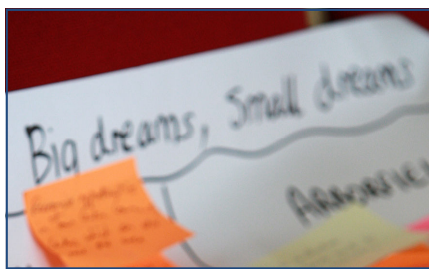


Appendix A

Shaping our new communities (2014 - 2026)

Executive summary



Shaping our new communities 2014 - 2026

Aims and objectives

Help create strong, sustainable new SDL communities that are vibrant and well-integrated with surrounding towns and villages

	Involve the community in discussion about SDL developments	Support creation of thriving, community facilities that can sustain themselves	Help make the new communities strong, vibrant and well-integrated with the rest of the borough	Find the best ways to run community assets for the benefit of local people in the long term
In the next three years we will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link consultation and engagement work with SDL and Community Forums communications plan • Provide ongoing support to SDL Community Forums • Increase understanding of local people's aspirations and needs • Support Neighbourhood planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence the need for community facilities • Learn from similar developments in UK and farther afield • Ensure that facilities provide work for local people and can sustain themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a plan is in place to resource community development support in each SDL from first build phases • Support new communities in engaging with their new built, social and cultural environments • Work with voluntary and community sector groups to expand services to support new communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local people and organisations to find the best option for each SDL area • Support development of local groups that are able to run community assets
We will have succeeded if, by 2017:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People feel positively about the opportunity to get involved • SDL development reflects aspirations of Neighbourhood Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding has been secured for good quality facilities • Community facilities are well used and financially viable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residents feel positively about their new community and feel welcomed and supported • Community facilities are being well used and there is a local cultural and social activity • Voluntary sector is active within new communities and residents are aware of services and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community facilities are being managed in the community's best interest or a robust plan is in place for this to happen



Executive summary

Wokingham Borough Council's Core Strategy 2010 sets out a vision for how the borough should develop in the period to 2026 and how the council aims to protect and enhance the good quality of life enjoyed in the borough. The Core Strategy and its accompanying Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) identify four Strategic Development Locations which will accommodate the majority of 13,000 further homes to be built across the borough to 2026. In addition to homes, these areas will also provide the infrastructure required to support and make a success of these new developments, and offset their impact on existing local communities.

The purpose of this document is to formalise Wokingham Borough Council's position on how we:

1. Continue to engage with the community in the planning stages of the four SDL communities
2. Provide the right community facilities for the new SDL neighbourhoods, with a particular emphasis on proposed multi-use Community Centres
3. Support community development within SDLs and their integration with neighbouring communities
4. Develop options for future management of these facilities

This document sets out a framework for establishing strong, vibrant and integrated communities in each of the four new development areas. It has been developed with significant input from relevant service areas across the council, and draws on learning from local and national experiences as well as local consultation to provide a series of recommendations and proposals for further work.

Whilst the emphasis of this framework is focussed on and around our four SDL communities, it is recognised that this work sets a precedent for ways of working with our evolving communities across the wider Borough in the future



Objective one: Involve the community in discussion about SDL development

Chapter one considers:

- The reasons for involving the existing community in SDL development
- What engagement has already taken place locally
- The opportunities in place for providing communities with information
- The lack of formal means for communities to influence decision-making
- Examples of community involvement from elsewhere in the UK
- Feedback from consultation on current levels of communication and involvement

Recommendations include:

- Reviewing the existing communications plan to reflect consultation findings, including improvements to format for community forums, and considering more effective ways of targeting SDL information at younger sections of our community.
- Agreeing the relationship between Neighbourhood Planning and SDL Community Forums/ the broader SDL decision making process.
- Exploring opportunities for greater community influence more in line with Town and Country Planning Association 21st Century Garden City aspirations through the planning of new community centres and other approaches to integration picked up in later chapters of this document.

Objective two: Support creation of thriving community facilities that can sustain themselves in the long term

Chapter two considers:

- The Core Strategy's requirement for community infrastructure within the SDLs
- The challenge created by the lack of national standards for community facilities
- The evidence required to prove the need for community buildings, including previous local experiences and national practice
- Examples of community buildings both locally and nationally
- The type of community buildings required, including research into income generation proposals and feedback from community workshops that considered local need and aspirations.

Conclusions and Recommendations include:

- Our current size estimates for Community Building requirements in each of the SDL areas are reasonable (below average m² per capita ratio based on research of similar UK developments)
- Ensuring some community meeting space is provided from the very early stages of the development, even if it is a temporary measure
- Further work is required to explore needs data and options for provision of health, youth and childcare where there are identified gaps.



Objective three: Help make new communities strong, vibrant and well-integrated with existing communities

Chapter three considers:

- Evidence showing the beneficial impact of community development in new developments, including research into the 'New Town Blues' phenomenon and local experiences such as Woosehill, Lower Earley and Norreys ward. These experiences support the case for the provision of community workers and a community development programme within our SDLs
- How SDL communities can be supported to swiftly develop self-sufficiency through strong community relationships
- Wokingham Borough Council's experience of community development work and approaches taken by other major developments nationally. These include community workers and other initiatives undertaken to provide resources and otherwise build capacity for the voluntary and community sectors. These have included small community activity budgets, peppercorn rents for Voluntary Sector organisations and resources to fit out and open the doors on new community buildings.
- The results of the consultation that provided ideas for community integration initiatives, highlighted the importance of creating shared identity and understanding future Parish level governance arrangements (particularly for Arborfield Garrison), and supported the idea of community workers. A common theme from the consultation was the need to build the capacity of grassroots groups from the early stages of development and concern was expressed by voluntary sector representatives about the sector's ability to plan for the long term in a climate of short term financial uncertainty.

Recommendations include:

- Creating a new identity for the Arborfield Garrison SDL and clarifying future parish governance arrangements for Arborfield Garrison and South Wokingham SDL areas
- Developing an outline job role for SDL community workers
- Developing a Community and Voluntary Sector support package.

Objective four: Find the best ways to run community assets for the benefit of local people

Chapter four considers:

- The various ways in which community buildings are managed both locally and nationally, ranging from Local Authority or Parish Councils, community associations and development trusts, to private (for-profit) companies. Key points to note were that none of the assets in new developments researched were both owned and managed by the Local Authority, and that top down attempts to establish community ownership/ management were rarely successful.
- Local consultation feedback indicated a preference for the community to have influence over the management of new facilities. However, no specific models have been identified as preferred options, other than that they should include a paid manager/ administrator. A clear preference was expressed against facilities being managed by private companies not for community benefit.

Recommendations include:

- Adopting a flexible approach to identify the most appropriate management option for each SDL context
- Further work into community management models
- Build skills and capacity within voluntary and community stakeholders to equip them for potential asset management and business planning.

Shaping our new communities 2014 - 2026: Summary of conclusions

Objective one:

- SDL Communications Plan: Plan should be reviewed to reflect findings from stakeholder consultation. In particular:
- Further improvements to SDL Community Forums (agenda setting, time for discussion, Exceptional Meetings).
- Explore creation of a single online information point which signposts to SDL information held on relevant community and developer websites
- Identify best methods for targeting SDL info at younger sections of the community.
- Closing the loop – Identify new opportunities for feeding back on stakeholder input
- Neighbourhood Planning: Clarify the relationship between Neighbourhood Planning Working Groups and the SDL Community Forums. This could link to the next recommendation:
- Increase opportunity for community influence (in line with 21st Century Garden City aspirations): Provision of Community buildings and other community facilities may offer an opportunity for this. See also recommendations for working group proposals under sections 2,3 and 4

Objective two:

- Bespoke: Each SDL area is unique and will require community facilities tailored to local needs and circumstances.
- Size of Community Centres: Based on comparative research the sizes of community centre provision currently requested are below average and therefore not unreasonable, based on average m²/per capita ratio (see Appendix F).
- Early provision of facilities/ meeting space: Meeting space should be provided early in the development, even if temporary.
- Community Centres: Good practice learning from national experience and local consultation recommends the provision of community centres with flexible spaces, lots of storage and a welcoming feel. Cafés and libraries were a recurrent theme of what should be provided within the facility.
- Consultation identified a desire for additional facilities to include childcare, youth, family and leisure provision within the new SDL areas. Health facilities were also a concern in North & South Wokingham, and Arborfield. Further work is required to explore needs data and options for provision of health, youth and childcare
- Dual use of Schools and other assets for community use should be optimised. 4 strands: Decisions on provision of community facilities, including Community Centres should be informed by 4 strands:
- Service stakeholder (public and third sector) requirements based on need where known
- Existing local provision
- Objective assessment of what works in practice based on local and national research, and projected future trends
- Community stakeholder consultation
- All four of strands should then be considered against cost/ viability.
- Working groups: Harness interest from community stakeholders through the establishment of Working Groups for each of the SDL areas, to be affiliated to either the SDL Community Forums (and possibly Neighbourhood Planning structures where appropriate). Their remit could include shaping community buildings based on the four strands outlined above.
- Additional analysis should be carried out in relation to both community building costs and income opportunities to inform working group discussions
- Revenue to “Open the doors”: resources will be required to fit out and meet initial running costs until new centres can generate revenue. NB: No current provision has been made for this and further work is required to identify levels of funding and potential sources.

Objective three:

Community Manager Role

- Provision of a worker with a community development remit was widely supported by stakeholders.

Key points to note:

- Geographic scope of this post would be significantly wider than that of existing WBC community development workers. Likely elements of the role are summarised at Appendix I
- Management of this worker is open to discussion with stakeholders, but at least a virtual link to WBC's Community Services Team is recommended, given existing Community Development expertise.
- Post should be located onsite for better community access, and accommodation should be secured in advance.
- A small budget to resource start up community activities should be identified.
- Basic terms and responsibilities to be developed to inform all 4 Community Manager remits, and should be

agreed with the working group(s) proposed under objective 2.

- Further consideration should be given to the relationship between the Community Manager, their work programme and working group/ any subsequent Community Management entity.

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Creating an identity for Arborfield SDL:

- Work to create a new identity for the former garrison site and to understand boundary and governance options should be undertaken soon.

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Increasing Community and Voluntary Sector Strength

- Buildings Management Skills: Consideration should be given to support in the form of advice (as a minimum) to boost the sector's management skills.
- Develop a support package in consultation with Voluntary and Community Sector partners and identify potential resourcing options.

Objective four:

- Explore community management models: Supported by consultation and the budget pressures faced by WBC. Any model would require strong focus on enterprise and income generation.
- Adaptable approach: The needs and capacity in each SDL area may vary greatly, and any agreed approach should retain flexibility to adapt to the differing circumstances.
- Invest in the grass roots: In practice, top down proposals for community trusts and other management models have proved largely unsuccessful.

Support required is likely to include:

- ◇ Business Planning. Could be supported by: i) existing WBC officer(s) (ii) Community Manager posts in

medium/ long term. (iii) Commission specialist expertise; (iv) Explore options for Business support via Corporate Social Responsibility

- ◇ Start up revenue funding although external funding may be available by means of grants or loans.
- Paid manager/ administrator would help to lessen the burden on volunteers, but will add to the running costs and Trustee responsibilities/ training needs.
- A Community Development Trust (CDT) may be appropriate for one or more of the SDL areas. NB: If appropriate Volunteer base can identified, one CDT could be established across 2 or more SDLs or the wider borough, with local management groups for individual Community Centres.

