

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The 1994 Adopted Local Plan

- 1.1 In January 1994 the Borough Council formally adopted the Surrey Heath Local Plan. This provided statutory planning policies for development, use of land and countryside protection up to the year 2001.
- 1.2 The 1994 Local Plan evolved over a five year period and had its origins in the circumstances of the mid and late 1980's.

The Development Plan

- 1.3 The Local Plan in combination with the Surrey Structure Plan, the Surrey Waste Local Plan and the Surrey Minerals Local Plan comprise the statutory Development Plan. It is a mandatory duty placed upon local authorities, being prepared under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act, 1991 and supporting Regulations. The adopted Surrey Heath Local Plan was prepared against the background of the Surrey Structure Plan 1989 and was certified as being in "general conformity" with that plan's strategic policies.

Reasons for this Review

- 1.4 In September 1994 the Borough Council agreed to progress a review of the Surrey Heath Local Plan to ensure that policies remain up to date and as effective as possible.
- 1.5 The specific reasons for the review are:
 - (a) To bring the plan up to date with national planning policies which are issued in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) and Circulars;
 - (b) To bring the plan up to date with the new policies of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994;
 - (c) To revisit plan policies which may no longer be relevant or be capable of being achieved; and
 - (d) To include an environmental appraisal of policies.

This Document

- 1.6 This is the Adopted plan. It has been prepared following a major consultation period during 1996 and the publication of the Surrey Heath Local Plan Deposit Draft 1998. Objections to the Deposit Draft were considered by an independent Inspector who held a Public Inquiry between January and July 1999. In response to the Inspector's recommendations, the Council subsequently published Proposed Modifications for a further round of consultation. The Adopted plan is the outcome of this extensive process.

Main Functions of this Local Plan

- 1.7 The Local Plan has three principal functions which are:
 - (a) To apply the broad principles of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994 to the particular circumstances of Surrey Heath;
 - (b) To set out the Council's policies for the control of development in Surrey Heath; and
 - (c) To make proposals for the development and use of land and to allocate land for specific purposes.
- 1.8 The Plan has particular significance to the development control function, that is, dealing with planning applications and other consents necessary from the local planning authority. Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sets out the importance of the Development Plan to the determination of amongst other things, planning applications:
"Where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

- 1.9 In considering particular proposals, the Borough Council will rely upon the policies of the Plan, and where there are material considerations will weigh these in the judgement to be made. Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 “General Policy and Principles” (February 1997) advises at paragraph 50:

“Material considerations must be genuine planning considerations, i.e. they must be related to the purpose of planning legislation, which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. The consideration must also fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned”.

Format of this Plan

- 1.10 The Local Plan comprises a Written Statement and a Proposals Map. The Written Statement includes all the Council’s policies, together with an explanation of the reasons for them and how they will work. For ease of reference the policies are set out in a box within the text.
- 1.11 The Proposals Map and accompanying inset plans show precisely where development is proposed and where policies will apply.

Plan Timescale

- 1.12 The policies and proposals put forward in this plan cover the period until the year 2006. This means that the Plan is compatible with the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, and particularly the housing policies of the latter, and the Local Plan can be certified as being in “general conformity” with the Structure Plan as required by Regulation.

Keeping the Plan up to date

- 1.13 The Borough Council supports the government’s view that local plans should be kept up to date. While many of the plan policies will still be as relevant in the year 2006 as they are now, it is inevitable that some changes will be required in due course as circumstances change. The Borough Council will monitor progress with the plan, and the changing nature of national and strategic planning policies in the coming years before deciding upon further reviews.

Responsibilities

- 1.14 This Plan has been prepared by Surrey Heath Borough Council as the local planning authority for the area, in consultation with Surrey County Council which is responsible for the strategic elements of land use planning, most transport matters (although the Borough Council acts as agent for some highway related activities), social services, some leisure facilities, the police, fire services and waste disposal. Other organisations including those in the private sector also have responsibility for implementing particular parts of the plan. The Local Plan therefore provides guidance and a framework for co-ordinating private and public sector investment decisions.

Other Documents

- 1.15 Some of the policies and proposals for the development of specific sites within this Plan are supported by other documents in the form of supplementary planning guidance produced by the Borough Council or the County Council. Appendices 11 and 12 contains a list of these documents.

Chapter 2

LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

Introduction

2.1 This Local Plan has been prepared to take account of national, regional and county wide planning policies and emerging thinking on environmentally sustainable development.

Sustainable Development

2.2 The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (“The Earth Summit”) which was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 focused on the need to achieve sustainable development. The most often quoted definition of sustainable development is that which aims at:

“ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”
(Our Common Future, WCED, 1987).

2.3 The UK Government also see it as living within our environmental means and placing the concept of environment at the centre of decision making. It was agreed at the Summit to adopt Agenda 21 which is a global action plan setting out what nations should do to achieve sustainable development.

2.4 In January 1994 the UK Government produced a report, “Sustainable Development - The UK Strategy” which sets out an agenda for moving towards sustainable development. The Strategy sets out the requirements for a sustainable framework for development as one which:

- (a) Shapes new development patterns in a way that minimises the use of energy consumed in travel between dispersed development;
- (b) Provides for the nation’s needs for food production, mineral extraction, new homes and other buildings, while respecting environmental objectives;
- (c) Uses already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work; and

(d) Conserves the natural resources of wildlife and landscape, safeguarding those identified as being of special interest or of national and international importance.

2.5 At the European level the Community has produced the “Fifth Environmental Action Programme - Towards Sustainability” which sets out the strategic framework for the Community’s environmental policy until the year 2000. It seeks to address the root causes of environmental degradation rather than trying to clear up problems once they have become too large to ignore. The programme sees local authorities playing a crucial role in achieving the programme’s aim of environmental improvement, particularly through spatial planning, economic development, transport planning and environmental auditing.

National Planning Policy

2.6 The Government intends that local plans should be an important framework for sound and effective development control within which the market can bring about appropriate development. A local plan must make adequate provision for development and at the same time take account of the need to protect the natural and built environment.

2.7 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (PPG12) “Development Plans”, December 1999, the Government reiterates its intention to work towards ensuring that development and growth are sustainable:

“The planning system regulates the development and use of land in the public interest. The system as a whole, and the preparation of development plans in particular, is the most effective way of reconciling the demand for development and the protection of the environment. Thus it has a key role to play in contributing to the Government’s strategy for sustainable development by helping to provide for necessary development in locations which do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs”.

2.8 The Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) Regulations, 1999, expressly require local planning authorities to take account of environmental considerations when preparing their development plans. In November 1993 the Department of the Environment published “Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans - A Good Practice Guide”, to assist local planning authorities fulfil their statutory obligations. It is the intention of environmental appraisal to make as explicit as possible:

- (a) how concern for the environment has been taken into account in drawing up the plan; and
- (b) what is the likely impact on the environment of the plans implementation.

2.9 These environmental concerns include not only the traditional issues such as protection of the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, historic buildings, Areas of High Archaeological Potential amongst others, but new, wider environmental concerns such as global warming, the consumption of non-renewable resources and energy conservation.

2.10 In Planning Policy Guidance Note 13, “Transport” (March 1994), the Government sets three key objectives for local authorities to address in their land use policies and transport programmes:

- (a) to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys;
- (b) to encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and hence
- (c) reduce reliance on the private car.

2.11 The review of the Surrey Heath Local Plan has been prepared to take account of relevant parts of Government guidance set out in the various Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG’s). These provide national guidance on a wide range of matters relevant to Surrey Heath, including Green Belt, countryside and the rural economy, housing, transport, industry and commerce, retailing and town centres, nature conservation, the historic environment, sport and recreation, renewable energy, pollution control and noise, amongst others.

2.12 This review also includes an environmental appraisal which has been applied both to the

proposed policies at the consultation stage and to the Deposit Plan. The environmental appraisal has helped to refine plan objectives and policies and ensure that the plan is contributing as far as possible to the objectives of sustainable development. A summary of the environmental appraisal is included at Appendix 1. A full report on the environmental appraisal is available separately.

Regional Planning Policy

2.13 In March 1994, The Secretary of State for the Environment published Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9). It sets out the main principles for the future development of the region for the period up to the year 2011, which in summary are:

- (a) To foster economic growth, in particular by encouraging the use of existing planning permissions and land which is allocated in development plans and is available;
- (b) To ensure development and growth are sustainable and reflect the environmental constraints of the region. The firm protection of Green Belts, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated sites of nature conservation importance, the built heritage and the best and most versatile agricultural land are to be maintained and inappropriate development in the countryside will be resisted.
- (c) To make full use of opportunities for re-development and recycling of urban land;
- (d) To provide sufficient housing, to meet the needs of the region’s population;
- (e) To co-ordinate planning and transport policies and reduce congestion where there is development pressure including the area to the west of London;
- (f) To encourage growth in opportunity areas to the east and north of the region.

2.14 The planning strategy for the west of the region (which includes Surrey Heath), is set out at Paragraph 7.25 of RPG9 as follows:

“In the western counties of the South East, while having regard to the needs of the market, and taking account of the changes to the structure of the local economy since the late 1980’s a reducing rate of economic

and housing development is appropriate. These areas are now entering a period of adjustment, enabling infrastructure and services to catch up with the rapid growth of the recent past, and should no longer need to absorb continuing net inward migration throughout the 1990's and into the next century. Existing planning commitments and redevelopment opportunities in urban areas will make an important contribution to meeting the housing needs of the population of these counties, and to restoring and maintaining the buoyancy of their economy."

Surrey Structure Plan 1994

- 2.15 In February 1995, Surrey County Council adopted the "Surrey Structure Plan 1994" as a replacement to the 1989 Structure Plan. This introduced new policies and a strategy which is not fully reflected in the Adopted Surrey Heath Local Plan. The Review Plan consequently takes account of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994.
- 2.16 The Structure Plan applies the principles of Regional Planning Guidance to the Surrey situation and establishes strategic planning policies for the foreseeable future and up to the year 2006 for policies regarding the level of new housing provision. The Structure Plan seeks to promote a high quality and sustainable urban and rural environment for Surrey and to ensure that the county's economy is maintained and renewed. The Structure Plan's provisions for development has been limited such that it will not be necessary to alter the boundaries of the Green Belt over the structure plan period and only where existing urban areas cannot meet development requirements will it be acceptable to identify development land within Countryside beyond the Green Belt.
- 2.17 The objectives of the Surrey Structure Plan are directed at sustaining the quality of the environment:
- (a) To resist the further urbanisation of the county;
 - (b) To slow down the rate of development provision;
 - (c) To ensure that development complies with high standards and protects and enhances

not only features of recognised importance but also the quality of life generally;

- (d) Not to meet in full the demand for travel;
- (e) Within environmental and infrastructure constraints, to give priority to meet the needs of Surrey's population for social, community, health and specific housing needs, together with provision for retailing, leisure and recreation; and
- (f) To provide for development which contributes to the maintenance and renewal of the County's economy within environmental and infrastructure constraints.

- 2.18 In preparing this Local Plan, account has also been taken of other County Council documents, including the New Transport Plan for Surrey.

A Strategy for Surrey Heath

- 2.19 The strategy for this Local Plan reflects the influences provided by policy at national and strategic level, whilst also reflecting the nature of Surrey Heath, its pattern of development, open space and countryside, its services and infrastructure.
- 2.20 The broad aims of the Strategy are set out in the following paragraphs. More specific objectives are explained in the subsequent topic chapters.

The Environment

Working Towards Sustainability

- 2.21 The Borough Council has recognised the importance of sustainable development and this Plan seeks to work towards a more sustainable future, recognising that planning decisions, to meet the needs of the present, should not deny future generations the opportunity to meet their needs or enjoy the highest environmental standards.
- 2.22 Working towards a more sustainable future will inevitably involve making efficient use of existing resources, particularly in built up areas, and directing new development to sites where the environment can be enhanced or at the very least harm to the environment can be minimised to acceptable levels. Where possible, land use decisions have been

influenced by the need to reduce longer journeys by private motor car, and where congestion can be minimised and pollution and fuel consumption reduced.

- 2.23 The concept of sustainability is not however about preventing development. It is however about ensuring that new development takes place as far as possible in accordance with sustainability principles. In preparing this Plan, the Borough Council has sought to apply the concept of sustainability to its policies and proposals, recognising that the benefits of such an approach may not be obvious or significant in the immediate future. The move towards sustainability will require a long term strategy which will need to continue beyond the life of this Plan.
- 2.24 In applying sustainability principles, the Borough Council has followed the advice set out in the Department of the Environment's good practice guide "Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans". A summary of the appraisal is set out at Appendix 1. This appraisal is not an end in itself but provides a useful tool to test the appropriateness of the Council's policies.

Protection of Important Environmental Assets

- 2.25 The Surrey Heath Local Plan 1994 placed considerable emphasis on environmental considerations and on protecting the more valued areas and features of Surrey Heath from irreversible change. This Plan continues this approach, recognising the importance and value of the local environment to the quality of life of residents and the need to restrain development pressures and direct new development to the least harmful locations.
- 2.26 The Borough contains a broad range of environmental "assets". Some of these are physical, including the man-made landscape, including historic buildings and conservation areas and natural features such as the countryside, areas of landscape importance, the Green Belt, recreation land and areas of ecological importance whether this is for botanical or wildlife reasons. The Plan has identified the most important environmental assets of the Borough. Full details are detailed

in the Environmental Appraisal Topic Paper Number 11, dated February 1996.

- 2.27 A range of environmental matters may need to be taken into account in the process of considering planning applications. Policies in the Plan therefore aim to ensure that environmental considerations are fully taken into account in determining whether planning applications are acceptable, and that where necessary environmental impact can be properly assessed.

Enhancement of the Environment

- 2.28 The Plan aims to provide opportunities for the enhancement of the environment:
- (a) Development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of conservation areas;
 - (b) High quality design and layouts of new development schemes, particularly where this replaces older, worn out development in areas which need revitalising;
 - (c) Through traffic management and/or environmental improvement schemes for the benefit of pedestrians and those with disabilities, particularly in Camberley town centre and local centres and in older residential areas;
 - (d) Through local highway improvements and traffic management, aimed at alleviating congestion and improving road safety.

New Development

- 2.29 The following broad objectives apply:
- Identification of Sufficient Land to meet the Requirements of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994*
- 2.30 Through a combination of extant planning permissions, new large site allocations and estimates of future housing on unidentified sites the requirements of the Surrey Structure Plan will be met.
- Making the Best Use of Existing Urban Areas and Rural Settlements*
- 2.31 In identifying sufficient land for new housing development the following broad selection process has been applied:

- (a) To identify as much housing development as possible from existing urban areas and rural settlements, having regard to recognised environmental constraints; only then to
- (b) Identify “brownfield sites” outside of settlement areas, which can be made acceptable in locational terms; and only then if absolutely necessary to
- (c) Identify countryside land not in the Green Belt, including housing reserve sites and only where this is close to existing facilities and services, including public transport, and which is not of recognised importance for environmental or recreational reasons and which can overcome any traffic related concerns.

Concentration of New Industrial and Employment Generating Uses Within Existing Urban Areas

- 2.32 For major employment generating uses the “sequential test” will apply, directing major new retail, leisure and office uses of more than 2,500 sq. metres to Camberley town centre, to help maintain and enhance the role of Camberley town centre as the principal focus for shopping, employment and leisure within the Borough and the Blackwater Valley towns.
- 2.33 Elsewhere new industrial and commercial development which is not suitable for town centres will be encouraged in areas of older industrial estates and selected mixed use areas requiring revitalising, particularly where there is good access to public transport.

Enhancement of Facilities for those with Special Needs, particularly those requiring Affordable Housing

- 2.34 It is recognised that the housing market in Surrey Heath is biased towards larger and more expensive properties and does not fully address the need of those who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market. Policies therefore seek to direct some housing opportunities to those requiring subsidised and low cost market housing.

Movement and Infrastructure

Alleviation of Traffic Congestion through Promotion of Movement Studies and Suitable Traffic Management Measures

- 2.35 The Borough Council considers that a Movement Study for the area is urgently required to assess the current problems and identify opportunities for improving movement within the Borough, and will be pressing Surrey County Council to bring forward funds for this purpose. Where resources can be made available, the Borough Council will investigate the feasibility of undertaking highway improvements and traffic management measures to reduce congestion on the roads and improve highway safety.

Enhancement of Non-Car Based Travel, particularly Facilities for Cyclists and Pedestrians, including those with Disabilities

- 2.36 In peak times many journeys are made by car which are of short duration and could be made by alternative means of travel, including by foot and bicycle. It is therefore the intention to make such alternative journeys more attractive by gradually introducing a cycle network and improved pedestrian areas.

Enhancement of Improved Rail and Bus Services as an Alternative to the Car.

- 2.37 The Borough Council will work with Surrey County Council and the operators of public transport to seek improvements to services within the Borough.

Chapter 3

GENERAL POLICIES

Introduction

- 3.1 This chapter sets out policies which apply either Borough wide or to the general situations which may occur within various parts of the Borough, and which are not included in the specific subject chapters which follow.
- 3.2 Care of the environment, which is acknowledged to be under great pressure, is of paramount importance. This includes not only concern about the physical environment within the towns and villages of the Borough and areas of countryside and open spaces, but also to noise, pollution and the conservation of energy and resources.
- 3.3 General policies have been grouped within one of the following four categories, although there is a degree of overlapping of issues in certain circumstances

Development Impact

- 3.4 This plan seeks to contain as much development as possible to existing settlement areas. The impacts of development in existing built up areas may be different to those arising from development proposals within the countryside. When open countryside is developed it will be an almost irreversible change. Developments within settlement areas may be more incremental but may nevertheless have very significant impacts in terms of change to urban character, loss of landscape features, loss of open space, additional traffic generation and impacts on infrastructure and services. This plan seeks to encompass a whole range of environmental and infrastructure impacts which will need to be examined in considering planning applications.

Design and Layout

- 3.5 Well designed new development can not only meet essential needs but can enhance the attractiveness of the environment and add something to the quality of life. The plan includes a number of policies which seek high quality designs from new development proposals.

Environmental Protection

- 3.6 A number of new environmental protection policies appear in this Local Plan. The advice of the Environment Agency has been sought on a number of policy areas, relating in particular to the effects of development on floodplains, the quality of groundwater and watercourses. In addition the plan reflects the greater emphasis given to hazardous installations, contaminated land and pollution matters, including noise and light pollution.

Conservation and Enhancement

- 3.7 Chapter five sets out policies for the built heritage, including historic buildings, conservation areas, historic gardens and archaeological sites. In a wider sense, there are other conservation issues, including retention of trees and landscape features, renewable energy and conservation of water resources.

Environmental Considerations

- 3.8 The Environment White Paper “This Common Inheritance” (September 1990), Britain’s first comprehensive survey of all aspects of environmental concern, makes clear that one major responsibility of local planning authorities is to ensure that development plans are drawn up in such a way as to take environmental considerations into account.
- 3.9 Development plans should address not just the traditional environmental considerations, such as Green Belt, landscape quality, nature conservation, heritage and conservation areas, but other environmental concerns such as global warming and the consumption of non-renewable resources.
- 3.10 Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 “Development Plans” (December 1999) also identifies other environmental considerations which should be addressed by plans, which include policies for the improvement of the physical environment, pollution and contaminated land, land drainage issues, water quality and groundwater resources, hazardous installations and policies designed to serve the conservation of natural beauty and amenity of land.

Strategy

3.11 The strategy adopted in this Local Plan recognises that the Plan's contribution to global issues and to sustainable development has limitations, but plan policies are subject to an environmental appraisal, which is summarised at Appendix 1. The Plan seeks to achieve the following broad objectives:

- (a) To balance the essential needs of development with environmental considerations and contribute to sustainable development solutions, particularly by directing new development to urban locations where possible;
- (b) To ensure that proposals for new development fully assess the environmental and infrastructure impact which arise, and where possible contribute to infrastructure or service improvements which development proposals make necessary;
- (c) To ensure that new development meets high standards of design and contributes to enhancements of the built environment, for the benefit of its users; and
- (d) To ensure that planning decisions for the development and use of land minimise the irreversible loss of valuable finite resources and where possible contribute to conservation of natural resources.

DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Making the Best Use of Urban Land

POLICY G1:

MAKING THE BEST USE OF URBAN LAND

The Borough Council will seek to make the best use of land in settlement areas, as defined on the Proposals Map, provided that at all times important characteristics and features are not prejudiced.

3.12 The Borough Council will make what contribution it can towards meeting the needs of the existing and future population by making the best use of land from within defined

settlement areas. However, whilst it is important that appropriate opportunities are taken to make full and effective use of land, it is also important that the character and amenity of established residential areas and valuable amenity open spaces within the urban environment are retained.

3.13 The policy reflects the Surrey Structure Plan 1994 which aims to consolidate development within the existing structure of the county as far as possible, making the best use of urban land, particularly derelict or under used land, as a means of relieving pressure on the countryside. In Surrey Heath there is no derelict land but a steady supply of small development sites is likely to continue to come forward from infill, redevelopment and conversions.

3.14 It is intended to maintain restraint on further business, industrial and commercial development with encouragement being given to the redevelopment of outworn industrial and commercial buildings, and mixed use schemes in Camberley town centre. The opportunities and commitments within the established settlement areas mean that there is no need to allocate yet more land for such purposes.

Impact of Development

POLICY G2:

IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals which will (either individually or cumulatively with others) lead to deterioration of the natural and built environment, infrastructure or services will not be permitted. Where appropriate, developers will be required to provide or contribute towards improvements or works to infrastructure necessitated by the development.

3.15 The Borough Council is committed to improving the environment and infrastructure of the Borough, through a partnership between the public and private sectors. The Council is concerned about the cumulative effect of new development, including the smaller residential developments, on the infrastructure of the Borough, particularly the highway network. All developments will be expected to make

adequate provision in terms of site related infrastructure, that is, where existing infrastructure is inadequate to cope with the proposed new development and it is possible to overcome that deficiency by way of condition attached to a planning permission or legal agreement, if the site is otherwise suitable for development. Where an identified shortfall exists over a wider area, developers may also be required to contribute via a legal agreement, to the upgrading and/or provision of new facilities, where development makes this necessary. Infrastructure in this context includes:

- (a) The transport network (eg highway junction improvements, road widening, footway and cycle lane improvements);
- (b) Utility services (eg surface water drainage, sewerage, sewage disposal etc);
- (c) Environmental features (eg new paving, street furniture, tree planting and other landscaping etc); and
- (d) Local social facilities (eg community buildings, public open space etc).

It may also be appropriate to seek contributions from developers towards the provision of additional places in local schools.

- 3.16 This policy reflects the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, (particularly at Policies EN3 “Infrastructure and Services” and EN4 “Planning Benefits”) and national guidance, particularly Circular 1/97 “Planning Obligations”, January 1997.

Environmental Assessment

- 3.17 For very large developments, or those having a significant environmental impact, the preparation of an environmental assessment is already a statutory requirement. Schedule 2 of the Department of the Environment Circular 15/88, “Environmental Assessment”, provides appropriate guidance.
- 3.18 Policy EN2 (Environmental Assessment) of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, also requires that in certain circumstances, prospective developers will need to supply appropriate environmental information in order for a proposal to be fully and properly considered. In an area like Surrey Heath with significant

environmental constraints there will be major development proposals, not subject to statutory environmental assessment, but which will need to be accompanied by supporting environmental information. Whilst, this will apply to any major proposal which is likely to have an adverse impact on the environment or place significant demands on infrastructure and services, it would be unduly onerous to expect such information provision on most proposals which are relatively small scale in nature.

Planning Benefits

POLICY G3:

PLANNING BENEFITS

Where appropriate, planning benefits that are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development will be sought from the developer, to achieve the objectives of the Local Plan.

- 3.19 The Council will, where planning conditions are deemed inappropriate, seek to secure a planning obligation by agreement to achieve the planning benefit being sought. Planning benefits will only be sought where they are directly related to the development being proposed. For example, to enable the development to go ahead, to secure related off-site works, to secure the provision of facilities required by the proposed development, to mitigate any impact or amenity losses, to achieve an acceptable mix of uses or to restrict the use of land which would have a detrimental impact on the environment. Planning benefits may be either in the form of the provision of the facility required by the development or where there is a clear opportunity to provide such a facility elsewhere, a financial contribution towards this provision in the near future. Planning benefits, for which the Council enters into an agreement, will meet the requirements for the proper use of ‘planning obligations’ set out in Annex B of DoE Circular 1/97 “Planning Obligations” (January 1997).

- 3.20 Examples of benefits which might be sought include: environmental improvements, improvement to public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes; provision of community, cultural, educational and leisure facilities, and enhancement schemes for nature conservation interests.

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- 3.21 The Secretary of State for the Environment has expressed concern about design issues and has launched a “Quality in Town and Country Initiative” with the express intent of raising awareness of the importance of design to the quality of life.
- 3.22 Design, particularly in the urban context may be defined as the relationship between different buildings, the relationship between buildings and streets, squares, parks and other spaces which make up the public domain, the nature and quality of the public domain, the relationship between buildings, open spaces and the movement patterns within them. The appearance and treatment of spaces between and around buildings is often of comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves.

Design Principles

POLICY G4:

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Borough Council will, in considering proposals for new development and redevelopment, ensure that:

- (a) The scale, mass, density, quality, character, materials and landscape design of development is compatible with the adjoining development and that in the surrounding area;**
- (b) In settlement areas, development should not be of a height that would appear incongruous;**
- (c) In the countryside, development will be restricted to two storeys unless the characteristics of the site and surrounding area are such that no harmful visual impact or harm to the area’s rural character would arise;**

- (d) Vehicular and servicing access is unobtrusive; and**
- (e) Special attention is given to the quality of public spaces.**

- 3.23 Surrey Heath is an area characterised by generally small scale, low rise development reflecting its largely rural character. It is important that new development should reflect the scale and form of the existing context. Planning applications for larger schemes should be accompanied by a statement on the design principles adopted for the site and its context having regard to the criteria set out in Policy G4. Height restrictions within Camberley town centre are referred to in Policy TC4.
- 3.24 Within the countryside it is recognised that developments for the purposes of agriculture and horticulture may not be able to meet these criteria. In considering such schemes the issue of need will be a material consideration which may override consideration of some of the criteria set out in Policy G4. The Borough Council recognises the role that Countryside Design Statements can play in promoting good design in rural settlements. It supports the principle of the preparation of Village Design Statements by rural communities and will determine what weight to give them on a case by case basis.

Design Considerations for Residential Areas

POLICY G5:

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR RESIDENTIAL AREAS

When considering planning applications for new residential development, the Borough Council will pay due regard to the principles established in the Surrey Design Guide.

- 3.25 The Surrey Design Guide provides a basis for considering the highway layout of new development. The Borough Council will expect applications for new residential development to meet the principles of the Surrey Design Guide.
- 3.26 In conservation areas and the areas designated as being of Urban Landscape Quality (Policy UE2) and Good Urban Character (Policy UE4) and on land adjoining listed buildings, the requirement is for new development to conform to the surroundings. In these areas the strict application of the Surrey Design Guide may not be appropriate.

Design Against Crime

POLICY G6:

DESIGN AGAINST CRIME

All new developments shall be designed with a view to reducing the likelihood of crime, by allowing for the surveillance of streets, footpaths and communal areas and the creation of areas of defensible space.

- 3.27 In designing new development, care should be taken to reduce the likelihood of crime, particularly opportunity crime. Planned or premeditated crime is less likely to be deterred by such design measures, although robust doors and window locks can deter all but the most resourceful burglar.
- 3.28 The principles of surveillance and territoriality are considered to be fundamental to design against crime. Surveillance means ensuring that the design and layout of buildings and estates allows for people to see, and thus monitor, communal areas such as the street, footpaths and open space as well as the front doors of other buildings. Adequate lighting is essential so as to allow for effective surveillance at night. The principle of territoriality is concerned with defining the various areas of public and private space. Generally, people will police and look after their own area of private space if it is satisfactorily defined so that members of the public, especially children, know when they are intruding on private property. This principle of “defensible space” can be extended from the small scale of a front garden to a residential cul-de-sac or a housing estate or industrial estate.
- 3.29 Certain basic design principles will need to be followed to ensure that the objectives of surveillance and territoriality are achieved. In particular:
- long areas of blank street frontage should be avoided;
 - buildings should be designed to allow for overlooking of streets, footpaths and public open space wherever possible;
 - separate traffic-segregated footpaths within new housing developments should be avoided unless they can be seen from nearby housing;
 - adequate lighting shall be provided to streets, footpaths and communal areas;
 - walls and other means shall be used to demarcate private space from the public realm where appropriate; and
 - the structure and specification of buildings and their components should be such as to deter crime.
- 3.30 The Borough Council will take account of the advice contained within Department of the Environment Circular 5/94, “Planning Out Crime” and will consult the Surrey Constabulary (Architectural Liaison Officer) when appropriate. Conflicts can arise between designing for crime prevention and the best appearance or ease of use of developments. In these cases, and where no acceptable alternative is possible, decisions will be made based upon the relative importance of each in the particular circumstances of the case.

Facilities for People with Disabilities

POLICY G7:

FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Borough Council will require all new developments open to the public, to include facilities and access arrangements for people with disabilities. Works to listed buildings, where new public access is required, will be expected to take account of access needs for people with disabilities. Any access provision will be expected to be undertaken without compromising the building's special interest. Exceptionally, planning policies may be relaxed where it is essential to make a listed building accessible to people with disabilities.

- 3.31 The Borough Council has a strong commitment to providing full facilities and opportunities for people with disabilities so as to help them integrate more fully into the community, both in terms of their work and leisure opportunities. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the Disabled Persons Act 1981, require the provision of suitable means of access for the disabled to public buildings wherever practicable and reasonable. Building Regulations also include requirements for access to and use of premises by people with disabilities. The Borough Council will also encourage appropriate provision for people with disabilities within existing public buildings.
- 3.32 It is important that special attention is given to entering and leaving buildings, the provision of parking spaces, widths of doorways, corridors and aisles, heights of service counters and desks, means of summoning assistance, provision of lifts, emergency exits and avoidance of restrictions to movement such as revolving doors. In addition, the provision of access for people with disabilities in areas of informal open space and recreational areas, on public rights-of-way and in the countryside will be encouraged.
- 3.33 When considering whether the access requirements for people with disabilities have been met, the Council will have regard to the Surrey

Access Forum's publication "Access for Disabled People - Guidance Notes".

- 3.34 In respect of listed buildings, consideration will also need to be given to Policy HE7 (Demolitions, Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings) and each proposal will need to be considered on its merits depending on the relative weights of the two factors. In principle, whenever alterations are proposed to gain access to or with a building open to the public, the opportunity to improve access for people with disabilities should be taken.

Telecommunication Masts and Satellite Antennas

POLICY G8:

TELECOMMUNICATIONS MASTS AND ANTENNAS

Development for non-network telecommunications masts and antennas will be permitted where there is no adverse impact on:

- (a) The visual appearance of the building;**
- (b) The surrounding area;**
- (c) The amenity of neighbouring properties;**
- (d) The character, appearance or setting of any listed buildings either within or in the vicinity of the site;**
- (e) The character and appearance of any Conservation Area either surrounding or in the vicinity of the site.**

The proposal should not result in any significant electrical interference.

The Borough Council will require mast sharing and the use of existing buildings and structures where reasonably possible.

The Borough Council will require the demolition of obsolete masts and removal of obsolete antennae.

Development for network telecommunications will be considered in accordance with Policy DP8 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994.

Account will be taken of the need to include additional structural capacity in

any proposed telecommunications mast to take account of the growing demands for network development.

- 3.35 The Borough Council recognises that there is a demand for satellite receiving dishes. Planning applications are only required for satellite antennas in certain circumstances. As the general environmental concern stems from poor selection or siting of a dish, or because of dish colour and appearance that contrast conspicuously with its background, permission will not normally be given for installations on the front walls and front roofs of buildings. Installation on the side or rear walls will be more acceptable where these parts of the buildings are not prominent in the street scene.
- 3.36 Guidance on satellite antennas is contained in “A Householders Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes” published by the Department of the Environment, available from Surrey Heath Borough Council. Most householder satellite dishes are “permitted development” and are unaffected by this policy.
- 3.37 The Government’s general policy for telecommunications as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 “Telecommunications” (December 1992), is to facilitate the growth of existing systems whilst being fully committed to environmental objectives, including well established objectives for the protection of countryside and urban areas. In Surrey Heath this will apply in particular to the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, proposed Special Protection Areas, to buildings of architectural and historic importance and to conservation areas.
- 3.38 In recent years there has been significant change in the telecommunications industry, rapid advances in technology and in the number of service providers. Modern telecommunications are not only important for businesses but can benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel and thereby reduce vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants.
- 3.39 In accordance with national policy the Borough Council will permit proposals for telecommunications development where the

details and its environmental impact are acceptable.

- 3.40 The siting of any other mast within part of the network may have an important effect on the positioning of others because each will usually need to be located centrally within its cell. Personal Communications Operators (PCN) will be encouraged to submit a comprehensive plan showing the location and type of facilities which will be required within each cell. On this basis the Borough Council can assess the environmental effects of the proposed network and avoid having to assess each mast in an ad hoc way.

Energy Conservation in Layout Designs

POLICY G9:

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Development proposals will be assessed against the need to conserve finite resources, and should incorporate energy saving measures wherever possible.

- 3.41 The conservation of energy is a strong feature of Government policy and is becoming a major theme in the international context, as it contributes to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases and use of more natural resources.
- 3.42 Where possible developers should seek to construct energy efficient buildings, making the most of potential layouts to maximise energy efficiency, through locating habitable rooms to suitable aspects and minimising heat loss through careful and effective designs.

Art in the Built Environment

POLICY G10:

ART IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Borough Council will seek the provision of new works of public art as part of the external environment of major developments in the following areas:

- (a) On major routes within the Borough;**
- (b) Within Camberley town centre, district or village centres; and**
- (c) Within or adjacent to areas of public open space.**

- 3.43 Public art includes a wide range of possibilities, such as sculpture, water features, mosaics, murals, decorative street furniture, ground surfaces, metalwork and woodcarving in the public realm for general enjoyment. The Borough Council recognises the contribution that art can make to the enjoyment of the environment. Through negotiation, the Borough Council will seek the provision of forms of art for enjoyment by the general public.
- 3.44 It is generally considered that works of public art will be provided only by major developments. For the purposes of this policy, major developments include schemes such as superstores, retail warehouses, business parks, some community uses and large scale re-developments within town centres, where the siting of these developments provides an opportunity for public art for the enjoyment of the public passing or using the site. This policy may not be applicable where listed buildings and their setting or Conservation Areas may be affected.

Areas of Special Control of Advertisements

- 3.45 The Borough Council will maintain the designated area of special control of advertisements and continually monitor and review the remainder of the Borough to assess whether the area needs to be modified. Surrey County Council designated the Area of Special Advertisement Control in 1971 and this was confirmed by the Secretary of State in 1972.

This area chiefly covers all the Borough except for Camberley, Bagshot, Lightwater, Mytchett and most of Frimley and Frimley Green. As part of the continuous monitoring of development, the Borough Council will continue to assess whether any changes to boundaries are needed. Within an Area of Special Control the permitted development rights regarding captive air balloons and illuminated advertisements are restricted and there are extra controls over the size of permitted signs. Plan G1 in Appendix 13 shows the designated areas.

Advertisements in Commercial Areas

POLICY G11:

ADVERTISEMENTS IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

The erection of advertisements on commercial premises will normally be supported provided they are considered essential for identifying the business concerned and that their scale, colour, number, materials and detailing are appropriate to both the character of the building and the adjoining area and are not prejudicial to public safety.

- 3.46 Subject to the above design criteria, advertisements will be acceptable within the commercial areas of the Borough. Outside these areas advertisements may be unacceptable on amenity or public safety grounds.
- 3.47 With the exception of the policy regarding the designated area of special control, none of the advertisement policies in the plan are intended to take away the rights incorporated in the current Advertisement Regulations.

Illuminated Advertisements

POLICY G12:

ILLUMINATED ADVERTISEMENTS

Outside the Area of Special Control of Advertisements, applications for illuminated advertisements will be considered against the following criteria:

- (a) Their scale, colour, number, materials and detailing are appropriate to the character of the building and adjoining area;**
- (b) They do not adversely affect the residential amenity of any properties in the surrounding area;**
- (c) They do not adversely affect any statutory or locally listed building, conservation area or designated area of “good urban character”; and**
- (d) They do not adversely affect public safety.**

- 3.48 Illuminated advertisements are an appropriate feature on commercial premises when their size or layout are such that there is a significant retail character and where there is no significant historic character or “good urban character” to be protected. Within the Area of Special Control of Advertisements the character of the area is such that illuminated advertisements are unlikely to be acceptable.

Advertisements on Hoardings

POLICY G13:

ADVERTISEMENTS ON HOARDINGS

The Borough Council will not permit advertisements on hoardings:

- (a) In the open countryside; or**
- (b) In a predominantly residential location; or**
- (c) Where it would prejudice the historic, architectural, landscape/townscape or other similar interest in a locality as identified within other policies of this Plan.**

- 3.49 This policy recognises that advertisements on hoardings will be unacceptable in those locations specified for visual amenity reasons.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

POLICY G14:

AREAS LIABLE TO FLOOD

In areas liable to flood, as shown on the Proposals Map, development (including the extension or redevelopment of existing properties), which after consultation with the Environment Agency, is considered likely to materially:

- (a) Impede the flow of flood water; or**
- (b) Increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; or**
- (c) Increase the number of people or properties at risk.**

will not be permitted.

Developers will, where found to be necessary, be required to make provision for adequate flood alleviation and prevention measures.

- 3.50 Concern has been expressed by the Environment Agency that a considerable amount of development has taken place on the flood plains of rivers resulting in people and property in these areas being subject to increased risk from flooding. Development also reduces the capacity of the available flood plain and impedes the flow of water, thereby increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. It is essential therefore to control further development in the flood plains of rivers.
- 3.51 This policy applies to all areas liable to flooding but has particular relevance to the catchment areas of the River Blackwater, the Mill Bourne (east of Chobham), the Bourne (south east of Chobham) and the Windle Brook (between Windlesham and Chobham).
- 3.52 This policy also applies to the rebuilding of properties, particularly where this would involve an increase in ground coverage.

Quality of Groundwater

POLICY G15:

QUALITY OF GROUNDWATER

Proposed developments which, after consultation with the Environment Agency, are found to pose an unacceptable risk to the quality of groundwater, will not be permitted.

- 3.53 Surrey Heath is located on a minor aquifer which is highly permeable and which in some cases may require protection from some forms of development such as industrial sites where toxic chemicals are used. In considering planning applications the Borough Council will rely upon the advice of the Environment Agency.

Development Impact on Watercourses

POLICY G16:

DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON WATERCOURSES

Development affecting rivers, canals and streams must safeguard their character and quality, including bank sides and adjoining habitats.

- 3.54 The Borough Council recognises that there is increasing concern over the quality of river environments. The river environment has a number of roles including as a source of water, as a recreational resource and as a habitat for wildlife. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that any proposed development does not adversely affect these roles. In considering proposals for development the Borough Council will consult with the Environment Agency, Thames Water, the Blackwater Valley Recreation and Countryside Management Service and other local authorities as appropriate. The Borough Council will support initiatives which seek to improve the quality of river environments.
- 3.55 Features which will be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of any proposals will include any linked or adjoining water

features eg. ponds, water meadows and also any trees which prefer wetter soils. Proposals must protect local wildlife and plant life from polluting activities

Surface Water Run Off

POLICY G17:

SURFACE WATER RUN OFF

Development which, after consultation with the Environment Agency, is found to result in levels of surface water run-off likely to increase the risk of flooding, must include appropriate attenuation or mitigation measures to the Borough Council's and the Environment Agency's satisfaction. The cost of such works, as well as the cost of any assessments of surface water drainage impacts required, and any long term monitoring and management, will be met by the developer.

- 3.56 Unless carefully sited and designed, development can increase run-off by the addition of impermeable surfaces. Any such flooding is usually downstream of the development. It is therefore important that hydrological surveys and mitigation measures are implemented before the development is completed. In addition such run off can include pollutants and silt, leading to silt deposition and damage to the river environment.

Notifiable Installations

POLICY G18:

NOTIFIABLE INSTALLATIONS

Proposals for development located within the vicinity of a notifiable installation which, after consultation with the Health and Safety Executive, is found to represent a risk to or be at risk from the notifiable installation, will not be permitted.

3.57 Notifiable installations are sites and pipelines which contain hazardous substances. Whilst such installations are subject to stringent controls under existing health and safety legislation, it is considered prudent to control the kinds of development permitted in the vicinity of these installations. The notifiable installations within Surrey Heath are: Johnson Wax, Frimley Green; British Gas, Camberley; British Gas pipeline Bramshill/Camberley; British Gas pipeline Miltons Hall/Horsell Common; Esso Oil Pipeline, Frimley Green/Lightwater/Chobham; and Government Oil Pipeline, Windlesham/Chobham.

Contaminated Land

POLICY G19:

CONTAMINATED LAND

Where development proposals affect land which is contaminated, or the Borough Council has reasonable grounds for believing may be contaminated, the Borough Council will consult with relevant experts and pollution control authorities. Permission will only be granted where the Borough Council is satisfied that there would be no risk to health or the environment, or remedial measures are proposed which would mitigate the effects of any contamination and ensure the site is suitable for its intended use.

3.58 Planning Policy Guidance Note 23, “Planning and Pollution Control” (July 1994), contains advice on the approach to sites which are contaminated through previous commercial uses, domestic or industrial landfill and old sewage works. Although contamination is subject to control under pollution control legislation, principally the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Environment Act 1995, the existence of contamination or its likely existence can be a material consideration to be taken into account in dealing with planning applications.

3.59 Contamination may give rise to hazards which put at risk people working on the site, the occupiers and users of the buildings and land. Contamination may escape from the site to

cause air or water pollution and may contaminate adjoining land.

3.60 Surrey Heath has only a limited history of contamination and sites allocated for future development are not thought to be contaminated. Nevertheless the responsibility for providing information on whether land is contaminated rests primarily with the developer of the site.

3.61 The Environment Act 1995, places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to assess contaminated land on the basis of “suitability of use”. When considering a planning application the Borough Council will obtain specialist advice where appropriate, and consult the Environment Agency. Should the degree of contamination be such that remedial action is required to safeguard future uses or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land, or protect any buildings or services from the hazards, then planning permission may be granted subject to appropriate conditions specifying the measures to be carried out. The prospective developer will be expected to provide all necessary information about the site to determine whether the measures proposed are suitable.

Noise

POLICY G20:

DEVELOPMENT AND NOISE

The Borough Council will not permit:

- (a) Development which causes an unacceptable degree of noise disturbance to noise sensitive development or to areas which are valued for their quietness;**
- (b) Noise sensitive development adjacent to noisy locations.**

- 3.62 Planning Policy Guidance Note 24, “Planning and Noise” (September 1994), suggests that development plans should provide some degree of certainty about the areas in which particular types of development will be acceptable and those in which special measures may be required in order to mitigate the impact of noise. The PPG sets out relevant considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications for noise sensitive development and introduces the concept of noise exposure categories (NEC) for residential development.
- 3.63 In considering proposals for housing development near a source of noise the Borough Council will determine into which of the four noise exposure categories the proposed site falls into, taking into account both day and night time noise levels. Category A refers to circumstances where noise is unlikely to be a determining factor. Where proposed housing development sites fall into Noise Exposure Category B, appropriate planning conditions are likely to be imposed to ensure adequate levels of protection against noise. Planning permission will not normally be granted for housing development where sites fall into Noise Exposure Category C, unless exceptionally there are very special circumstances to justify development. Planning permission will not be granted where a proposed site falls into Category D.
- 3.64 Where proposed development is the generator of noise, the Borough Council will expect the prospective developer to demonstrate that any noise impacts can be successfully mitigated.
- 3.65 There is a need to control floodlighting to ensure that, in particular, adjacent residential properties are not seriously affected. However, the light spillage from urban areas has also become a problem within rural areas. Floodlighting of schemes such as golf driving ranges, and sports pitches can seriously affect residential properties from light spillage and the disturbance arising from the activity. Some large scale developments such as business parks, or superstores may involve substantial lighting schemes on buildings and in car parks.
- 3.66 Very often all of these types of schemes are located on the edges of urban areas and may result in light spillage into rural areas which are traditionally unlit at night and valued for that quality.
- 3.67 In assessing such schemes, hours of use of floodlighting may have to be restricted to minimise nuisance at night; and other types of lighting may have to be designed to minimise light spillage, including downward direct lighting.
- 3.68 Advice contained in publications such as ‘the Institute of Lighting Engineers’ booklet “Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution (1944)” and the Council for the Protection of Rural England’s briefing paper “Light Pollution (1996)” will be taken into account in assessing proposals for lighting schemes.

Light Pollution

POLICY G21:

LIGHT POLLUTION

In considering proposals for development involving floodlighting or substantial lighting schemes, account will be taken of the effect on the character and amenity of the surrounding area in respect of associated disturbance, light spillage and illumination. Consideration will be given to restricting the hours of use.

CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

- 3.69 The protection and enhancement of the environment is a major thrust of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, particularly at Policy PE14, and this Local Plan. Whilst the policies relating to the countryside areas are largely protective in character, this Plan also contains positive policies encouraging environmental improvements and enhancements, with emphasis on areas and features which are of landscape or townscape importance or areas which have deteriorated but which are worthy of and capable of improvement.
- 3.70 Developers should always aim for high quality building and landscape design in all new developments. A well designed scheme that respects the environment can do much to make it more acceptable to the local community. The

Borough Council will, where appropriate, prepare planning briefs or other guidance to aid developers, drawing their attention to matters of importance such as site characteristics, infrastructure and other development requirements. Further guidance on design considerations is given in Annex A to PPG 1 “General Policy and Principles” (February 1997).

Nature Conservation and Protection of Species

POLICY G22:

PROTECTION OF SPECIES

Development and other land use changes having an adverse effect on species and habitats protected by appropriate legislation will not be permitted. Where development is permitted which may have an adverse effect on these species, the Borough Council will, through the use of conditions or planning agreements, require the developer to:

- (a) Facilitate the survival of individuals of the species; and**
- (b) Reduce disturbance to a minimum; or**
- (c) Where it is not possible to retain the species on their current site, to provide adequate alternative habitats.**

3.71 Some protected species have or need large territories over which to roam and as such, site specific designations are inappropriate and impracticable. Such species need to be protected where they occur, which may be in urban or rural areas. Facilitating their survival may include not only protecting their habitation eg. nest or sett, but also providing access to areas of forage. Where a species cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within a development, and where relocation is appropriate the developer should provide adequate alternative habitats. Adequate, alternative habitats are those which are sufficient to sustain at least the current level of population of a species.

- 3.72 On sites where protected species are thought likely to be present, prospective developers will be required to undertake surveys to identify species and habitats present and where appropriate to implement measures to minimise the impact of their development proposals. A simple example would be to provide for Barn Owls in a proposed conversion of a barn or other agricultural building.
- 3.73 The Borough Council, in coming to a view on development which affects protected species will do so in consultation with appropriate bodies such as English Nature and the Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- 3.74 Legislation covering the protection of species includes not only the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, but also the European Community Habitats and Species Directive 92/43. Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 “Nature Conservation” (October 1994) sets out relevant Government policy for nature conservation. It includes the EU directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409, which lists bird species to be protected, including the nightjar, woodlark and dartford warbler.

Green Corridors

POLICY G23:

GREEN CORRIDORS

The Borough Council will seek to ensure that any development in the vicinity of green corridors, as shown on the Proposals Map, preserves their landscape character. The Borough Council will encourage, where necessary, the enhancement of the character of the area through landscape design.

- 3.75 Several of the main routes through the Borough have been designated as green corridors where the Borough Council will seek to preserve and, where necessary, enhance the environment. These routes are either major traffic arteries (including the railways where appropriate) or routes with a particularly significant landscape value.
- 3.76 Within the urban areas, these green corridors are often of particular importance. They are largely tree-lined with deep grass verges. Parts

of these roads are more urban in appearance and adjacent properties suffer from the effects of high traffic flows and associated problems such as traffic noise. The Borough Council will seek to introduce landscape design in these areas wherever possible through the production of planning briefs and the exercise of its development control powers, and its own environmental enhancement programmes.

- 3.77 Within the rural areas, the planning restraint policies will generally make it more important to retain the open landscape nature of the green corridors and to effect the removal of any unsightly features. Where development is allowed, adequate landscape design will be required as part of any planning permission.

Retention of Trees

POLICY G24:

RETENTION OF TREES

The Borough Council will seek to retain any trees which make a significant contribution to the environment of a site, street or other area. Where retention of trees is not possible, the tree(s) should be replaced with good quality stock of an appropriate species.

3.78 Trees are an essential feature of the built and countryside environments. Individually or in groups, they make a valuable contribution to the visual amenity of an area.

3.79 Wherever possible, the Borough Council will seek to retain trees which make a significant contribution to the environment. However, it is recognised that in some cases tree loss will be inevitable. In these cases, replacement tree planting will be required as an integral part of any development. Trees which appear to be under threat may be protected by the serving of a Tree Preservation Order. Tree planting may not be appropriate in certain habitats, such as heathland and unimproved grassland

Tree Preservation

3.80 There are several hundred Tree Preservation Orders in this Borough. A Tree Preservation Order can be imposed by the Borough Council on individual trees, groups of trees or woodlands where it considers:

- (a) that the tree or trees are in good health;
- (b) that the tree or trees make a significant contribution to public amenity; and/or
- (c) that there is a potential threat to their long term retention.

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Landscaping on Development Sites

3.81 The treatment of unbuilt areas around a new development can contribute greatly to the impact the development makes on the neighbourhood. Sensitive landscape design can enhance the quality of the residential environment for occupants and adjoining residents. Careful consideration should be given to both the functional and aesthetic aspects of landscape design at the planning application stage and details of surface treatment and planting will be required for all new developments. Developers will be expected to make full use of existing site features in any proposed landscape design.

Tree Surveys and Protection Measures

3.82 The retention of established trees on a development site can help to soften the impact of new buildings. The Borough Council will, where relevant, require developers to provide details of the position of all trees, indicating their species, height, spread and trunk diameter measured 1 metre above ground level.

3.83 The tree survey should be carried out in accordance with the guidance in British Standard 5837, 1991. Additional planting and landscape design will often be required on development sites. Particular importance will be given to the retention of trees when considering planning applications and planning conditions will be attached to planning permissions to protect existing trees during and after site works. Layouts of proposed developments should not only incorporate important trees and tree groups but also allow sufficient space around them to cater for future growth.

Renewable Energy

POLICY G25:

RENEWABLE ENERGY SCHEMES

In assessing proposals for renewable energy schemes, the Borough Council will have particular regard to the following issues:

- (a) The immediate and wider impact of the proposed development on the landscape;**
- (b) The need to protect features and areas of natural, cultural, historical and archaeological interest;**
- (c) The measures that would be taken, both during and after construction, to minimise the impact of the development on local land use and residential amenity;**
- (d) The local and wider benefits that the proposal may bring;**
- (e) Certain renewable energy resources can only be harnessed where the resource occurs.**

3.84 The Government's policy is to stimulate the development of new and renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable in order to contribute to:

- diverse, secure and sustainable energy supplies;
- reduction in the emission of pollutants;
- encouragement of internationally competitive industries.

(Reference: "New and Renewable Energy: Future Prospects in the UK", Energy Paper 62, March 1994). The importance of the Council's role in working with the local community is recognised.

3.85 The Government has published Planning Policy Guidance Note 22 on "Renewable Energy" (February 1993) together with technical annexes, which set out in more detail the particular issues that local authorities should consider in determining such proposals.

- 3.86 The Council acknowledges that new and renewable energy sources can potentially contribute to energy needs in a significant and sustainable way. Renewable energy sources offer the hope of increasing diversity and security of supply, and of reducing harmful emissions to the environment.
- 3.87 The aim of the planning system is to secure economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land in the public interest. The Council's policies towards developing renewable energy sources must be weighed carefully with its continuing commitment to policies for protecting the local environment. The Council acknowledges the advice in PPG22 that proposals to harness renewable energy can display a variety of factors peculiar to the technology involved. Moreover, such schemes can have particular locational constraints since, in many cases, the resource can only be harnessed where it occurs. The Council will need to consider both the immediate impact of renewable energy projects on the local environment and their wider contribution to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Availability of Water Resources

POLICY G26:

AVAILABILITY OF WATER RESOURCES

Development which, after consultation with the Environment Agency, is found to have a requirement for water, for which adequate water resources do not exist, and cannot be provided without detriment to water quality, amenity or nature conservation, will not be permitted.

- 3.88 The development of water resources for water supply is becoming increasingly difficult. New developments should therefore be limited to locations where adequate water resources already exist, or where new provision can be made without adversely affecting existing abstraction, river flows, or water quality.

Environmentally Responsible Development

- 3.89 The Borough Council will where appropriate encourage developers to make use of materials which are recycled or are derived from sustainable sources and wherever possible recycle waste material from the construction process. The use of recycled materials and building materials derived from sustainable sources is now becoming accepted practice by the construction industry. This practice is supported by advice from organisations such as the Building Research Establishment. The recycling of waste materials from the construction process is now becoming recognised as good practice.

Article 4 Directions

- 3.90 The Borough Council will from time to time review the existing Article 4 Directions. Article 4 Directions are applied where the particular character or amenity of an area is under threat from development that would normally be "permitted development" under the General Permitted Development Order 1995. The Direction removes the permitted development rights referred to in the Order. Article 4 Directions are subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State. The following Article 4 Directions are in force in the Borough:

- (a) Rural area (east) - stationing of caravans;
- (b) In the area of Connaught Park, Bagshot - car boot sales;
- (c) Ford Road, Chobham - forestry building and works;
- (d) Ford Road, Chobham - caravan sites;
- (e) Ford Road, Chobham - fences and enclosures;
- (f) Ford Road, Chobham - agricultural buildings and works; and
- (g) Smiths Farm, Chobham - agricultural buildings and works.

Plan G2 in Appendix 13 shows the above areas.

Chapter 4

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- 4.1 This Plan defines settlement areas which serve to distinguish concentrated areas of housing and other development from land which is largely open in character, and which is designated as countryside either within or beyond the Green Belt. In Surrey Heath the nature of the town and village environments varies significantly between the smaller rural settlements and the much larger urban areas of Camberley and settlements in the west of the Borough.
- 4.2 To a greater or lesser extent the settlements defined on the Proposals Map have all been subject to urbanising influences. The Urban Environment policies apply therefore to all of the settlements in the Borough.
- 4.3 The environmental quality of settlements is shaped by a combination of factors, including the pattern and form of existing development, the extent of change in the built environment and how successfully new development blends in with its surroundings, the road system and traffic flows, the amount, type and location of open spaces and other facilities and the extent of trees and other natural features amongst others.
- 4.4 This chapter explains how the environmental quality of the settlement areas can be protected and enhanced. There is an emphasis on areas and features which are of townscape importance even where these have deteriorated but are still worthy of and capable of improvement. Typically these areas of townscape importance include green spaces within densely developed areas, well wooded low density residential areas and the Victorian and Edwardian areas of housing which once characterised the settlement areas.

Protection of Urban and Rural Settlements

- 4.5 The relevant objectives are as follows:
- (a) To make full and effective use of urban land to meet housing needs, particularly from conversions, from small and medium

sites and from unused, neglected and derelict land;

- (b) To avoid the loss of valuable open space in urban areas, for both recreation and amenity reasons, and in the interests of quality of life;
- (c) To ensure that the cumulative effects of development do not damage the character and amenity of established residential areas, and to avoid “town cramming”; and
- (d) To include density and other policies in local plans where the pressure for development and redevelopment is such as to threaten seriously the character of an established residential area which ought to be protected.

Surrey Structure Plan 1994

- 4.6 The Surrey Structure Plan 1994 reflects the advice of Government policies. In summary the Structure Plan seeks to achieve the following objectives:
- (a) To conserve and where possible enhance the character of urban areas, by identifying areas which require particular protection or enhancement or which make a particular contribution to the urban environment, at Policy PE10;
- (b) To identify open land in urban areas which contribute to the separate identity of communities and the structure of urban areas, to protect them from development and to protect urban open land which contributes to the character, environment and amenity of the area, provides essential recreational or community use or is of high ecological value, at Policy PE11;
- (c) To resist higher density development in areas identified as requiring protection or enhancement in the interests of environmental character, at Policy DP6; and
- (d) To promote environmental enhancement of towns and villages, through traffic calming and other traffic management measures, at Policy PE14.

Strategy

4.7 The strategy adopted in this Local Plan therefore draws upon, and fits into the approach adopted by Government advice and Structure Plan policies. The strategy recognises that whilst there is some potential for continuing small developments and re-developments for housing within settlement areas, Surrey Heath has very little neglected or under-used land and has no derelict land at all. Much of the open land which has not already been developed therefore has some importance locally for recreation and amenity reasons.

4.8 The strategy for town and village environments is therefore to identify:

- (a) Areas of distinctive environmental qualities and character which should be retained for the benefit of future generations;
- (b) Areas of urban open space which are of particular value for recreation, amenity or ecological reasons which should be protected from inappropriate development;
- (c) Areas of low density residential development where higher density development would be detrimental and out of character;

- (d) Areas of urban landscape value where important natural features should be retained and where possible enhanced;
- (e) Areas of particular built form where the distinctive local characteristics should not be lost; and
- (f) Areas where the residential environment should be enhanced by appropriate measures.

Green Spaces within Settlement Areas

POLICY UE1:

GREEN SPACES WITHIN SETTLEMENT AREAS

The Borough Council will not permit the loss of, or reduction in the size of the Green Spaces, as defined on the Proposals Map. The enhancement of the Green Spaces will be encouraged through appropriate management schemes. Proposals within Green Spaces for the operational requirements of existing schools and small extensions to other types of development will be acceptable provided that:

Insert photo No.2

- (a) Any adverse effect of the function of the Green Space is minimised; and**
- (b) There is no conflict with other policies of this Plan.**

- 4.9 There are no new opportunities to provide new large green spaces within the existing settlement areas. It is all the more important, therefore, to protect the best open spaces from fragmentation or incursion from development. Equally important is support for improved management of these areas and extending public access, where possible. Such spaces should be protected where they contribute to environmental quality regardless of the degree of usage, or whether public access is available to them. Appendix 4 lists the Green Spaces and explains the selection criteria.
- 4.10 Land designated in this Plan as a Green Space has one or more of the following functions:
- (a) For its visual amenity value;
 - (b) For its recreational value; and
 - (c) For its ecological value.
- 4.11 Whilst the loss of Green Spaces will be resisted it is recognised that, due to exceptional circumstances, a limited amount of development may be acceptable on Green Spaces comprising school grounds when this meets the operational requirements of the schools. Some Green Spaces, which have only a limited or no recreational function at present, have a potential contribution to make to meeting any identified deficiency in outdoor playing space in the locality. This potential will be an added factor in resisting the loss of Green Spaces.

Areas of Urban Landscape Quality

POLICY UE2:

AREAS OF URBAN LANDSCAPE QUALITY

Within Areas of Urban Landscape Quality, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will resist development which would result in the loss of existing landscape features and will encourage development which would enhance the existing appearance and character of these areas.

- 4.12 Part of the residential areas of the Borough have a local distinctiveness and are of high visual quality. It is intended to protect these areas from inappropriate forms of development. The Areas of Urban Landscape Quality are at:
- (a) Camberley;
 - (b) Frimley;
 - (c) Frimley Green; and
 - (d) Bagshot (two areas)
- 4.13 Trees and shrubs form an attractive part of the residential environment. Their colour, shape and variety help to soften the harshness of the urban environment. The Areas of Urban Landscape Quality feature very attractive mature landscapes which should be protected. The areas identified in the Proposals Map are typically areas of low density, detached housing, much of which is substantial in size. The landscape is heavily treed, with tree-lined streets and stand in large gardens to front and rear. The Borough Council will seek to protect the special environmental character of these areas, which are subject to strong development pressures, by ensuring that new development will retain the best of existing landscape features. The Borough Council will discourage large expanses of paved areas and wide paved footpaths which can create a harsh appearance and have a detrimental effect on the street scene.

Low Density Policy Areas

POLICY UE3:

LOW DENSITY POLICY AREAS

Within the low density policy areas of Camberley and Windlesham (Snows Ride), as defined on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will restrict the density of proposed housing development to within a range of 2.5 (or less) to 8.7 dwellings per hectare, as measured exclusive of surrounding roads. The Borough Council will determine the appropriate density of individual developments having regard to the individual circumstances of each case, including the prevailing density of the area, features of the site and the character of the surrounding area.

- 4.14 The defined areas are mainly low density developments which still retain a special and cohesive character of substantial and mainly detached dwellings in spacious grounds. The Borough Council will seek to maintain the distinct character of these areas by not permitting higher density development proposals.
- 4.15 To avoid undue rigidity this policy sets out a range of densities. The appropriate density level will depend upon the pattern of development in the locality as well as the prevailing density of the immediate area. In any event, the density of any new development should not exceed 8.7 dwellings per hectare.

Areas of Good Urban Character

POLICY UE4:

AREAS OF GOOD URBAN CHARACTER

Within the Areas of Good Urban Character, the Borough Council will permit new development provided that:

- (a) It complements its surroundings;**
- (b) It is designed as infill development respecting prevailing densities, the existing scale, massing and detailing of buildings in the area;**
- (c) It respects the relationship of existing buildings to the street scene and adjoining buildings; and**
- (d) Meets the requirements of Policy H17.**

- 4.16 Those areas defined as being of good urban character are primarily the areas developed during the Victorian era and the early part of the twentieth century. As such they represent an important part of Surrey Heath's historic growth and have a pattern and character of built form which is distinctive within the context of Camberley. They are typically areas of traditional vernacular buildings, often terraced or semi-detached with a traditional front/back relationship to the street that is semi-private, walled or fenced front gardens and secluded rear gardens. Buildings front onto the street in the traditional manner and the street pattern forms the basis for the primary relationship between built form and open space. The nature of these areas is such that on-street parking is often a necessary feature.
- 4.17 While a number of these buildings in these areas are worthy of inclusion in the List of Structures of Local Significance it is the local distinctiveness and character of the area rather than individual buildings that warrants special consideration. Those areas with a particularly high quality character have been designated as conservation areas, but the greater part of the designated areas of good urban character are not of sufficient merit to justify this status. Nevertheless it is important that new development should respect the existing character of these areas.

- 4.18 The Areas of Good Urban Character are located in Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley.
- 4.19 Surrey Structure Plan Policy PE10 (The Protection of Urban Character) provides support for the designation of these areas. Structure Plan Policy DP6 (Housing in Urban Areas) makes clear that increases in density should not normally be permitted, and that new dwellings should normally be constructed at a density appropriate to the character of the surrounding area and the individual circumstances of each site.
- 4.20 In order to protect the character of these areas strict application of the Surrey Design Guide may not be appropriate. For example the Borough Council will look to retain frontage development in these areas and will support traffic calming measures where possible to create an attractive and safe residential environment. These measures will be particularly appropriate where on-street parking is a characteristic of the area and where the option of providing off-street parking is either limited or would detract from the character of the area. Policy M3 addresses traffic management measures in residential areas.
- 4.21 The residential enhancement area contains for the most part sound properties with the potential to be more attractive environments. However, it fails to fulfil its potential due to high levels of through traffic, poor landscaping and intensive on-street parking. The Borough Council will seek to improve the environment of the area through traffic management measures including road closures to prevent commercial through traffic and subject to the availability of funding for other improvements to the area.
- 4.22 The improvements to this area are associated with the traffic and highway strategy for the Yorktown industrial estate, which adjoins this enhancement area, and generates part of the through traffic and on-street parking in these residential streets. Policy M9 and paragraph 11.52 sets out further details of the Yorktown highway strategy.

Residential Enhancement Areas

POLICY UE5:

WEST OF FRIMLEY ROAD RESIDENTIAL ENHANCEMENT AREA

Within the area defined on the Proposals Map as a Residential Enhancement Area, the Borough Council will secure improvements to the residential environment, by:

- (a) The introduction of traffic calming methods where necessary;**
- (b) The reduction or removal of through traffic where it currently causes amenity and/or safety problems;**
- (c) The introduction of trees and landscaping into the street scene where appropriate; and**
- (d) The improvement and harmonisation of on-street parking where it is an existing feature of the street scene.**

Chapter 5

HERITAGE

Introduction

- 5.1 The Borough's heritage includes 9 conservation areas, 173 listed buildings and 198 locally listed structures, three ancient monuments and other important archaeological remains, important parks and gardens and landscapes.
- 5.2 This rich variety of built development reflects the historic, social and economic development of the area. The villages, as one would expect in a largely rural area, are in the main much older than Camberley, now the major developed area. This is reflected in the historic built environment, many villages containing the stock of historic buildings and designated conservation areas. Camberley grew rapidly in the early 19th Century onwards following the establishment of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and much of its built heritage dates from this time, including that within the Royal Military Academy conservation area which is of very high quality.
- 5.3 Archaeology has an important role in understanding the evolution of our community. Archaeological and historic sites exist both above and below ground level. The sites are a unique and irreplaceable source of knowledge about our past. As well as archaeological remains, work is now ongoing in respect of historic landscapes and it is expected that areas will be identified during the plan period.
- 5.4 The Borough Council's role, as local planning authority, is to secure the conservation of the historic environment. As such a high priority is accorded to the protection and, wherever possible, enhancement of this valuable heritage, which is reflected in the policies below. Development proposals however cannot be considered solely in relation to this chapter, but will need to accord with other policies in the Plan and the Surrey Structure Plan 1994.
- 5.5 Surrey County Council are responsible for the Surrey Structure Plan and for maintaining the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). They also act as advisors to this Council on all heritage matters.
- 5.6 There are two central Government departments with responsibility for the administration of control over heritage matters in England, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Broadly speaking the DETR deals with matters closely linked with development control issues whilst the DCMS deals with aspects of conservation policy such as the listing of buildings, and scheduling of ancient monuments. Further details are given in Annex A of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, "Planning and the Historic Environment" (September 1994), and DOE Circular 20/92, "Responsibilities for Conservation Policy and Casework".
- 5.7 The major legislation in respect of the built heritage is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 together with any associated circulars and regulations. Statutory protection specifically for archaeological and historical sites is limited to monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979. The relevant Planning Policy Guidance Notes, 15 and 16, are outlined below.

Strategy

- 5.8 The strategy adopted in this local plan draws upon and fits into the approach advocated at national and strategic levels.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 "Planning and the Historic Environment"

- 5.9 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, "Planning and the Historic Environment" (September 1994) sets out the government's approach to the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. The government has committed itself to the concept of sustainable development. This has been described as "not sacrificing what future generations will value for the sake of short-term and often illusory gains" (Para. 1.3). This

concept has particular relevance in the preservation of the historic environment, which is irreplaceable, but cannot in practice be preserved unchanged. It is therefore essential to identify what is specified in the historic environment and provide policies to protect it, whilst allowing for the possibility of some change when acceptable.

- 5.10 The Local Plan includes policies which set out the criteria for the preservation of conservation areas, listed buildings and structures of local significance, to protect the Borough's heritage from inappropriate development and encourage high standards of design.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 "Archaeology and Planning"

- 5.11 Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 "Archaeology and Planning" (November 1990), gives guidance on the handling of archaeological remains and discoveries. Archaeological remains are irreplaceable, and in many cases are highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. A balance must be struck between the need for development and the interests of conservation of archaeological sites and remains. Archaeological remains identified and scheduled as being of national importance should normally be identified in local plans for preservation.
- 5.12 On sites where a site is likely to contain archaeological remains, developers should be advised of the need for an initial assessment of the likelihood of archaeological remains existing.
- 5.13 The local plan identifies known sites of archaeological importance and potential and outlines the procedures the Borough Council will require to ensure archaeological considerations are fully taken into account in the development process. Advice is also given on the requirements on sites outside defined sites of archaeological importance or potential.

Surrey Structure Plan 1994

- 5.14 Policies within the Surrey Structure Plan aim to conserve and enhance the County's inheritance of buildings, sites and historic landscape. Policies also provide for the conservation and enhancement of conservation

areas, the conservation of Areas of Historic Landscape Value and buildings of architectural or historic value.

- 5.15 A Surrey Heritage Strategy has been developed, which identifies important aspects of the county's heritage which should be preserved and promotes a co-operative approach to the development of programmes for their preservation. The Government's Environment White Paper "This Common Inheritance" (September 1990) proposed that local authorities should work together to consider their approach to the heritage.

Local Plan Strategy

- 5.16 The heritage strategy and objectives for this local plan are as follows:
- (a) To protect the best of the Borough's heritage for the benefit of future generations;
 - (b) To protect statutory listed buildings and structures of local significance from inappropriate development and alterations;
 - (c) To encourage high standards of design within conservation areas and in respect of historic buildings and features;
 - (d) To ensure the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas;
 - (e) To protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments from development;
 - (f) To protect areas of archaeological importance and ensure that developers provide adequate arrangements for proper investigation; and
 - (g) To protect historic landscapes, parks and gardens from inappropriate development and alterations.

Conservation Areas

- 5.17 Conservation areas are designated under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires local authorities to determine "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". There are nine designated conservation areas within the

Borough. These are:

- (a) Chobham (Village Centre);
- (b) Bagshot (Village Centre);
- (c) Bagshot (Church Road);
- (d) Basingstoke Canal;
- (e) Upper Gordon Road/Upper Park Road, Camberley;
- (f) Royal Military Academy/Staff College/ London Road frontage, Camberley;
- (g) Church Road/Kennel Lane, Windlesham;
- (h) Updown Hill, Windlesham;
- (i) Bagshot Park.

5.18 The Borough Council is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that areas of special architectural or historic interest are protected against inappropriate development or alterations. The designation of conservation areas ensures protection by requiring consent to be obtained for demolition, by limiting permitted development rights and by extending protection to trees. The importance given to preservation and enhancement in conservation areas means that local planning authorities are also obliged to require much higher and more detailed standards for the design of new developments than may be the case elsewhere.

5.19 It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than individual buildings which is important. Thus the character and appearance of an area is determined not only by the quality of individual buildings but their group value which will be enhanced by features such as building form and layout, materials, style and juxtaposition with open spaces.

POLICY HE1:

DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The Borough Council, in considering proposals for development in conservation areas, or outside but which would affect their setting, will permit development where:

- (a) There is no loss of buildings, trees, open spaces, gardens, walls and other local features which make a significant contribution to the character of the area;**
- (b) It is of a high standard of design and well detailed to be sympathetic to the scale, design, character, materials and plot size of adjoining buildings and the conservation area in general;**
- (c) The proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area;**
- (d) Significant views into and out of conservation areas will be safeguarded.**

5.20 The Borough Council will need to be satisfied that any new development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, before granting any approval. The loss of significant features will generally be opposed as it is likely they will have an historic character that cannot be replicated by development. The character of the area derives not only from buildings, but also from street patterns, building lines, roofscapes, open spaces and gardens, ground surfaces, trees, views, the “mix” of uses in the area and other essential features. In commercial areas this will include the quality of advertisements and shop fronts. High priority will be given to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of these areas. The conservation areas in Surrey Heath are varied in character and the Council will expect this distinctiveness to be respected in the detailed design of new proposals. Consequently, development must not only be appropriate to the character of these areas, as well as being high quality, well-designed buildings in their own right, but also preserve the area by making a positive contribution to the character, quality or appearance of the environment, or by

development which leaves the character and appearance unharmed.

- 5.21 To assist in the consideration of proposals, supplementary guidance, including a character appraisal of each conservation area will be produced and used when considering the appropriateness of new development proposals and their effect on the character and appearance of these areas.

POLICY HE2:

CHANGES OF USE IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Changes of use in conservation areas will only be permitted where they:

- (a) Are sympathetic to the character of both the building and the overall conservation area; and**
- (b) Do not lead to an undesirable intensification of activities in the area.**

- 5.22 The use of buildings and open spaces can be fundamental to the character of an area. Inappropriate changes of use can detract from that character in terms of both the alterations to the building/open space and the changed pattern and level of activities associated with the new use. Once a change of use has been permitted, it can be difficult to resist further minor changes and alterations that can be considered normal requirements of that use, but may nevertheless detract from the character of the conservation area.

- 5.23 The detailed design of a building is an important consideration in whether to allow development in a conservation area. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (September 1994), at paragraph 2.11 stresses that local planning authorities should expect developers to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special interest of the site or area, and to provide such written information or drawings as may be required for the proposal to be fully understood. In most circumstances outline planning applications would not provide sufficient information for the merits or otherwise of a proposal to be properly assessed. With certain proposals the potential impact of advertising or the use of materials

or landscaping can be so fundamental to the consideration of the proposal, that they cannot properly be left as reserved matters. Infill sites and other developments with a close relationship to adjoining buildings require full consideration of the proposed design in relation to its neighbours. Detailed drawings of adjoining buildings will be required, so that the proposed impact on the street scene can be assessed.

POLICY HE3:

DEMOLITION AND REPLACEMENT OF BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The Borough Council, in considering proposals for the demolition of a building in a conservation area, will apply the following criteria:

- (a) The demolition of a building which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area will not be permitted unless there is overwhelming evidence that it no longer has a viable use;**
- (b) In all cases the demolition of a building will not be permitted without first having approved the details of any replacement building, or use of the site.**

- 5.24 In order to protect the character and appearance of conservation areas most buildings, including part of a building, require consent for demolition from the local planning authority. In conservation areas the prime consideration is the effect of any works on the area as a whole. A building may not in itself be of special historic interest but it may well, when taken together with other buildings, contribute to the character or appearance of the street, town or village. Consideration must therefore be given to the effects of demolition on the building’s surroundings and on the area as a whole.
- 5.25 Consent for demolition will not be given unless there are clear, acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment of the site. The Borough Council will need to consider the merits of a proposed development in determining whether consent should be granted for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, and will need to be satisfied that the future

use of land will not detract from the conservation area before granting any consent for demolition.

- 5.26 The general presumption however, will be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.27 Where significant demolition is permitted it will normally be conditional upon demolition works not commencing until planning permission for the redevelopment has been granted and a contract made for the carrying out of the works. This is to avoid vacant sites which detract from the appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.28 Further advice is set out at Paragraphs 4.25-4.29 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment” (September 1994).

POLICY HE4:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The Borough Council will seek to enhance the character of conservation areas by:

- (a) Carrying out enhancement schemes; and**
- (b) Seeking the assistance of developers where appropriate to carry out improvements as part of any grant of planning permission.**

- 5.29 The streetscape and the treatment of the spaces between buildings can be as important to the character of a conservation area as the buildings themselves. The Borough Council is concerned to ensure that every effort is made to improve the quality of materials, street furniture and landscaping and the condition of their maintenance within conservation areas.
- 5.30 Where funding opportunities arise, the Borough Council will seek to reintroduce traditional surfacing materials and street furniture into these areas, and will be looking to the private sector to assist in the carrying out of improvements as part of any permission for development.

- 5.31 The Borough Council is obliged to prepare enhancement studies for designated conservation areas, where appropriate, so as to assess their character and the scope for enhancement.

Article 4 Directions in Conservation Areas

- 5.32 Incremental changes to properties within conservation areas can erode the characteristics which resulted in designation as a conservation area. The Council has powers to use Directions under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, to control certain classes of development which would otherwise not require explicit planning permission. Examples include the replacement of traditional windows and doors by modern joinery of unsympathetic design and the replacement of roof coverings with materials not in character with the conservation area. Where considered necessary to protect the character of a conservation area, the Borough Council will consider making such a direction to restrict development rights, subject if necessary to the approval of the Secretary of State.

POLICY HE5:

ADVERTISEMENTS AND SHOP FRONTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

The erection of advertisements and insertion of shop fronts will only be permitted where the scale, colour, materials, detailing and number are sympathetic to the character of both the building concerned and the conservation area in general. Internally illuminated signs will not be permitted in conservation areas. Where existing advertisements are considered to be detrimental to the character of the conservation area, the Borough Council will undertake the necessary discontinuance action to ensure their removal. Where shop-fronts are considered to be detrimental to the character of a conservation area, the Borough Council will seek their replacement with more sympathetic designs, as part of any planning permission that may be granted for change of use, alteration or addition.

- 5.33 Conservation areas that include commercial centres, for example Chobham and Bagshot, can include large numbers of properties which require advertisements and/or shop fronts so as to fulfil their function. As such the impact of advertising and shop fronts can be a significant factor in the character of that area. The use of traditional materials and appropriate scale and detailing can ensure that advertisements and shop fronts remain sympathetic to the character of the area.
- 5.34 Where existing signs with deemed consent are considered to be detrimental to the character of an area, and it is not possible to negotiate an acceptable design solution, the Borough Council will consider serving discontinuance notices to ensure their removal and replacement with more appropriate signs, in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992, as amended.

POLICY HE6:

VARIATION OF NORMAL PLANNING AND HIGHWAY REQUIREMENTS

The Borough Council will consider variation of the normal planning and highway standards where this would assist the retention and preservation of the character of conservation areas and listed buildings, as long as such variation is compatible with acceptable safety and amenity standards.

- 5.35 Normal building, planning and highway standards such as those in this Plan and in the Surrey Design Guide are designed primarily with regard to new building and engineering requirements. The application of these standards to a historic building can lead to the partial or total destruction of the character of that building. Building regulations allow a more flexible approach to be adopted and local planning authorities have the discretion to relax mandatory standards where their strict application would be unreasonable. The Borough Council will adopt the same approach for planning and highway standards.

Listed Buildings

POLICY HE7:

DEMOLITIONS, ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

The Borough Council will seek to retain and preserve the stock of listed buildings and will apply the following criteria in relation to proposals affecting them:

- (a) The demolition or part demolition of listed buildings or removal of their external or internal features of character will not normally be permitted;**
- (b) Alterations and additions to listed buildings will only be permitted where these respect and reflect the scale, materials, colour and other character aspects of the building concerned; and**
- (c) Alterations and additions to listed buildings will only be permitted where they do not detract from the character or setting of the building concerned, particularly with regard to its surrounding gardens, landscape, street scene or relationship to adjoining buildings or significant views.**

- 5.36 Statutory listed buildings are defined as buildings being of special architectural or historic interest and are defined with regard to a set of criteria established by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, and now the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The process of listing such buildings is carried out by English Heritage on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. There are some 173 listed buildings within the Borough.
- 5.37 Any works involving the demolition of any part of a listed building, internally or externally, or affecting the character of the building, require listed building consent from the local planning authority. In accordance with PPG15, "Planning and the Historic Environment" (September 1994), justification of the proposals will be required to explain, or show, why works which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary. This should be in the form of a clear

statement, but in some cases, usually involving major works, an impact assessment will be required. While alterations and additions may be acceptable, it is important to ensure that they are subordinate to and in character with the listed building.

- 5.38 When considering access to and within a listed building, consideration should be given to the needs of people with disabilities. The application of this policy should be considered with that of Policy G7 - Facilities for People with Disabilities.
- 5.39 Minor additions will require Listed Building Consent when they affect the character of a listed building. Such additions include satellite dishes, meter boxes and burglar alarms. Advice should be sought from the Borough Council.

Listed Buildings: Full Detailed Applications

- 5.40 The Borough Council will require planning applications for development likely to affect a listed building and/or its setting, to be supported by detailed information of the proposed development and/or alterations so as to allow full consideration of the effects on the listed building.
- 5.41 It is considered that this degree of information is necessary to allow for full consideration of applications and to ensure that the listed building is not adversely affected. Much of the value of a listed building lies in not only the architectural and historic detailing found within and on the exterior of such buildings, but also in the building being retained in suitable usage and within its original setting. Applicants must be able to justify any proposals. The justification should show why works which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary. Outline applications do not usually contain the level of detail required to assess the physical and visual impact of a development proposal on a listed building or its setting.
- 5.42 There are no historic buildings in the Borough which are also scheduled ancient monuments or within County Sites of Archaeological Importance. Nevertheless many listed buildings are either of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains

archaeological remains. Sometimes it can be difficult to tell if, or how, proposals will affect historic remains prior to the commencement of the works. In considering proposals for works to listed buildings, the Borough Council will request, where appropriate, an archaeological assessment of the proposals before applications are determined. In granting planning permission, the Borough Council will consider appropriate conditions to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for recording remains that would be lost in the course of works.

- 5.43 The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England must be notified of all proposals to demolish (in whole or part) listed buildings; and allowed access to buildings which it wishes to record before demolition takes place.
- 5.44 In addition, applicants may be required, in cases of alteration or demolition, to arrange for the recording of features that would be destroyed in the course of the works. This may include the recording of features which are not apparent at the time that consent is granted. In some cases exploratory opening up, with Listed Building Consent as necessary, may be required, before consent for the main works is considered.
- 5.45 Even when no such conditions are attached, works to listed buildings may lead to hidden features of interest being revealed. These should be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority.

POLICY HE8:

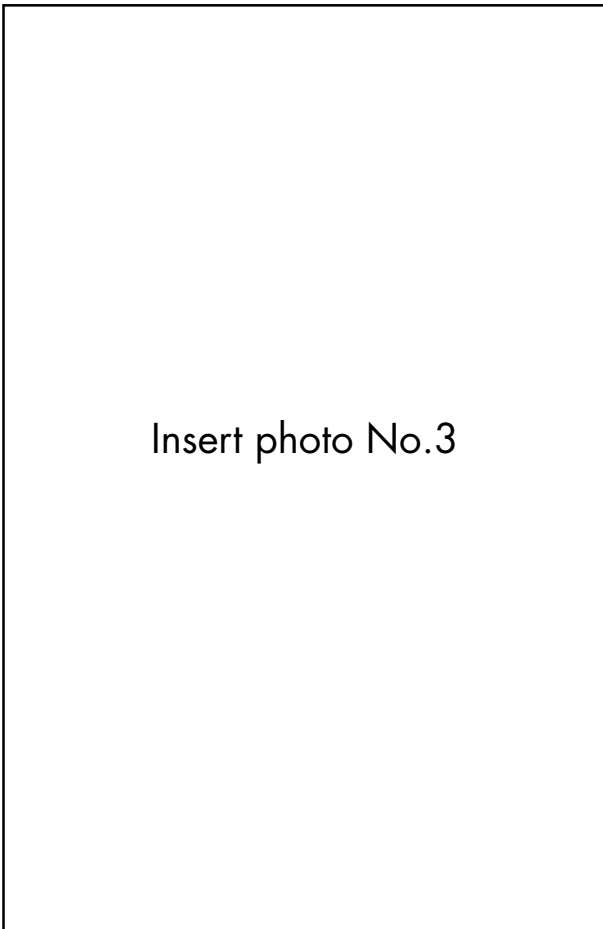
CHANGE OF USE OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Wherever possible, listed buildings should be maintained in the use for which they were originally designed. Where this is not feasible and a change of use is required to ensure a building's preservation, the Borough Council will only permit changes of use that:

- (a) Do not detract from the character of the building; and**
- (b) Do not damage or conceal internal architectural features or compromise significant volumes of internal space.**

5.46 The character of listed buildings is invariably protected best when the building remains in the use for which it was originally designed. Inappropriate changes of use involving subdivision of rooms, lowering ceiling heights, strengthening floors and other changes often leads to the removal or concealment of historic features and destroys the integrity and proportions of the internal spaces. The Borough Council will require detailed factual evidence including, where appropriate, a financial appraisal, before allowing any change of use.

5.47 The setting of a listed building and its significance in the street scene can be as important to the character of the building as the structure itself. This is recognised by the Secretary of State and developments within the curtilage of a listed building require listed building consent, while those considered to be affecting the setting require advertising and notification to English Heritage (in certain cases). The Borough Council will need to be satisfied that any development that may be outside the curtilage, but nevertheless affects the setting of a listed building, does not adversely affect that setting.



The Local List

POLICY HE10:

STRUCTURES OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Borough Council will maintain a list of structures which it considers to be of local architectural or historic significance. The list is to be reviewed periodically with a view to amendments or alterations. The Borough Council will seek to retain and preserve the stock of structures on the local list and will apply the following criteria in relation to proposals affecting them:

- (a) Works of repair, alterations and additions to structures of local significance should be sympathetic to, and in character with, the structure; and**
- (b) Alterations and additions to structures of local significance or development within their curtilage should not detract from the character or setting of the building concerned, particularly with regard to its surrounding gardens, landscape, street scene or relationship to adjoining buildings or significant views.**

POLICY HE9:

DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Any new development affecting the setting of a listed building by virtue of its proximity or its impact on significant views will only be permitted if its design, location and massing is sympathetic to that of the listed building.

- 5.48 The statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest is defined with reference to standards of national significance and pays no regard to the local character, history and architecture of individual areas. The emphasis is very strongly in favour of buildings constructed before 1840. However, much of the historic development, particularly at the western end of the Borough, took place during the Victorian period. The result is that many fine buildings and structures that represent the early growth of areas like Camberley are unprotected by the statutory listing process. These properties are often substantial and set in large grounds. More recent development, surrounding these properties often make them unsuitable for conservation area status. Intense pressures for change and to accommodate development is a constant threat to these structures and their contribution to the local character.
- 5.49 Local listing provides recognition that there are a number of buildings and structures for which every effort should be made to see them retained. Where proposals are made to demolish locally listed structures, the Borough Council will seek detailed justification why the existing building or structure cannot be retained in an appropriate use.

Grants for Historic Buildings

- 5.50 The Borough Council recognises the enhanced costs of certain repairs to historic buildings by virtue of the materials and higher standards of workmanship required. When resources permit, the Borough Council may be prepared to make available discretionary grants for repairs and/or maintenance normally up to a maximum of 10% of the total cost. Priority for grants would be given for works to Listed Buildings. Grant aid may be available from other sources.

Advertisements and Shop Fronts

POLICY HE11:

ADVERTISEMENTS AND SHOP FRONTS ON LISTED BUILDINGS

The erection of advertisements and insertion of new or replacement shop-fronts on listed buildings will not be permitted, except where the building is in commercial use and within an established commercial area. In these circumstances the Borough Council may allow the erection of advertising considered necessary for the purpose of identifying the business of that premises subject to the normal considerations of control in the interests of amenity and public safety, provided that the following criteria are complied with:

- (a) The scale, colour, materials, detailing and number of signs are sympathetic to the character of the listed building; and**
- (b) The signs do not detract from or conceal any significant architectural features; and**
- (c) Internally illuminated signs will not normally be permitted on listed buildings.**

Where existing advertisements are considered to be detrimental to the character of a listed building, the Borough Council will undertake the necessary discontinuance action to ensure their removal.

5.51 Where advertisements and shop fronts are necessary on listed buildings, the Borough Council will require them to be in character with the building, modest in nature and normally use 'natural' or 'traditional' materials. Internally illuminated signs would only be acceptable where such advertising is appropriate to the building concerned. Projecting signs and internally illuminated signs will not normally be acceptable, although hanging signs, appropriately detailed, may be acceptable, depending upon the character of the building and adjoining area.

5.52 Features of historic importance, such as shop signs, on high boards and old lettering should be retained 'in situ' whenever possible. Listed building consent will be required for their removal.

POLICY HE12:

SHOP BLINDS AND SECURITY GRILLES

The Borough Council will not permit the installation of modern plastic canopies on listed buildings and shop fronts in conservation areas. In addition the installation of external steel roller shutters will not be permitted on listed buildings and shop fronts in conservation areas.

5.53 The Borough Council recognises the need for the security of shop fronts. However, where historic buildings and areas are concerned, particular regard must be given to the aesthetics and amenities of the building and area, and care must be taken not to damage important architectural features. Laminated glass, internal grilles, and external grilles may be acceptable, subject to the necessary consents.

Sites of Archaeological Importance

POLICY HE13:

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND COUNTY SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

There will be a presumption against any development which will adversely affect scheduled ancient monuments including their site and setting, and county sites of archaeological importance, as defined on the Proposals Map. The Borough Council will encourage the management and interpretation of such sites to develop their educational and recreational potential.

5.54 The Borough contains four ancient monuments which are statutorily protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Schedule of Ancient Monuments is compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Scheduled ancient monuments are of national importance and any proposal affecting the site or setting requires an application for their ancient monument consent to be made to the Secretary of State. In considering proposals for development which are likely to affect the site of a scheduled ancient monument or other site of archaeological importance, the Borough Council will consult English Heritage and Surrey County Council as appropriate.

5.55 County Sites of Archaeological Importance are compiled by Surrey County Council and comprise those sites where the County Archaeologist is aware of evidence of archaeological interest. Archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource vulnerable to damage and destruction. In considering proposals for development regard will be had to the guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, "Archaeology and Planning" (November 1990).

5.56 The information currently available on these sites is stored in the County Sites and Monument Record (SMR) maintained by Surrey County Council.

POLICY HE14:

AREAS OF HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

In considering proposals for development within areas of high archaeological potential, as defined on the Proposals Map, the Borough Council will, in consultation with Surrey County Council:

- (a) Request that an initial assessment of the archaeological value of the site be submitted as part of any planning application; and**
- (b) Where as a result of the initial assessment important archaeological remains are considered to exist, request the developer to arrange an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out prior to the determination of any planning application; and**
- (c) Where important archaeological remains are found to exist and preservation of the remains in situ is not justified, seek agreement for a full archaeological investigation of the site in accordance with a scheme of work, such scheme to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority prior to the granting of planning permission; and**
- (d) Where remains are to be left in situ, impose conditions or seek agreement, where appropriate, to this effect and ensure that damage to the remains is minimal or will be avoided; and**
- (e) Require that the results of the investigation and any excavation be made available for display at either the Surrey Heath Museum or other suitable location.**

5.57 The areas defined as being of high archaeological potential are those when the County Archaeologist has good reason to suspect that significant finds may be unearthed by any disturbance of the ground. These areas will be subject to revision from time to time as a result of further research. Most areas of high archaeological potential are recorded on the Surrey County Sites and Monuments Record which provides information about the location of important archaeological remains throughout the county. Areas of high archaeological

potential have also been identified in Bisley, Frimley and Windlesham, covering the areas of land believed to form the original village centres, which have come into existence since AD 1100.

- 5.58 In areas of high archaeological potential prospective developers should consult the Borough Council at the earliest opportunity. A qualified archaeologist appointed by the developer should produce an initial assessment of the site which evaluates its archaeological value and what, if any, further field evaluation is required. Such an evaluation should include an assessment of the impact of the development upon the preservation of any archaeological remains enabling their preservation to be secured if justified. In considering proposals for development, the layout and positioning of the proposals should avoid damage to, or result in only minimal disturbance to, archaeological remains. The Borough Council will impose conditions or seek legal agreements to this effect. Full archaeological excavation of the site should only be considered if there is an overriding case for the development of the site and destruction of any remains is unavoidable. The Borough Council will consult Surrey County Council and English Heritage as appropriate on such matters having regard to Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 “Archaeology and Planning” (November 1990).
- 5.59 It is considered appropriate that any significant finds should be offered first to Surrey Heath Borough Council Museum. If not required by the museum the finds should preferably be placed on public display in the local area or as part of the development permitted on the site. This publicity for the results of excavations will help to encourage and develop the educational and recreational potential of archaeological sites and ancient monuments through management and interpretation.

POLICY HE15:

SITES OUTSIDE AREAS OF HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Outside the areas of high archaeological potential, the Borough Council may request, where appropriate, that an initial assessment of the site for archaeological potential be submitted as part of any planning application. Archaeological assessment and, where appropriate, field evaluation will be required prior to development on sites of 0.4 ha or more. Where evidence of significant archaeological remains is found then the criteria set out in Policy HE14 will apply.

- 5.60 Outside of the designated areas of high archaeological potential it is less likely that finds of major importance will occur. Unexpected remains may still occur, however, and they are clearly more likely on large scale developments (0.4 ha or more). In these cases, the County Archaeologist will be consulted and developers will be required to carry out an initial archaeological assessment and, where appropriate, field evaluation. Where archaeological remains are identified which cannot be preserved in situ, proper archaeological investigation will be required prior to development.
- 5.61 An “Archaeology Guidance Note” is in preparation which will provide further details of how the Borough Council will deal with planning applications which may affect archaeological remains.

Historic Parks and Gardens

POLICY HE16:

HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

The Borough Council will seek to retain, protect and conserve and where necessary encourage the sensitive restoration of parks and gardens of special historic interest. Particular emphasis will be placed on the need to secure the preservation of those gardens which are considered to be most valuable by virtue of their contribution to the national heritage or their scarcity. In all cases, the following criteria will apply in relation to proposals affecting them:

- (a) Development within or adjoining an historic park or garden which detracts from its character or appearance will not be permitted;**
 - (b) Development resulting in unsympathetic sub-division will not be permitted;**
 - (c) Development which results in the loss, damage or alteration of particular features of architectural or historic interest will not be permitted;**
 - (d) Development will be required to preserve existing views into and from historic parks and gardens.**
- 5.62 English Heritage is responsible for the compilation of a Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Such gardens are not statutorily protected but their inclusion in the register highlights their importance as part of our heritage.
- 5.63 Within Surrey Heath, Bagshot Park is included on the Register as a Grade II site, which accords it Special Historic Interest. In addition, a submission has been made to English Heritage seeking the inclusion of Chobham Place. As more becomes known about the Borough’s heritage of historic gardens, through the work of organisations such as the Surrey Gardens Trust, new gardens may be included on the register. Surrey County Council are also compiling a register, to include those gardens of county-wide rather than national importance.

- 5.64 Also within Surrey Heath there are a number of important gardens, often, for example, within the curtilage of a listed building, which are not specifically protected. They usually help form the setting of the listed building but are not themselves given statutory protection, although existing or proposed structures within them may be subject to control.
- 5.65 When determining applications which may affect a historic garden, the Borough Council will consult and have regard to the advice of the Surrey County Council's Historic Gardens Officer. Particular features of architectural or historic interest will be those determined and identified by English Heritage or Surrey County Council.
- 5.66 Policy RE15 identifies specific areas of landscape importance because of their special landscape value.

Areas of Historic Landscape Value

- 5.67 No areas of historic landscape value have yet been formally identified for Surrey Heath in accordance with PE12 of Surrey Structure Plan 1994. Research and survey work is currently being undertaken by Surrey County Council. It is likely that areas will come forward during the Plan period and if adopted by the Borough Council for development control purposes will be a material matter in the consideration of applications for development. Until such time as this Plan is reviewed areas identified as being of Historic Landscape Value will also be afforded protection under Policy RE15, Areas of Landscape Importance.

Chapter 6 RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

- 6.1 The rural areas of the Borough are valued for their own sake and for the important environmental assets they contain. These assets include agricultural land, areas of nature conservation and landscape importance. The Local Plan aims to continue to protect the character of the countryside by retaining the established Green Belt policies over the eastern half of the Borough and designation of the countryside beyond the Green Belt policies over the western rural areas.
- 6.2 The Local Plan also recognises that there are pressures leading to a more intensive use of the rural areas as places of employment and for recreation purposes. The diversification of agriculture, the conversion of buildings for commercial and other uses and the increasing demands of recreation in the countryside are encouraging change. These pressures provide opportunities to maintain the healthy rural life and economy of Surrey Heath.

Strategy

- 6.3 The strategy adopted in this local plan draws upon, and fits into the approach advocated at national and strategic level.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 “Green Belts” (January 1995)

- 6.4 The Green Belt has a fundamental role. PPG2 sets out the purposes of the Green Belt as being:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 “The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development” (February 1997)

- 6.5 The countryside has been subject to structural changes in the past 30 years, with changes in the nature of employment as a result of declining opportunities in agriculture. This PPG advises that it is important to sustain the process of diversification in the countryside and to accommodate change.
- 6.6 At the same time, the countryside should be conserved for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors.
- 6.7 When preparing development plans, local planning authorities should take account of any special designations including Green Belts, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, historic and archaeological sites and locally devised designations. Plans should then weigh the following factors:
- the need to encourage rural enterprise;
 - the need to protect landscape, wildlife habitats and historic features;
 - the quality and versatility of land for use in agriculture, forestry and other rural enterprises; and
 - the need to protect other non-renewable resources.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 “Nature Conservation” (October 1994)

- 6.8 PPG9 sets out the principles that apply to the integration of nature conservation priorities and land use planning. Local plans should identify relevant international, national and local nature conservation interests, and ensure that the protection and enhancement of these interests is properly provided for in local plans, with particular emphasis on the strength of protection afforded to international designations.

6.9 The Government’s objectives for nature conservation, as set out in PPG9, are to ensure that its policies contribute to the conservation of British wildlife and its habitats. Where conflict between development and conservation issues is unavoidable, any adverse effects on wildlife should be minimised.

Surrey Structure Plan 1994

6.10 Policies within the Surrey Structure Plan 1994 aim to protect major valued environmental characteristics and assets of Surrey. Policy PE1 defines the Green Belt boundaries within Surrey and establishes that such boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. Other policies seek to protect other areas of landscape, ecological or amenity value.

Surrey Countryside Strategy

6.11 The Surrey Countryside Strategy was first drawn up in 1991 as a vehicle for securing agreement and co-operation on actions to deal with issues facing Surrey’s countryside. The Strategy has been regularly reviewed, most recently in 1996.

6.12 The revised aim of the Strategy, as set out in the 1996 Review is:

“To ensure that the character and diversity of Surrey’s countryside is conserved, is enhanced through appropriate management, and is not prejudiced by actions necessary to promote the economic and social well-being of the rural community, thereby enabling residents and visitors alike to enjoy and appreciate its qualities now and in the future”.

Local Plan Strategy

6.13 The Local Plan rural environment strategy is as follows:

- (a) To provide a policy framework to ensure that the best of the Borough’s rural environment is retained for the benefit of future generations;
- (b) To identify the Green Belt and Countryside beyond the Green Belt and protect these areas from inappropriate development;

- (c) To identify the character of the countryside and settlements within it, including areas of landscape value, and set out policies for their protection;
- (d) To identify the Borough’s best natural environmental assets, including those of nature conservation interest and to set out policies for their protection;
- (e) To provide guidance for new development in the countryside, including extensions to existing buildings, re-use and conversion of existing buildings and rural diversification.

The Green Belt

POLICY RE1:

THE GREEN BELT

Within the Borough an area of Green Belt will be maintained as defined on the Proposals Map.

6.14 The outer Green Belt boundary remains the same as in the adopted Surrey Heath Local Plan 1994. Policy PE1 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994 re-confirmed the outer Green Belt boundary as a “general line extending southwards from a point west of Windlesham, passing west of Knaphill...”.

6.15 PPG2 states:

“The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead.” (Paragraph 2.1)

6.16 The settlement of Chobham is shown as being “washed over” by Green Belt notation, as advised in PPG2 “Green Belts”. Chobham is considered to have a special character by virtue of its historic interest, which is recognised by the designation of a Conservation Area in Chobham High Street, and by the presence of numerous listed buildings in Chobham. Within the settlement area of Chobham it is proposed to allow no new building other than for the purposes of agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport and recreation, limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing buildings and only limited infilling and limited affordable housing for local community needs.

Policies E5 and H9 set out the employment and housing policies to be applied in rural settlements, including Chobham.

POLICY RE2:

DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

Within the Green Belt, there will be a general presumption against inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances.

1. The construction of buildings is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

- (a) Agriculture or forestry;**
- (b) Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;**
- (c) The replacement or extension of existing dwellings in accordance with Policy RE5;**
- (d) The re-use of rural buildings in accordance with Policy RE6;**
- (e) Limited infilling and small scale affordable housing in the settlement area of Chobham in accordance with Policies E5 and H9.**
- (f) The infilling or redevelopment of the Major Developed Sites identified in this Plan in accordance with Policies RE17 and M21.**

2. The material change of use of land and the carrying out of engineering and other operations are inappropriate development unless they maintain the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

Development proposals which are otherwise appropriate in the Green Belt, should not be detrimental to the visual amenity and nature conservation interests of the Green Belt.

6.17 Policy RE2 reflects the strict restraint approach for the Green Belt as set out in Policy PE2 of the approved Surrey Structure Plan 1994. Very special circumstances will need to be demonstrated to justify an exception to the normal presumption against planning permission.

6.18 PPG2 makes clear that:

“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”. (Paragraph 3.2)

6.19 Housing development is not normally considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt. However, the “Surrey Heath Borough Council Housing Needs Survey, February 1996”, gave an indication of the need for affordable housing within the rural villages. Information is not available for individual villages, but surveys to establish housing needs in individual villages within the Green Belt may indicate special considerations to justify the provision of affordable housing. More information on affordable housing can be found in the Housing chapter.

6.20 There may be circumstances where an essential need may arise for the provision of a dwelling in the countryside which cannot be met in a settlement or through the conversion of an existing building. Development will be considered taking into account guidance provided in PPG7, Annex I. Where it is essential for an agricultural or forestry worker to live close to their place of work a new dwelling may be permitted. To establish the need for a dwelling a functional test will be applied. When a functional test is inconclusive a financial test will be carried out. Normal planning considerations concerning amongst others access, design, and siting will also be applied.

6.21 Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation could include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation, or small stables provided that they are genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Countryside Beyond the Green Belt

POLICY RE3:

COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE GREEN BELT

The Countryside Beyond the Green Belt, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be protected for its own sake. In this area development will be permitted only for:

- (a) Agriculture and forestry;**
- (b) Outdoor sport and recreational facilities;**
- (c) Gypsy caravan sites;**
- (d) The replacement or extension of existing dwellings in accordance with Policy RE5;**
- (e) The re-use of rural buildings in accordance with Policy RE6;**
- (f) The replacement or extension of existing business premises, provided that there would be no significant change in the scale of the building;**
- (g) Other uses of land which preserve the openness of the countryside.**

Development will not be permitted if it would detract from the character, appearance or nature conservation interests of the countryside; interference with the safe movement of traffic; or give rise to difficulties in the provision of public services.

6.22 This Policy applies to areas of open countryside which separate the settlements of Camberley, Frimley and Frimley Green from Mytchett, Deepcut, Bagshot and Lightwater. The land not only provides an important countryside gap between developed areas, but provides important areas for informal recreation and contains Sites of Special Scientific Interest, proposed Special Protection Areas and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, as set out in Policies RE10, RE11 and RE12. The major part of the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt is owned by the Ministry of Defence and is in active use by the army, or is owned by the Crown.

- 6.23 The advice given in Para 6.20 relating to the essential need for the provision of a dwelling in the countryside, is also applicable in areas of Countryside Beyond the Green Belt.
- 6.24 Within the countryside, there are a number of sensitive gaps between settlements where there is a danger of coalescence. Such coalescence would be undesirable as it would harm the separate identity of settlements.

The Blackwater Valley

POLICY RE4:

BLACKWATER VALLEY STRATEGIC GAP

The Blackwater Valley Strategic Gap, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be maintained in order to prevent the coalescence of the settlement areas in the valley. Within the Strategic Gap, the Borough Council will promote the enhancement of the landscape and nature conservation, and seek to improve public access for outdoor sport and recreation. Proposals for development will not be permitted where they prejudice the openness of the Strategic Gap.

- 6.25 The Blackwater Valley is recognised in Policy PE6 of the 1994 Surrey Structure Plan as an important long term open gap preventing the coalescence of the built-up areas in the western part of the Borough with the built-up parts of Farnborough, Hawley and Blackwater in Hampshire. It also provides an easily accessible recreational and landscape resource for a large number of people. Proposals for development will be considered under Policy RE3.
- 6.26 A Blackwater Valley Strategy 1993-1998 has been prepared by the Blackwater Valley Recreation and Management Service together with the local authorities in the Valley. This Strategy provides a framework for reconciling the, often competing, landscape, nature conservation and recreation uses in the Valley and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. A new Strategy for the period 2000– 2005 is being prepared.

Change in the Countryside

POLICY RE5:

EXTENSION, ALTERATION AND REPLACEMENT OF DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

- (a) Proposals for the extension or alteration of dwellings will not be permitted where this would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;**
- (b) Proposals for the replacement of an existing dwelling will not be permitted where this would result in a new dwelling materially larger than the dwelling it replaces.**

In addition, such proposals should:

- 1. Not detract from the rural character of the area;**
- 2. Not contribute to a reduction in the stock of small dwellings;**
- 3. Alterations or extensions should not detract from the appearance of the existing property and its setting, and accord with Policy H17;**
- 4. Replacement dwellings should be located on, or immediately adjacent to, the footprint of the existing dwelling so as not to detract from the open character of the site or surrounding countryside.**

6.27 In considering proposals for the extension or alteration of a dwelling, the original dwelling is that as it existed on the 1st July 1948, or as originally built, if constructed after that date. In the case of proposals for the extension or alteration of a replacement dwelling, the original dwelling is the dwelling which it replaced as it existed on the 1st July 1948, or as originally built if constructed after that date.

6.28 In considering the effect of a proposed extension, alteration or replacement to a dwelling the Borough Council will have regard to government guidance; in particular, the advice in PPG2 “Green Belts” paragraph 1.4, that the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness; and to advice in PPG7 “The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development”, that the

countryside should be protected for its own sake. Only limited extensions and alterations, or a replacement dwelling that is not significantly different from the scale of the existing, will be permitted. In considering proposals for extensions and alterations, the Borough Council will have regard to the scale of existing properties adjacent to the site as well as the cumulative impact of past extensions or alterations, to prevent a gradual change in the character of the dwelling and the countryside over time.

POLICY RE6:

RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF RURAL BUILDINGS

The re-use and adaptation of buildings in the countryside will be considered according to the following criteria:

- (a) The use or retention of the building(s) will not detract from the character or appearance of the area, particularly taking account of:**
 - (i) The scale of the building(s) and the combined impact of groups of buildings;**
 - (ii) The existing character and condition of the building(s);**
 - (iii) The activities associated with the proposed uses, including traffic and car parking;**
- (b) If the building is in the Green Belt, the proposed use must be capable of being contained within the existing accommodation, without any extension or external storage;**
- (c) Permission will not be granted for the re-use of buildings which detract from the rural character of the area, or have been erected in abuse of permitted development rights;**
- (d) The proposed use should not be detrimental to the amenity of the occupiers of adjacent or nearby properties by reason of noise, dust, vibration, fumes and traffic;**
- (e) The proposal must demonstrate that the rural character of the remaining land or buildings associated with the proposed development will be retained and the land appropriately**

managed in the future. To achieve this the local planning authority may seek land management agreements;

(f) The replacement or extension of non-residential buildings outside settlements will constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

(g) In the case of horse related uses, the proposal would not lead to over-use and deterioration of bridleways or open spaces in the area.

(h) Appropriate measures should be taken to secure the protection of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Where protected species could be harmed, English Nature will be consulted.

- 6.29 This Policy seeks to assist the rural economy and ensure full use is made of rural buildings, within both the Green Belt and Countryside Beyond the Green Belt. It relates to re-use and adaptation of all buildings in the countryside including whole farms, existing farms seeking to diversify their activities, redundant institutional and Ministry of Defence buildings and others. Conversion to another use must not detract from the rural character or appearance of the area as a result of the re-use or adaptation of the building. The adaptation of rural buildings will not however be appropriate where this involves substantial rebuilding as opposed to the conversion of the existing buildings.
- 6.30 For the purpose of this policy, the “remaining land or buildings” referred to in criterion (e), is that land or buildings which, together with the proposal, comprise the planning unit, for example a farm. Land management will normally be embodied within an appropriate planning agreement.
- 6.31 This Policy reflects Government policy set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 “The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development” (February 1997), and Policy RU3 of the Surrey Structure Plan. In accordance with Annex G of PPG7, evidence of redundancy is not a determining issue and the fact that a building is not redundant is not by itself a reason for refusing planning applications for a new use. However, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied

that any agricultural building erected under permitted development rights has not been constructed with the intention of early conversion to another use.

- 6.32 Conversion to residential use will be examined very carefully, as they can often have detrimental effects on the fabric of rural buildings, particularly those of historic interest, through the insertion of floors, windows and doors, and their appearance in the landscape and impact on the character of the countryside, through the introduction of external domestic features such as gardens and car parking. Residential conversions have a minimal impact on the rural economy and thus have no real contribution towards achieving Government objectives set out in PPG7.
- 6.33 Horticulture is the dominant form of agriculture within Surrey Heath. Policy RE9 addresses nurseries and garden centres. With only a small number of farms in the Borough, pressures for farm shops and other forms of farm diversification have been minimal. However, where proposals for farm diversification do arise involving re-use and adaptation of farm buildings, appropriate land management agreements, under criterion (e) of the policy may take the form of a farm plan.
- 6.34 Surrey County Council in conjunction with the Surrey Districts, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), the Agricultural Development Advisory Service (ADAS), the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, the Rural Development Commission, the Country Landowners Association and National Farmers Union, have developed “The Surrey Farm Plan System”, which gives advice to farmers on the type of supporting information needed for any diversification proposal. Appropriate diversification activities which farmers could use to support farm income could include recreational and leisure uses, small scale industrial uses appropriate to a rural area, such as craft workshops, farm shops and limited overnight accommodation. MAFF has produced further advice on appropriate uses for farm diversification projects. Farm plans may need to include specific management proposals for the protection of ecologically important habitats, landscape improvements and possibly measures for enhanced public access to the countryside.

Agricultural Land

POLICY RE7:

AGRICULTURE

The use of the best and most versatile agricultural land for any development not associated with agriculture or forestry will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that there are overriding material considerations in favour of such development. Where development is permitted on the best and most versatile land it should be on the lowest grade available. Any such other use of land, as may take place in conjunction with agriculture, should not impair the efficiency or productivity of the agricultural unit concerned.

- 6.35 About 26% of the Borough is agricultural land. According to a MAFF report "Agricultural Issues in Surrey Heath" (March 1996), there were 105 holdings within the Borough, over half of which were part-time. Of the full-time holdings, 30 were in horticulture, 10 in cattle and sheep and 5 in cattle. There were no recorded holdings which were entirely devoted to pigs and poultry, cropping or in mixed uses.
- 6.36 The best and most versatile land falls within agricultural land grades 1,2 and 3a, as defined in the MAFF Agricultural Land Classification 1988. Within the Borough, about 10% of agricultural land is classified as Grade 3, with no Grade 1 or Grade 2 identified on the published maps (1:250000). However, the site specific field surveys have identified higher grade land including Grade 2. Agricultural activities are prominent within the Borough and determine the character of much of the landscape. There have been significant pressures to diversify the use of agricultural land to other uses, particularly for recreational uses such as golf courses. Whilst such uses may be acceptable countryside activities, there is also a need to retain agricultural viability and landscapes of value. The Borough Council will therefore continue to resist the loss of the best agricultural land, including the Bagshot Beds which are important for horticulture, an important local employer. The Borough Council will seek the advice of Surrey County

Council, or other appropriate sources, when dealing with proposals likely to affect the viability of agricultural holdings.

POLICY RE8:

NEW HORSE RELATED DEVELOPMENT

New stables will only be permitted in the countryside where it can be shown that:

- (a) The site does not contain existing buildings which could be used for horse keeping purposes;**
- (b) The proposal would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;**
- (c) The nature conservation value of the land would not be significantly damaged;**
- (d) The design, scale and materials of buildings would be in keeping with the character of the area;**
- (e) The proposed development and horse related activities would not be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent residential properties;**
- (f) Buildings should be small scale in character in order to ensure the openness of the land is maintained, and regard will be had to the cumulative impact on the character of the area of the proposal and any existing buildings on adjacent land;**
- (g) Traffic generation, access and parking at the site could be satisfactorily accommodated;**
- (h) There would be adequate exercise facilities, so that the proposal would not result in the over-use and deterioration of bridleways and open spaces in the area.**

- 6.37 The keeping and riding of horses has become increasingly popular in the Borough.
- 6.38 On open fields, the erection of appropriately sized stables which are ancillary to the open use of the land can in principle be acceptable in countryside areas. However, buildings associated with horse keeping, and the accompanying fencing and jumps can have a detrimental impact on the area, particularly in areas of open countryside.

- 6.39 When considering proposals for new stables and field shelters, the Council will have regard to the need to avoid a proliferation of buildings and structures in the open countryside. A horse will generally require a stable area of about 13.7 sq.m. with a roof height of up to 3.4 m. That standard of accommodation should not be significantly exceeded unless a larger unit is required for use as a foaling box, or to meet the special needs of disabled riders.
- 6.40 Horsekeeping can exacerbate several problems in the countryside. These include fragmentation of viable agricultural holdings and the erosion of paths and bridleways.

Nurseries and Garden Centres

POLICY RE9:

NURSERIES AND GARDEN CENTRES

Nurseries

1. Proposals for the erection of buildings or other forms of development to form new nurseries or to alter or extend existing nurseries will be considered appropriate in the countryside, provided that such proposals:

- (a) Would be reasonably necessary for the purposes of horticulture;**
- (b) Are sited and, where appropriate, landscaped in order to minimise the impact on the appearance of the countryside; and**
- (c) Retail sales are limited and provided that the goods to be sold are directly related to the propagation and nurture of garden plants and shrubs and that the area used for the display of goods for sale is small in relation to the area used for horticultural activity.**

Proposed Garden Centres

2. Proposals for the erection of buildings for use as a garden centre or for the change of use of existing buildings and land from nursery to garden centre will not be permitted in the countryside.

Existing Garden Centres

3. Proposals for the erection of buildings or other forms of development which would extend existing garden centres

will not be permitted in the countryside.

4. Retrospective planning permission for the use of existing garden centres will not be granted as of right, but permission may be granted having regard to the following criteria:

- (a) The extent to which the garden centre has existed over time;**
- (b) The contribution made to local employment and the local economy;**
- (c) The degree of harm which continuation of the use would cause to the character of the countryside and the extent to which this could be minimised by alterations to the built form and layout of the garden centre; and**
- (d) The extent to which retail sales can be limited either by condition or legal agreement.**

- 6.41 Horticultural activity has long been widespread throughout Surrey Heath countryside, although the greatest concentration of nurseries continue to exist in the eastern half of the Borough where nurseries or garden centres operate. The Borough Council recognises that the nature of nurseries, in particular, has evolved over time and, in some cases, nurseries have become garden centres in response to changing market pressures and opportunities. Whilst some nurseries within the Borough rely totally upon horticultural expertise, others combine horticultural practice with some importation of stock and related goods for sale to the public. In practice the distinctions are not always clear.
- 6.42 Nurseries which are a primarily agricultural use are acceptable in principle in the countryside. This may include a limited amount of retail sales provided that the goods sold are directly related to growing plants and that the area used for sales is small in relation to the horticultural area.
- 6.43 Garden centres are, however, a “sui generis” use, which is a use which does not fall within a particular Use Class, as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended. As such, they are not acceptable in principle in the countryside. The Borough Council recognises that many garden centres have however been operating for a

number of years without undue problems, and this should be taken into account when considering any retrospective planning applications to regularise the continuing use of a garden centre. Garden centres make an important contribution to the rural economy of Surrey Heath and provide a source of rural employment.

6.44 The Council has published supplementary planning guidance, “Garden Centres and Nurseries in Surrey Heath” which provides further advice.

Areas of Nature Conservation Importance

POLICY RE10:

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AND SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION

Development proposals affecting proposed Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), as identified on the Proposals Map or as subsequently identified, will be subject to rigorous examination. Development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, and which adversely affects the integrity of the site, will not be permitted unless it can be shown that:

- (a) There is no alternative solution; and**
- (b) There are reasons of over-riding public interest for the development.**

Insert photo No.4

6.45 The European Communities Council Directive of April 1979 on the Conservation of Wild Birds requires governments to designate Special Protection Areas to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds. The SPA within Surrey Heath is proposed, as its designation remains to be confirmed by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). The Directive also requires the selection by member states of a network of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The SAC within Surrey Heath is a candidate SAC as its designation remains to be confirmed by the DETR. Development within the SPA or SAC or on adjacent areas will not be permitted if it is likely to have significant effects on the site. Appendix 2 describes the pSPA and cSAC.

POLICY RE11:

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES AND SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Proposals for development in, around or likely to affect Sites of Special Scientific Interest, as identified on the Proposals Map or as subsequently identified will be subject to special scrutiny. Where such development may have a significant adverse effect, directly or indirectly on the SSSI, it will not be permitted unless the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the national network of such sites.

Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) particular regard will be paid to the individual site's national importance.

6.46 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are nationally important sites notified by English Nature because of their plants, animals or geological or physiological features.

6.47 National Nature Reserves are designated by English Nature as sites of national importance for nature conservation which are owned or controlled by English Nature or an approved body. Chobham Common was designated as a National Nature Reserve in 1995 and is owned and managed by Surrey County Council. Appendix 2 describes the SSSIs and NNR.

POLICY RE12:

SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

Development will not be permitted within or affecting Sites of Nature Conservation Importance or potential Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, as identified on the Proposals Map or as subsequently identified, unless it can be shown that it will not materially harm the nature conservation or wildlife interest on the site. The Borough Council will seek to negate or minimise any possible adverse effect on the nature conservation interest of the area concerned.

6.48 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) are sites of county or regional wildlife value. SNCIs replace the former Areas of High Ecological Importance (AHEI) identified in the Surrey Heath Local Plan 1994, and the term is to be used throughout Surrey to ensure consistency. Sites were surveyed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust in 1995, and the selection of SNCIs was made by the Surrey Nature Conservation Liaison Group. Potential Sites of Nature Conservation Importance have also been identified by Surrey Wildlife Trust. These are sites which the Surrey Wildlife Trust believes to have a nature conservation interest which should be protected, but which were not surveyed in 1995. Appendix 2 describes the SNCIs.

POLICY RE13:

NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST

In considering proposals for development, the Borough Council will require the retention and enhancement of sites and features, including trees, woodlands, ancient semi-natural woodlands, heathlands, hedgerows, ponds, ditches and streams which contribute to the nature conservation interest of the area.

6.49 Policies RE10, RE11 and RE12 provide for areas of international, national and county wide ecological value. There are other areas throughout the Borough of a local nature conservation interest, which contribute to the diversity of habitats.

- 6.50 Land management agreements may be sought when land considered to be of designated or non-designated nature conservation interest is in use in a way likely to result in conflict between land users and ecological interest. Negotiation may result in existing users being accommodated on the site, and ecological interest protected. Land management agreements may be drawn up in consultation with Surrey Wildlife Trust or English Nature, except where the resultant damage to nature conservation interests would outweigh the benefits of the proposal or the interests of the existing users would be disadvantaged.
- 6.51 The establishment of Local Nature Reserves under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, will assist the protection of important habitats in the Borough. Where appropriate the Council will seek to acquire a legal interest in the land and manage the site to protect and enhance its natural features. Public access to these reserves will be encouraged. The Borough Council will consult English Nature and the Surrey Wildlife Trust in selecting a site. It should be noted that Chobham Common has been designated as a National Nature Reserve by English Nature.

landscape. Proposals for development and countryside improvement schemes should take account of the Landscape Profile in Appendix 9 together with “The Future of Surrey’s Landscape and Woodlands” which has been prepared by Surrey County Council. The Council, through its countryside management functions, can directly improve the countryside by tree planting and other measures. The Council can also assist other bodies with improvements through grant aid. The Council has introduced management schemes to several areas of the Borough such as Lightwater Country Park. The Council will continue to encourage the preparation of management plans to enable the landscape, nature conservation and, where appropriate, recreation potential of the countryside areas of the Borough to be maximised.

POLICY RE15:

AREAS OF LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE

Development proposals must respect the landscape value of Areas of Landscape Importance as identified on the Proposals Map or as subsequently identified. The Borough Council will, where necessary, encourage the sensitive management of these areas.

Landscape

POLICY RE14:

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The Borough Council will seek to ensure that development proposals and countryside improvement schemes respect, and where possible enhance, the character of the countryside landscape. Account will be taken of the visual impact of the proposed development on the landscape in terms of siting, design and new planting and whether existing landscape features should be retained.

- 6.52 The importance of preserving and enhancing the countryside for its own sake is recognised. The Borough contains a variety of landscapes, including heathland, farmland and woodland. This policy will assist the protection of these characteristics which constitute an attractive

- 6.53 Areas of Landscape Importance are fine parkland landscapes which, because of their special landscape or historic value, are considered to warrant particular protection. Development proposals must therefore take account of the particular features which characterise these landscapes. The following sites are currently designated as Areas of Landscape Importance which the Borough Council will seek to preserve:

- (a) Bagshot Park, Bagshot;
- (b) Pennyhill Park, Bagshot;
- (c) Chobham Place, Chestnut Lane, Chobham;
- (d) British Oxygen Company, Chertsey Road, Windlesham;
- (e) Windlesham Arboretum, Broadway Road, Windlesham.

- 6.54 The Surrey Structure Plan 1994 at Policy PE7 requires local plans to define landscapes of local value as well as landscapes of national importance, and to include policies which ensure that development respects the particular qualities and features of the landscape.
- 6.55 Research is currently being undertaken by Surrey County Council to determine areas of historic landscape value. Further guidance is given in the Heritage chapter. In addition, Surrey County Council is currently compiling a register of Historic Parks and Gardens, to include all of the above. Policy HE16 gives guidance on this.

POLICY RE16:

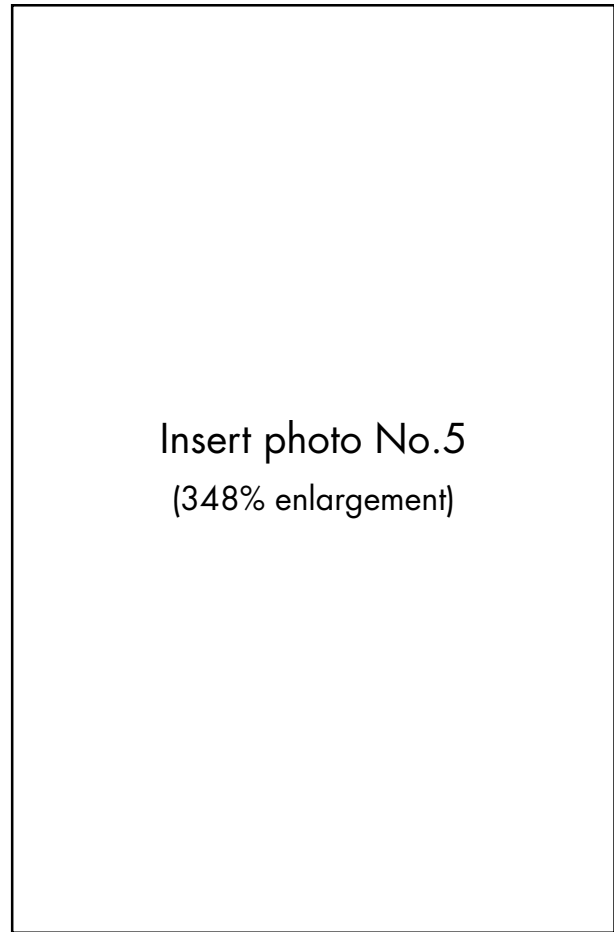
BASINGSTOKE CANAL

The Borough Council will seek to preserve and enhance the landscape of the Basingstoke Canal Policy Area as defined on the Proposals Map. The Borough Council will encourage the provision of suitable informal recreational and navigational uses and facilities provided that they do not adversely affect the landscape, ecological or historic character of the area.

- 6.56 The restoration of the canal to a navigable waterway has been completed and provides an invaluable informal recreational asset. Policy RU7 of the approved Surrey Structure Plan promotes the recreational use of water based areas, including canals, subject to appropriate safeguards for natural and environmental features. The whole length of the canal in Surrey Heath is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Conservation Area, and an appropriate balance between recreation and nature conservation has to be found. Any development proposals which affect the canal or its surroundings must positively enhance and not adversely affect the landscape, historic or ecological character of the area.

Minerals and Waste Disposal Matters

- 6.57 Surrey County Council is the planning authority for applications involving mineral extraction and waste disposal and has the responsibility for the production of the Surrey Minerals Local Plan and the Surrey Waste Local Plan. The approved Surrey Structure Plan also contains strategic planning policies for minerals at Policies DP24 -DP30 and for waste disposal at Policies DP31-34.
- 6.58 In the past the Blackwater Valley was a major source of gravel working. Extraction has long since been completed and the resulting gravel lakes have been restored and some are now in active recreational use. It is unlikely that Surrey Heath will offer opportunities for future mineral extraction.



Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

POLICY RE17:

MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

The following “Major Developed Sites” in the Green Belt are identified on the Proposals Map:

- i) The DERA Test and Evaluation Centre, Chobham Lane, Longcross;**
- ii) Gordon’s School, West End;**
- iii) Fairoaks Airport.**

Further development at Fairoaks Airport will be subject to Policy M21 of this Plan. Within the other Major Developed Sites the following criteria for infilling and redevelopment will apply:

Infilling should;

- (a) Have no greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing development;**
- (b) Not exceed the general height of the existing buildings; and**
- (c) Not lead to a significant increase in the developed part of the site or give rise to off-site infrastructure problems;**

Redevelopment should:

- (d) Have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including the land in it, and where possible have less;**
- (e) Contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of the land in the Green Belt;**
- (f) Not exceed the general height of the existing buildings;**
- (g) Not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings;**
- (h) Ensure that the new buildings are located to have regard to the openness of the Green Belt, existing landscape features and the need to integrate with the surroundings;**
- (i) Be part of a comprehensive scheme; and**
- (j) Not give rise to off-site infrastructure problems.**

6.59 The Longcross site accommodates a DERA facility used for testing military vehicles. The majority of this site lies within the administrative area of Runnymede Borough Council. It is identified as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt in the Runnymede Local Plan, in line with the advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 2 “Green Belts (January 1995) and specifically Annex C of that guidance. The small portion of the site lying within Surrey Heath has been given the same designation in this Local Plan to ensure consistency. Gordon’s School is a secondary boarding school with about 500 pupils. It currently contains about 17,000 sq. m. of built floorspace concentrated in a core area of about 6.5 ha. of Green Belt land to the north of West End. The School is keen to expand its sixth form capacity. Designation of its core area as a Major Developed Site will facilitate limited infilling and redevelopment, as part of this expansion programme. It will help secure jobs and prosperity. The reasoned justification for the designation of a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt at Fairoaks Airport is set out in Chapter 11 of this Local Plan.

