and property company, Moyallen, under the brand Woking Shopping, has developed a master plan comprising a series of town centre initiatives designed to sustainably rejuvenate the core of Woking. It has already delivered a step change in the retail environment in the town centre, through two successful developments within the past three years – Commercial Way and Jubilee Square

The first stage of redevelopment has taken place in the heart of Woking at Jubilee Square with the creation of a quality public space. This involved major structural changes, with a striking façade joining the town's two shopping centres together, the creation of 'Market Walk' a covered artisan market in autumn 2014. The second stage of this development was to significantly refurbish and upgrade Commercial Way with new public realm, reconfigured retail units and the creation of a 'casual dining' quarter attracting key restaurant brands to the town.

Woking secured the World Wildlife Fund's relocation of its international HQ to the town in the form of the 'Living Planet Centre' which was completed as state-of-the art BREEAM 'outstanding' eco-friendly building, with environmentally intelligent design and features, offering public access and educational facilities. New Central also opened, a new and exciting high-rise development in the heart of Woking providing a mix of 450 apartments, leisure, office space and retail units.

Other major redevelopment projects in the Borough include Victoria Square which follows on from successful projects at Jubilee Square (completed) and Commercial Way, both of which serve to improve the shopping environment and create new civic space for shoppers, visitors to the town and for businesses. It includes proposals for:

- a total of 10,967sqm of new retail floor-space

- a 190-bed, four-star hotel, with spa, gym, conference facilities & dining
- a new feature restaurant overlooking Victoria Square
- space for a medical centre
- 392 Residential Apartments in two towers
- additional car parking (380 spaces)
- 2 new civic spaces - Victoria Square and a new covered square
- a local energy centre
- new highway arrangements.

**Public realm:** As well as these major developments, the public realm continues to be improved and the area between Alexander House and Provincial House has been enhanced, with:

- new high quality granite paving, street furniture, lighting, cycle hoops and wayfinders
- new species of Sweetgum and Elm trees
- façade and canopy enhancements to Wolsey Place Shopping Centre
- upgrades to the CCTV system
- the creation of a new square at the eastern end of Commercial Way adjacent to Mercia Walk and Church Path
- space for occasional specialist markets and events.

A second phase of the Commercial Way enhancement works, from Chapel Street towards Cawsey Way, will be completed as part of the ongoing Wolsey Place asset management works and completed with the proposed Victoria Square development.

**Improved restaurant offer:** Following the refurbishment of Commercial Way, a ‘casual dining’ quarter has formed with a number of key operators including Bill’s, Carluccio’s, Las Iguanas and Cote Brasserie all opening in the town since 2012. These as well as Tante Marie, a part of the internationally acclaimed culinary school, now trade on the newly refurbished Commercial Way. Additional restaurant brands are expected to open in 2017 and beyond.

**Celebrate Woking:** this programme of events, initially a London 2012 legacy project, was designed not only to stimulate visits to the town and generate retail footfall but to also help start changing perceptions of the town. Tentpole events such as the annual Food & Drink Festival and Party in the Park, were underpinned by a diary of regular smaller events. In 2016 the programme devised and undertook an ambitious year-long celebration of former Woking resident HG Wells, exploiting the local ‘War of the Worlds’ heritage. Such events continue to showcase the ‘new’ Woking to locals and visitors alike, helping to change past perceptions of the town and stimulate positive feedback whether word of mouth or via social media.

**Arts & Culture:** The value of cultural sector is estimated to be worth over £27bn per annum, employing circa 650,000 people in 2015<sup>33</sup>. Woking has a long association with the theatre as home to the international HQ of Ambassadors Theatre Group, which operate over 40 theatrical venues worldwide including Woking’s own Ambassadors Theatre complex. More recently in 2007 the award-winning Lightbox museum and art-gallery opened housed in its distinctive building alongside Victoria Way. Woking has for some time invested in public art, the 1998 HG Wells Martian tripod statue becoming synonymous with the town, since then additional public art has been added celebrating both local notable people and events such as the 2012 Olympics.

Woking also is widening its cultural reach to embrace its unique heritage through the development of the Peace Garden at the Muslim Burial Ground and greater integration with Woking’s Shah Jahan Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque in the United Kingdom. Through Woking Borough Council’s purchase of Brookwood Cemetery, also known as the London Necropolis, it has secured the future of the largest cemetery in the UK (over 500 acres with over 235,000 internments) and one of the ten largest cemeteries in the World. Long-term plans are being developed to restore the cemetery and its parkland grounds back to its former glory.

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<sup>33</sup> Economic estimates of DCMS Sectors, August 2016; Creative Industries Focus on Employment, June 2016, DCMS.

## Outside Woking Town Centre:

The proposed Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme includes the demolition of 576 homes and other existing non-residential buildings and sports facilities. This will be replaced with a mixed-use development comprising of up to 922 residential units. It will also include retail space, a community centre, nursery/children's centre, leisure centre, health centre, sports pitch, public open space and associated infrastructure.

In West Byfleet, Woking Borough's main second centre, the long-awaited redevelopment of Sheer House and adjacent retail space is moving closer following the sale of the site and public consultation on redevelopment options in 2016. A mixed-use development of residential, commercial and retail space with improved public realm is the most likely option.

Also in West Byfleet the long standing redevelopment of the Broadoaks site appears to be moving forward with owners Octagon stating on their website "A mix of new residential properties including apartments, townhouses and substantial family houses will be built in spacious grounds, with centrepiece Grade II listed mansion. Adjoining Broadoaks Park will be a new independent co-ed secondary school for pupils from 11-18 years....Building will commence in Spring 2017".

Woking Town's urban predominance, often hides the rural credentials of the Borough, with approximately 60% of the Borough designated as Green Belt outside the urban core there are hundreds of acres of countryside to be enjoyed in. Woking's countryside blends open heathland, woodland and waterside habitats, providing opportunities for walking, horseriding, cycling and fishing.

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<sup>34</sup> Giles Atkinson Professor of Environmental Policy in the Department of Geography and Environment and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and Environment at the London School of Economics. 'Natural Capital & Economic Growth' Sept 2015

## Sustainability and Natural Capital

Woking has long prioritised 'sustainability' as being at the core of its operation, this is highlighted within its overarching "Woking 2050 – Vision for a Sustainable Borough" adopted in September 2015. More recently the value and importance of Woking's often underappreciated natural environment has been recognised in Woking's "Natural Woking - Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Strategy" adopted in March 2016.

The concept of 'Natural Capital' has recently been recognised an important element of wider economic development<sup>34</sup>. Looking at our natural assets such as geology, soil, habitats, water, air, open spaces as an important resource needed to support human activity including economic activity and growth.

Locally the Surrey Nature Partnership have recently published "Naturally Richer - A Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Surrey" in which the case for recognising and protecting Surrey's natural capital is made<sup>35</sup>. Promoting Woking's sustainability credentials and quality of its own natural capital will become an increasingly important differentiator when competing against other Global business locations. Woking's juxtaposition of highly urban environments, directly adjacent to naturally rich environments, easily accessible via an extensive network of pathways and canal routes offers residents, workers and visitors an increasingly important opportunity to escape from normal day to day life pressures.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/naturally-richer-a-natural-capital-investment-strategy-for-surrey.pdf>

### **What the consultation has found**

*Consultees felt Woking offered urban living surrounded by greenbelt, both of which are needed for a balanced economy and sustainable environment for residents and business.*

*Improvements and townscaping in central Woking were agreed to have made a big impact yet more is needed in the wider town centre and West Byfleet.*

*Consultees were supportive of festivals and events, particularly Celebrate Woking which was felt to be a strong programme of community events and the Food Festival is a particular strength.*

*There was acknowledgement about the improvement in the retail offer but a widely held belief that the town still lacked many key and emerging retail brands associated with a top-class retail destination.*

*There was some feedback that the older Chertsey Road, Chobham Road, High Street area had been neglected within the main town regeneration and that these areas needed to be included in future investment plans.*

*There was positive feedback over the new restaurants locating in the town, yet still some negative feedback over the wider non-food evening economy in terms of poor quality pubs, clubs and cinema offer.*

*The need for Woking to have a USP, something it was known for was cited by a number of consultees, whether an iconic building, a sports team or being the home of an internationally renowned brand such as McLaren.*

*Opportunities around association with the McLaren brand such as a visitor centre, McLaren 'experience', racing cars on roundabouts were again cited by consultees, including frustration over past promises of a visitor centre.*

*Respondents pointed to the need that all cultural and heritage assets need to be celebrated, for example the Muslim heritage is a unique asset which is not well known and could become a popular and unique attraction.*

*It was felt that Woking's natural capital including countryside, commons, open-spaces and the canal were underexploited and could be better promoted to counter the concrete urban perception of the wider Borough.*

*There was generally positive feedback regarding the 2016 HG Wells Celebration, although a few respondents felt that HG Wells was becoming outdated as a USP and that there was a need to find something to which younger people can relate. Woking should be celebrated for what it is: a young, vibrant town, rather than the home of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century author.*

*It was suggested by a number of consultees that Woking needed a number of high-profile town 'ambassadors' who would help promote the town and change external perceptions. Musicians Paul Weller and (now deceased) Rick Parfitt were cited as possible modern ambassadors for Woking.*

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### **Theme 5: Place Making: Summary of Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities**

Woking Borough Council continues to drive forward the development of Woking to provide the housing, commercial and retail space that the growing resident and business populations will require. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of the built environment and facilities the town offers, as well as to the public realm and to the range of cultural facilities, leisure opportunities, festivals and events. All these help to build a sense of place and build loyalty to the town and optimism for the future.

Brexit will present both challenges and opportunities, at present the town benefits from its adjacency to London and near Europe. Businesses can locate in Woking at lower cost than London, yet enjoy many of the benefits including excellent transport links to Europe via road, rail and air. Woking will soon have to compete in a new market environment, its quality of place will be an important differentiating factor against stiff competition from both other UK locations and increasingly European locations. Basingstoke is already ramping-up its inward investment offer.

The success of Victoria Square will be a significant catalyst in sending a bold message that despite market and political uncertainty Woking is open for business and investing in the future. In line with this, Celebrate Woking should include within its remit a strand of activity directly targeted at promoting the Woking brand for inward investment. As the details of Brexit become clear and new international trading partners are identified Woking needs to be proactively marketing itself as 'the' location from which to be based within the SE economic area.

Consultation feedback has consistently identified a lack of 'Unique Selling Point' for Woking, something that it is instantly known for. Whether a truly landmark building, a major-league sports team or venue, a top-flight university or being the home of an internationally recognised brand (such as McLaren). There lies a challenge to identify and pursue what Woking could be known for.

Woking as the home of McLaren, with its F1 heritage openly on show and a McLaren visitor centre have previously been cited as aspirations for the town. This seemingly achievable goal should continue to be pursued by the town's leaders, especially in light of senior management changes at the company.

Shopping remains one of the nation's most popular pastimes, but huge structural changes in shopper habits as the internet becomes exponentially more powerful and retailers switch from 'bricks' to 'clicks' presents Woking a significant short-medium and long-term challenge.

Lacking the cachet of Guildford or status of a Westfield, Woking has managed to retain an increasingly strong retail offer when many similar sized and ranked centres have lost theirs. Yet the consumer move from 'bricks' to 'clicks' is inexorable and in light of significant cost increases such as business rates, rentals and staffing costs (minimum wage and apprenticeship levy) retailers are increasingly reducing the size of their store base, many now only looking for a presence in the top-100 UK locations, some even focusing on the top-50 ranked centres.

Woking if it is to maintain its status as a retail centre must continue to and prioritise attracting the best and newest brands to the town. The offer has to shift from 'commodity' to 'experiential' giving the shopper something that cannot be achieved on the internet. The development of the 'casual dining' offer will help but as with retailers, attracting the key brands in the right location is paramount.

Significant improvements to the public realm such as Jubilee Square and Commercial Way help support the retail offer, as does the availability of nearby quality parking. Woking's car-parks although both adjacent to and linked to the core shopping, using pay on exit and card payments, now need to be offering an exemplary service. Accurate space management and real-time information, individual space availability indicators, touchless payment, app technology such as RingGo, number plate recognition and barrier-free access should all be in the development pipeline to ensure Woking's car-parking is considered as a locational advantage by shoppers.

Regular events and combined leisure experiences have to be offered to give consumers a reason to visit the town, against the ease and sometimes price advantage of internet shopping. Woking's cinema offer is dated, audiences will now travel to an IMAX<sup>36</sup> screen and 4DX<sup>37</sup> experience over and above a standard 2D presentation. Woking should be actively targeting the location of a new state-of-the art operator to the town offering IMAX and 4DX facilities.

The supporting environment also has to be second to none in quality, key infrastructure experiences such as parking needs to be state of the art, with the latest technology, intuitive, rapid and convenient. Town-wide free wi-fi or availability of fast all-network mobile voice and data connectivity is essential, especially for the always-connected generations.

Woking is also a Borough not just the town, its secondary centre of West Byfleet is on the cusp of a major a mixed-use redevelopment project centering on Sheer House. Anchored by a popular Waitrose supermarket West Byfleet has significant development potential which should not be overshadowed by the focus on Woking town centre.

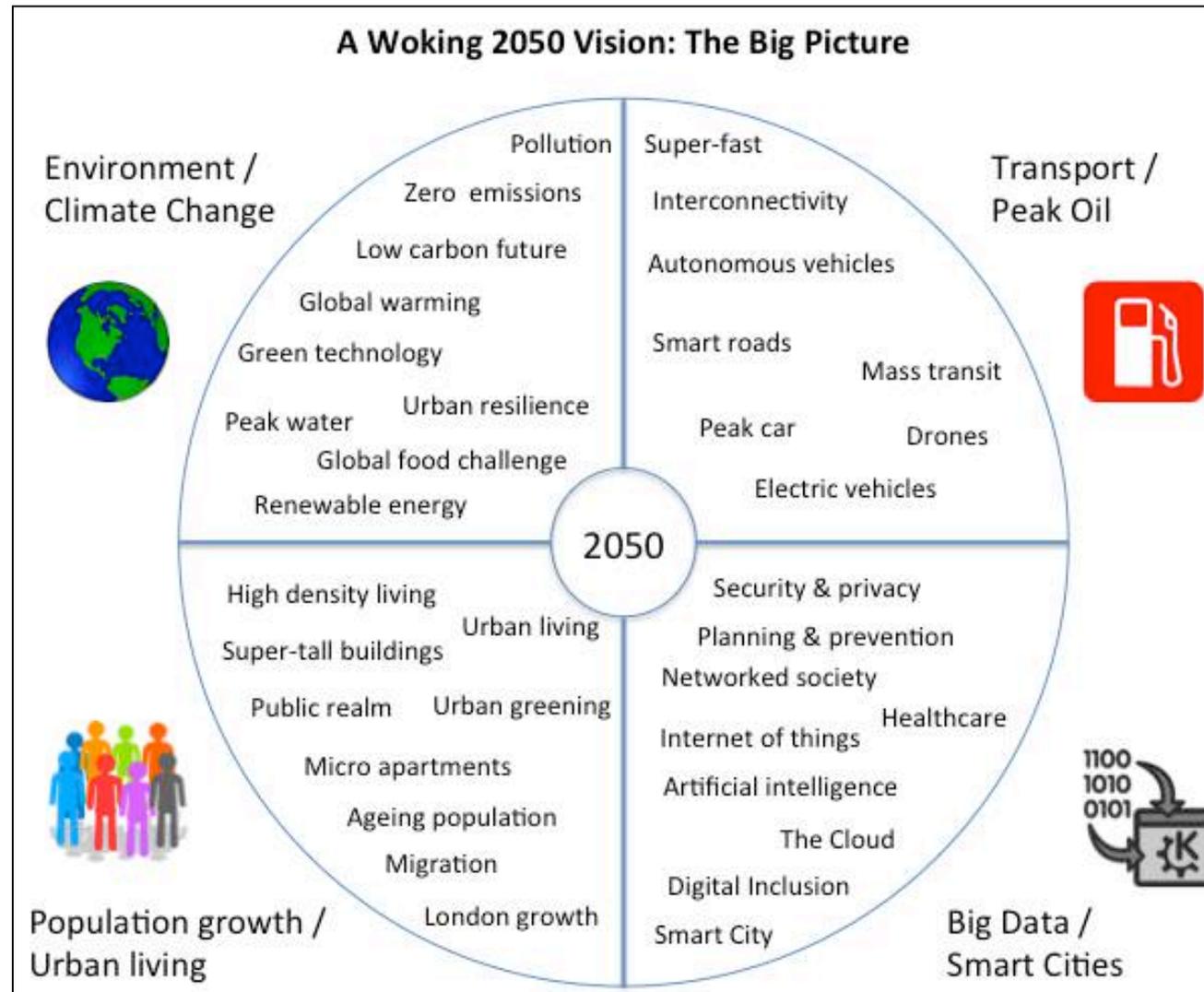
The Borough although perceived as an urban area has significant natural capital being 60% metropolitan green belt. As part of Celebrate Woking there is a challenge to rebalance the urban perception of Woking, further celebrating its countryside, common land and canal.

Competitive indices such as the Halifax Quality of Life Index, The UK Competitiveness Index and Legatum Prosperity Index are published regularly and often secure media coverage. Woking has previously featured within the Halifax index although failed to make the 2016 index, is 33<sup>rd</sup> in the UK Competitiveness Index and 33<sup>rd</sup> in the Legatum prosperity index. Although normally ranked well within the Surrey cohort there are opportunities to address the indicators behind these indices and improve Woking's ranking.

<sup>36</sup> IMAX is an extra wide, curved screen with enhanced light levels, digital projector and powerful Dolby sound system, licenced by the IMAX corporation

Ref:	Place Making: Priorities for action - summary
PM 1	Continue with town centre redevelopment through major schemes such as Victoria Square
PM 2	Continue investment in public realm infrastructure throughout the Borough
PM 3	Continued investment in the Celebrate Woking programme, but widening remit to include inward investment proposition
PM 4	Attract sought after and key retail brands to improve the Woking Shopping offer, ensure continued investment in shopper parking
PM 5	Upgrade the cinema offer, possibly attracting an IMAX and 4DX cinema operator to the town
PM 6	Develop key visitor attractions such as Muslim Heritage sites and Canal development such as the basin marina plans
PM 7	Continue to pursue a McLaren visitor centre and greater recognition of McLaren brand in relation to Woking as its home
PM 8	Continue to prioritise provision of quality hospitality operators, including +4* hotel operator and quality restaurants
PM 9	Develop the Woking brand further –young, dynamic and diverse – live, work and play and Woking's place in the regional offer
PM 10	Consider a Woking landmark building like London's Shard, Gherkin or Cheese grater
PM 11	Promote Woking's natural capital including countryside, commons and canal alongside the urban offer
PM 12	Analyse competitive comparative indices and identify issues that can be addressed thus improving Woking's future rankings

<sup>37</sup> 4DX is a cinema system with augmented environmental effects such as seat motion, wind, rain, fog, lights, and scents along with the standard video and audio.



## A 2050 Vision for Woking's Economy

### Introduction

In just 30 years, there have been great changes to the global economic, political, social, and environmental landscape. Technological advances have also been rapid, not least in respect of our use of mobile devices. Since the first mobile phones went on sale 34 years ago, mobile technology has now come to revolutionise almost every aspect of life and over the next 30 years, the possibilities are astonishing. 3D printing, for example, will soon offer us the ability to print in a wide range of materials and on a range of scales. Perhaps we will see the first 3D printed buildings in Woking by 2050. The world's first 3D printed house has already been 'built' in China. The application of 'big data' and the 'internet of things' is also going to radically reshape the way that we, as a Council, deliver our services.

In economic development terms, we face significant changes, challenges and opportunities over the next 30 years. These include the global challenges associated with climate change, global market volatility, peak oil and population growth. Closer to home, we will need to respond to the UK's decision to leave the EU as well as other planned (and unforeseen) developments that are likely to have an impact on the Woking economy.

In response to these future challenges and opportunities, Woking Borough Council is seeking to deliver a strategic, long-term vision to support smart and sustainable economic growth for the Borough to 2050. We have already published *Woking 2050: A Vision for a Sustainable Borough* that presents our overarching vision to create a sustainable Borough by reducing its impact on the environment. We now need to focus on the other 'big picture' issues which will form the basis of our ongoing 2050 visioning work.

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<sup>38</sup> [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

<sup>39</sup> Source: Key stats on older people, ageing and Age UK (Age UK, November 2014)

<sup>40</sup> London Infrastructure Plan 2050 – Update (Mayor of London, 2015)

### 1. Population growth and urban living

According to Eurostat population projection data<sup>38</sup>, the UK will become the most populous country in the European Union by 2050 with population continuing to grow from 65 million in 2016 to more than 77 million by 2050. By 2080, Eurostat predicts that the UK will have the largest population (85 million) of all the (current) EU Member States with over half of that growth accounted for by net migration.

The UK's population is also ageing. The percentage of the total population aged over 60 is predicted to rise from 23% to nearly 29% in 2036 and 31% in 2056 (ONS 2013<sup>39</sup>). With people living longer, so there will be a need for policy makers to tackle issues around health and care in old age as well as the housing needs of an ageing population. From an economic development perspective, the chances are that people will want to be working longer too which will require consideration of employment and skills issues.

Of particular importance to Woking is the predicted growth of London's population to over 11 million by 2050<sup>40</sup> (currently 8.6 million). Woking's proximity to London presents some very real challenges in terms of the provision of housing and the impact on transport, health provision, schools and opens spaces to support or even counter London's growth.

Woking's own population projections currently go out as far as 2039 and show a 13% predicted increase in population from 99,000 in 2014 to 112,000 in 2039<sup>41</sup>. The data also predicts a 19% increase in the total number of Woking households from 40,000 in 2014 to 47,000 in 2039<sup>42</sup> driven in large part by increased numbers of single person households.

Against the backdrop of a growing and ageing population, Woking faces some significant challenges in meeting the needs of its own population and that of nearby London. Given current land use and planning constraints (e.g. Green Belt), new development is likely to be intensified in existing urban areas.

<sup>41</sup> 2014-based Subnational Population Projections for Local Authorities in England: Table 2 (Source: ONS)

<sup>42</sup> 2014-based Household projections for England and local authority districts (Source: DCLG)

In the UK, there is already a growing trend towards urban living<sup>43</sup>. In the UK, and especially in the South East, urban settlements face the challenges of managing that growth while balancing environmental considerations, diminishing natural resources and space constraints.

In meeting the growing need for housing, Woking will need to consider higher density living solutions, particularly in its urban areas. This development will need to take place alongside innovative and forward-thinking planning and urban design to ensure that higher density living does not lead to lower quality of life. With the intensification of living in urban areas comes the need for planners to pay even more attention to the provision of shared space within the urban environment – green corridors, the greening of buildings, and the innovative design of the public realm - to create a balance between the public realm and private realm.

The following issues have been identified as some of the important considerations in the development of higher density urban living:

### ***Super-tall buildings***

With London and the South East in the middle of a population boom that shows no sign of slowing down, it will be important for Woking to look at a range of options to achieve both the housing and work space needs of the future. Tall buildings can play a role in meeting some of that demand. Unlike cities in Asia and Latin America, high rise living has not featured prominently in the UK and for many, the perception of high rise living remains tarnished by memories of social housing schemes of the 1960s. While a lot more is now known about building tall towers and planning for high density living, there is still more work that needs to be done to understand how towers work as places where people want to live and in which neighbourhoods can thrive. In-line with feedback on creating exemplar themes for Woking, the potential for Woking to have a number of notable, landmark super-tall buildings presents an opportunity that could be delivered within ten-years but have a

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<sup>43</sup> *Urban demographics: Why people live where they do* (Elli Thomas, Ilona Serwicka & Paul Swinney, Centre for Cities, November 2015)

legacy lasting up to and beyond 2050. London's skyline is now dominated by landmark buildings such as the 'Cheesegrater', 'Gherkin', 'Shard' and 'Walkie Talkie' there is an opportunity to create similar iconic buildings in Woking.

However these need to be designed for 2050 occupation, incorporating a concepts that promotes resilient communities, space suitable for sole occupation right through to multi-generational families and retired people. Quality safe communal spaces and where possible access to green 'breathing' space and leisure facilities. Many of the world's top architectural practices are wrestling with ideas for super-tall buildings, Woking is one of the very few towns within Surrey that could accommodate such an aspiration.

### ***Micro-apartment living***

With the growth in higher density urban living and the trend towards single person households, Woking will also need to consider the role of micro-apartment living<sup>44</sup> in an attempt to accommodate more people in the future. The challenges include how to do so affordably, comfortably and with enough privacy to make these spaces homes as well as housing. A West Midlands charity called the Homeless Foundation has developed the iKozie – a single-person home measuring just 17.25 sq m whose design was inspired by yacht interiors and first-class airline suites. (Average size 1 bed flat is 25-50 sq m)

### ***The greening of urban areas***

The higher density developments of tomorrow will require innovative and sustainable ways to build in green and open space within the public realm. Woking has the opportunity to lead the way in the greening of its urban environment, benefiting from its very own green 'corridor' (the canal) which passes right through the heart of the town.

<sup>44</sup> *Are tiny houses and micro-apartments the future of urban homes?* (The Guardian, 25 August 2014)

There are many other case studies from around the world that can be used to inspire green and sustainable developments in Woking. These include roof gardens or vertical gardens (i.e. planting on the façades of buildings such as the Athenaeum Hotel in London) or the creation of more ambitious projects such as solar ‘super trees’ in Singapore.



Source: [www.gardensbythebay.com.sg](http://www.gardensbythebay.com.sg)

Singapore’s solar super trees are vertical gardens, between 25 and 50 metres in height, which have been designed to mimic the ecological functions of real trees. The structures are planted to create habitats and micro-climates for a variety of flora and fauna. Each structure is fitted with photovoltaic cells that collect and store solar energy throughout the day – power that is used to illuminate the garden when the sun goes down each night. Their unique shape serves as rainwater collectors to help funnel water to fountain displays and irrigation systems. They are both important to the visitor economy as well as providing important environmental and sustainable habitats for the city.

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<sup>45</sup> Audi Urban Future Initiative: *How will cars and city become connected in 2050?* (Inhabitat, 26 November 2014)

## 2. Transport Infrastructure and Peak Oil

Like most other local authorities, Woking has seen a significant rise in car ownership over the last 35 years. In 1981, the Census showed that there were 31,000 cars owned by Woking households. By 2011 that figure had almost doubled to 56,500 cars. The average number of cars per household has also increased. In 1981, 30% of households owned two or more vehicle and, by 2011, that figure had risen to 44% of Woking households.

Over the same period, the world has started to take seriously the prospect of ‘peak oil’ – i.e. predictions that global oil production will peak and then decline over the next few decades with a resulting increase in oil prices. Some believe that when oil production decreases, modern society will be forced to change its views on car ownership and car-based travel although this will depend upon the rate of decline and development of effective alternatives.

Irrespective of peak oil, it is likely that there will be some significant changes in the way that we travel by 2050, supported by advances in transport technology. In turn, this will inevitably change the nature of our urban areas.

Some of the key considerations for Woking include:

**Electric vehicles:** The rise in the use of electric vehicles is already established and will have implications for the future design of roads, parking bays and new housing developments. Production of electricity is also forecast to become cleaner and cheaper (e.g. increased efficiencies in solar production) making electric vehicles more affordable and environmentally sustainable. In turn, urban living is likely to become quieter and less polluted.

**Piloted parking:** Car manufacturers have already developed vehicles that can make their own way into a parking space (without the need for a driver). This is not only about convenience for the driver. Automated parking also enables a completely new, space-saving type of design for car parks creating opportunities in urban areas for more ‘liveable space’<sup>45</sup>

**Interconnectivity:** It is the vision of many cities around the world to create an environment in which residents no longer rely on their own personal cars to get around but instead use a combination of public transport, shared cars and bikes, supported by real-time data. For this to work, urban planners will need to focus on developing the interconnectivity of multi-modal forms of transport.

**Peak car:** It is predicted that there will be a move away from car ownership altogether – sometimes referred to as ‘peak car’<sup>46</sup>. Rising costs associated with buying and running vehicles is already leading to a greater use of car rental, car clubs and on-demand taxi services such as Uber, especially among the millennial generation and those living in urban settlements. Peak car is also likely to lead to a growth in mass transit options. In Hackney, the council is championing car-free developments and guaranteeing alternatives to personally-owned cars, including a commitment that every resident will live within three minutes of a car-club bay.

**Super-fast:** In time, Woking will need to consider how it can fit into wider super-fast transport systems. While these may be some many years away from development, concepts currently on the table for testing in 2017 include Hyperloop<sup>47</sup> - a super-fast, pod-based transport system that would offer low cost mass transport alternatives to railways and other public transport.

**Drones:** The potential for using drones to deliver goods is already being explored but their use in the monitoring of the public environment is already well underway too. In the Borough of Reigate and Banstead, for example, police-operated drones are currently being used to combat town centre crime.

**Driverless/autonomous vehicles:** As the desire for individual car ownership is predicted to decline, so the opportunities for smart, driverless cars are likely to grow. Being able to call up a car with your mobile phone to take you to your destination, with no need to park it and only paying for distance travelled is

particularly attractive. The implications for those in driving-based jobs are less attractive. In England, there are almost 300,000 taxi or private-hire-vehicle driver licences and 600,000 people registered drivers of heavy goods vehicles<sup>48</sup> - jobs that could well become redundant with the advent of autonomous vehicles.

**Car-free:** The model of denser and less car-dependent cities of the future is becoming widely accepted across the developed world. Car-free and car reduction brings many potential benefits to the urban environment (e.g. the potential for conversion of car parks to green, public spaces and safer, quieter, less polluted pedestrianised environments).

**Smart roads:** Even car-free urban environments will still require roads. Traditionally, roads have been relatively low-tech but the roads of the future are predicted to be more ‘intelligent’ – built with sensors, data capture capabilities, the ability to be responsive to changes in the environment and, perhaps most importantly, offering connectivity with its users. Roads of the future will be able ‘talk’ to cars, bicycles and traffic lights, collecting data from its users and responding to it. Planners are already testing roads that can charge vehicles as they drive along them and temperature-controlled paint to warn road users of dangers<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> *End of the car age: how cities are outgrowing the automobile* (Stephen Moss in The Guardian, 28 April 2015)

<sup>47</sup> [www.hyperloop-one.com](http://www.hyperloop-one.com)

<sup>48</sup> *With Trump and Uber, the driverless future could turn into a nightmare* (John Harris, the Guardian, 16 December 2016)

<sup>49</sup> [www.arup.com/future\\_of\\_highways](http://www.arup.com/future_of_highways)



Source: [www.arup.com/future\\_of\\_highways](http://www.arup.com/future_of_highways)

### 3. Big Data and Smart Cities

**Big Data** attracts a lot of interest but its full potential is still being explored. The concept is relatively simple – the capture, storage and analysis of large and varied data sets to reveal patterns and trends. For local authorities, the analysis of big data can help to spot trends, tailor services and prevent problems from occurring. By providing the opportunity to analyse how people behave, it is a perfect tool for the planning and creation of smart cities. Bristol, for example, has launched a cutting edge research and development project that uses Bristol’s digital infrastructure (fibre in the ground, a mesh bouncing from lamppost to lamppost across the City, and a mile of experimental wireless connectivity along Harbourside) to collect and make ‘big data’

<sup>50</sup> *How Big Data And The Internet Of Things Create Smarter Cities* (Forbes, 19 May, 2015)

available and usable by many different projects at once. Each project is managed by ‘Bristol Is Open’ – a joint venture between the University of Bristol and Bristol City Council.

As populations grow and resources become scarcer, being able to use those limited resources in more efficient ways will become vitally important. Advances in technology are quickly paving the way for smart cities. **Smart cities** use information and communications technologies to deliver sustainable economic development and a higher quality of life for its residents. Developments in software, hardware and telecommunication networks are enabling more interaction between people and places and more machine-to-machine communication, creating an ‘**internet of things**’. Opening up and making sense of this is giving people a greater ability to interact with their environment. Using data sensors, smart city technologies can respond in real-time to everyday events including congestion, waste management, entertainment events, e-democracy, energy supply and more. Examples might include intelligent street lighting which will switch itself off to conserve energy when there is no one around, mapping energy use around the city to better understand demand, and mapping how people get around to maximise the use of bicycle and footpaths<sup>50</sup>.

Other important technological developments which are likely to have an impact on 2050 Woking include:

**Artificial intelligence** – computers are becoming better at understanding the world and taking on the jobs currently done by humans. This has significant Implications for future employment and skills.

**Smart medical devices** – medical devices working with mobile devices to monitor and predict health risks.

**E-democracy** – How citizens make national and local decisions could radically change by 2050 via the development of E-democracy (electronic democracy).

Although there are many challenges and barriers to overcome the technological developments in personal ICT and electronic decision making and voting, currently mainly used for entertainment purposes could easily support national and local decision making via citizen's online referendums, voting and polling.

Woking will need to put in place responses to some of the challenges associated with digital exclusion among its resident population, data security and privacy issues.

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#### 4. Environment and Climate Change

While our urban environments have traditionally been the centres of commerce, culture and innovation, they have also been large consumers of energy, adding to greenhouse gas emissions. They are also at particular risk from the challenges associated with climate change. Urban planners around the world are therefore working on solutions to improve the sustainability and environmental impact of cities as well as improve **urban resilience** (the capacity of individuals, communities, businesses and institutions to survive, adapt and grow no matter what stresses or shocks they experience).

Some of the key areas that Woking will need to consider are:

Tackling the threats of both flooding as well as '**peak water**' (the growing constraints on the availability, quality, and use of freshwater resources) through the use of water efficient buildings (e.g. green roofs, green façades and intelligent management systems), rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling

- Designing for a **low carbon** future and **renewable energy sources**
- **Local food production** – reducing food miles and growing food in urban areas through urban farming (rooftop, underground, vertical farming and

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<sup>51</sup> Greenhouse in the Sky: Inside Europe's biggest urban farm (The Guardian, 27 April 2016)

urban greenhouses)

- **Sustainable building design** using green building principles such as passive solar (windows, walls and floors made to collect, store, and distribute solar energy), natural ventilation and natural cooling. A rainwater harvesting system, geothermal heating systems,

A disused office in The Hague has been revamped as an urban greenhouse, with a fish farm operating on the floor below. At the top of an empty 1950s office block that once belonged to Philips, tomatoes, vegetables and trendy 'microgreens' are now being grown in a 1,200 square metre rooftop greenhouse. The vision is to be able to serve 900 local families, plus restaurants and a cooking school with 500 tilapia (fish) a week and 50 tonnes of rooftop vegetables a year<sup>51</sup>.

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#### 5. Working Patterns

Traditional post-war working patterns of a 'job for life', Monday-Friday, 9-5 working, retirement at 65 have already been shattered with the move to flexible working practices, increased job-changes, portfolio careers, zero-hour contracts, freelancing, the 'gig' economy, home-based working, hot-desking and move towards an older retirement age via a phased semi-retirement.

This strategic shift in working practices is set to continue towards 2050, with expected greater flexibility of working patterns across a full seven-day period, rarely based at a fixed office but utilising home-working, local-hubs and hot-desking as a common part of the working life.

Hours worked may reduce in line with greater automation and loss of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Current skilled but process driven jobs such as basic legal work and accountancy may also become automated via intelligent computing. It is predicted that 40% of employment roles will be lost to automation<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Oxford university economists Dr Carl Frey and Dr Michael Osborne

The retirement age is likely to continue to increase in line with life expectancy and financial restraints on pensions both private and state. Following 2015's ONS release of life expectancy forecasts many UK pension providers predicted the retirement age would rise to at least 70 by 2050.

These changes will impact on towns such as Woking in terms of its resident population needs and its place as a commercial and employment centre. Traditional commuting outflow and inflow patterns could shift significantly as the need to commute decreases. Flexible working patterns would potentially even out the traditional weekend peak for shopping and leisure activities as people incorporate leisure and work across a full seven-day period.

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## 6. Shopping 2050

The exponential shift from traditional shopping to internet based shopping is set to continue, with new disruptors such as local 3D printing of products set to again revolutionise how we buy things. Artificial Intelligence aided and Virtual Reality (VR) shopping is being predicted to further erode the viability of the traditional bricks and mortar High Street, with immediate delivery via autonomous drone vehicles.

Therefore, the experiential value of a shopping destination will become even more critical in terms of attracting people to visit, whether for combined leisure and social reasons, or to experience an event that cannot be enjoyed online or via virtual reality. The changes to personal transport highlighted previously will potentially impact on revenue generation from car parking, which for many local authorities is a significant source of revenue income.

Retailers are already shifting investment to more online services, VR augmented shopping and ultra-fast delivery and returns services. Therefore they will become even more selective as to which locations they chose to have a physical 'bricks and mortar' store representation in. This could potentially

reduce down to less than 100 regional shopping 'megacentres' where the experiential element of the shopping leisure activity would be guaranteed.

A move away from consumerism to experiential fulfilment is already being seen within Generation Y and Generation Z<sup>53</sup> which have been labelled the 'rental' generation who are looking at complete ownership of an asset as a waste, when use of it can be rented when needed, giving flexibility to change and upgrade at will. In terms of property giving flexibility to rapidly move to where work is, with cars to avoid fixed costs and depreciation, with phones to ensure they have the latest model.

This trend is expected to continue on beyond lifestyle purchases into property ownership where ownership of a property becomes unachievable for many and renting becomes the norm, closer aligning to rental levels experienced in mainland Europe e.g. 60% of Germans rent their property. The recent Government Housing White Paper gives the strongest strategic push towards property rental vs. ownership for any recent Conservative Government.

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## 2050 Vision: Summary of Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

Woking has already started to consider 2050 within its *Woking 2050: A Vision for a Sustainable Borough* strategy, however 2050 is also going to present a number of wider economic challenges:

Parking revenue will potentially change in line with changes to car ownership and use patterns. Therefore the public assets of large car-parks generating significant revenue income will have to be reviewed regularly.

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<sup>53</sup> Generation Y born 1977-1994, Generation Z born 1995-2012 (WJSchroer)

The need for investment in ICT infrastructure will increase exponentially as we move towards an even more data driven society. Access to and analysis of ‘Big Data’ will help shape and design future public services.

The role of the Council in providing quality green space and better public realm becomes even greater as many more people will live in higher density accommodation, most likely super-tall, hi-rise blocks.

The concept of ‘citizenship’ could become more prevalent, as our society becomes more multicultural and diverse, the need for citizens to embrace an agreed set of national values and principles may become more necessary.

Technological developments in E-democracy could change how people are represented with some decisions could be made via e-referendums, e-voting and polling.

The social wellbeing aspect of place management widens, the Council’s role to manage the ‘place’ becomes more important.

The delineation between commercial and residential blurs further as more people work from home. Work hubs are increasingly incorporated into residential developments.

Woking Shopping has to become more ‘experiential’ offering goods, services and events that cannot be replicated via online retailers

Leisure activities become an increasing priority for the 2050 population, the Council will have a key role in supporting community events and providing leisure services for residents, workers and visitors.

Ref:	2050 Vision: Priorities for action
2050V 1	<i>Woking 2050: A Vision for a Sustainable Borough</i> should be updated to include economic factors and regularly updated to reflect emerging trends and studies.
2050V 2	Woking’s revenue stream from car parking needs to be 2050 proofed ahead of strategic changes to car ownership and use patterns
2050V 3	Plans for supertall, hi-rise residential apartments need to be 2050 proofed in terms of predicted needs for families, single people, home-working, employment hubs and communal space.
2050V 4	Woking Shopping should invest in a 2050 strategy to identify developments needed to maintain its relevance as a shopping destination as consumer behaviour continues to move from commodity to experiential shopping.