**Overview**

The Borough of Woking was formed in 1895 as an urban district under the Local Government Act 1894. The present-day borough was established in 1974 and is one of two districts in Surrey to retain the boundaries of a single former urban district (the other being Epsom and Ewell). The development of Woking as a major town started with the coming of the railway in 1838. Sheerwater was developed as a London County Council housing and industrial estate. In the 1970’s and 80’s Goldsworth Park was developed as a major new community of 5,000 homes.

The borough of Woking is situated in the north west of Surrey boarded by Guildford in the south, Surrey Heath in the North West, Runnymede in the north and Elmbridge in the north east. 60% of the Borough is Green Belt. The Green Belt contains extensive heathland. The most significant areas of heathland, Horsell Common, Sheets Heath and Brookwood Heath, are designated as part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Chobham Common is the main area of heathland and is a priority for the Local Strategic Partnership in relation to reducing heath fires through arson.

The borough has one main town: Woking. Apart from the area around the town centre, the rest of the borough is divided into five areas located around a village. These villages are:

• Brookwood, population 2,565
• Byfleet, population 7,724
• Knaphill, population 9,958
• Mayford and Sutton Green, population 2,470
• West Byfleet, population 5,626

The key areas of deprivation in the borough are Sheerwater and Maybury and to a lesser extent Goldsworth Park and Barnsbury. The Sheerwater and Maybury areas are a focus for a large redevelopment programme currently being overseen by the borough council. Today, the majority of social housing in the Borough is owned by Thamesway Housing.

**Significant demographic information**

* In 2016, Woking borough had a population of 101,421. 20% of which were under 15, 17% were over 65, and 63% were between 16 and 64.
* The 2016 Census showed Woking is the most diverse borough in the county with the highest proportion of Pakistani’s in the county. This population, largely Asian and Asian British, mainly lives in Maybury and Sheerwater, where over 35% of the population is from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group.
* Crime within Woking is consistently average for Surrey but low nationally.
* Woking has the second highest population density for Surrey (15.68 people per hectare).
* Residents are largely healthy, with above average life expectancy (IMD 2016).
* 0.7% of the economically active population of Woking are unemployed

**Current Local Issues**

* **One of the key priorities for Woking Borough Council is the multi-million pound redevelopment of Woking town centre** which included the relocation of the fire station to Goldsworth Road, and Victoria Square, a comprehensive retail led mixed use development, which will include Marks and Spencer, a 190 bed four star hotel, 392 residential apartments and 380 additional car parking spaces. A**s part of this** Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council have entered into a 10 year agreement for the Borough Council to manage most highway functions within a defined town centre area. The project is currently under way and is proposed to be completed by December 2020. The governance for this is provided by Woking Joint Committee.
* **Another key priority for Woking Borough Council is the** [redevelopment and regeneration of Sheerwater](https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/majordevelopments/anewvisionforsheerwater)**. The aim is that the** regeneration will allow local people of all ages to benefit from high quality new homes, excellent leisure and retail facilities, open green spaces and improved transport links, as well as a local center that blends social, retail, recreation and community uses. Plans were approved by the Council in April 2017 and are starting in the later part of 2018.
* Movements within and through the borough are constrained by the location of both the railway and Basingstoke Canal, concentrating transport movements to the available routes under and over bridges. North-south vehicle movements across the railway are limited to Victoria Arch Railway Bridge (A320) and Maybury Hill Railway Bridge, both of which suffer from congestion. Enterprise M3 has secured £7.5 million funding towards constructing new pedestrian and cycle tunnels through the embankment either side of Victoria Arch and allow for the existing carriageway to be widened from two lanes to three. Enterprise M3 has also secured indicative funding of £5.8 million for a multi modal interchange at Woking Station. A 25% local contribution would be required for both these schemes.
* SCC Services for Young People and Woking Borough Council are currently working together to develop an Integrated Youth Strategy for Woking. The six priorities for this strategy are:
* Improving young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health
* Reducing risky behaviour – substance misuse, smoking, anti-social behaviour and improving sexual health
* Meeting the needs of young people that require additional support in their transition from adolescence to adulthood
* Improving young people’s experience of the local transport system – cost and safety
* Ensuring that facilities are accessible to young people and fit for purpose
* Promoting the Youth Offer.

**The local political structure**

There is one MP who represents Surrey Heath Borough (Parliamentary elections May 2017):

* Jonathan Lord

**Surrey County Council**

There are 81 member of Surrey County Council. Following the elections in May 2017, 61 are Conservative, 9 Liberal Democrats, 9 Residents’ Association/Independents, 1 Labour and 1 Green. The Leader is Tim Oliver, who leads a [Cabinet of 10 members](https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=120).

There are [7 county councillors](https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1) representing the area of Woking. They will work both with services and committees at a county level, but are also involved in the [Woking Joint Committee](https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=411) (a committee of borough and county councillors) which aims to make holistic decisions on areas where both the county and borough councils have responsibilities, and allow residents to engage with their local representatives on a regular basis. The Chairman is Borough Council Leader David Bittleston and the Vice-Chairman is County Councillor Liz Bowes.

**Woking Borough Council**

There are [30 members of Woking Borough Council](https://moderngov.woking.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1). Following the elections in May 2019, 14 are Conservative, 10 Liberal Democrat, 3 Independent and 3 Labour.  The next borough elections are in May 2020. The current Leader is David Bittleston, who leads an [Executive of 7 members](https://moderngov.woking.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=165).

Woking Borough Council has a [“Our Vision – Towards Tomorrow Today”](https://www.woking.gov.uk/council/about/vision) governing the work of the Council, which is themed under People, Places and Us.

**Parish Councils**

There are no parish councils in the borough of Woking. There are, however, a number of neighbourhood groups and forums.

**Local Services**

**Children and Young People**

There are six youth centres in the Woking area that are spread across the borough. Unfortunately the Lakers Youth Centre is currently not in use for the foreseeable future due to fire damage. Find out more: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service/support-and-advice-for-parents-and-carers/young-people-information-for-families/youth-centres-and-projects/youth-centres-and-projects-in-woking>

* Lakers Youth Centre, Denton Way, Woking GU21 3LG
* Maybury Centre, Board School Road, Woking GU21 5HD
* Old Woking Community Centre, Sundridge Road, Woking GU22 9AT
* Sheerwater Youth Centre, Blackmore Crescent, Woking GU21 5NS
* The Knaphill Cabin, The Vyne, 45 Broadway, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2SP
* Woking Youth Arts Centre (WYAC), Trinity Road, Knaphill, Woking GU21 2SY

**Vulnerable Adults**

The Adult Social Care locality and reablement teams are based in the Woking Borough Civic Offices alongside Woking Borough Council staff.

There are five Centres for the Community run by Woking Borough Council for Woking residents: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/centresforthecommunity>

* [Brockhill](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/brockhill) **(Goldsworth Park)**
* [Moorcroft](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/centresforthecommunity/moorcroft) **(Westfield)**
* [Parkview](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/centresforthecommunity/parkview) **(Sheerwater)**
* [St Mary's](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/centresforthecommunity/stmarys2) **(Byfleet)**
* [The Vyne](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/older/centresforthecommunity/thevyne) **(Knaphill)**

**Schools in Woking borough**

* Infant Schools (Entry age 4 years +): 4

(2 Academy, 1 Community and 1 Voluntary Controlled)

* Junior Schools (Entry age 7 years +): 3

(1 Academy, 1 Community and 1 Voluntary Controlled)

* Primary Schools: 19

(11 Academy, 4 Community, 3 Voluntary Aided and 1 Voluntary Controlled)

* Secondary Schools: 6

(4 Academy, 1 Free School and 1 Foundation)

* Special Schools: 3

(1 Academy and 2 Community)

* Pupil Referral Units: 1

**Fire Stations**

The main fire station in Woking has recently been relocated along Goldsworth Park Road, as part of the town centre development. The site has 2 fire engines and a land rover. Find out more: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-fire-and-rescue/how-to-locate-and-contact-surrey-fire-and-rescue/fire-stations-in-surrey-and-their-action-plans>

**Partnership activity**

**1. Woking Joint Committee**

As detailed above this is the main joint member and officer steering group and decision making body for partnership working between the two authorities.

**2. Community Safety and Health & Wellbeing Sub Groups**

The Woking Joint Committee acts as the governing body for the partnership work around community safety and improving the health and wellbeing of Woking residents (A combination of the Heath and Wellbeing Board for the area and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) The Police, SCC Adults Locality & Partnership Teams and Clinical Commissioning Group amongst other partners work together on these groups.

**2. Military Advisory Panel**

In support of the local Armed Forces Community Covenant, Woking Borough Council has set up a members [Military Advisory Panel (MCA) to](https://www.woking.gov.uk/community/wokingarmedforcescovenant/wbcmilitarypanel) advise and steer the implementation of activities in support of the aims and objectives of the Covenant.