

WOODLEY 2020

CONSULTATION

A key part of the process of developing a vision and long term plan for Woodley has been consulting local residents to identify how people would like the Town to develop in the coming years.

The consultation has been carried out by the Woodley Community Partnership at a number of public events including 2 Workshops and a Household Survey that was distributed to every household in the Town in 2007.

The input has been consistent and is captured in the information displayed in the following pages.

The input from the consultation events has been combined with fact finding research work to identify aspects of Woodley that are strong and should be maintained and opportunities for development and improvement in the future.

Woodley Community Partnership Residents Survey

Key results

Spring 2007

**HMR – Research, Conmsultation, Participation*

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1. The Survey

In the spring of 2007, all household in Woodley (approximately 10,000) were sent a self completion survey which included series of questions asked by Woodley Community Partnership.

There were 782 valid responses to the survey – a response rate of approximately 9%. This is good for this type of survey and provides a statistically significant sample , meaning that the response is a reliable representation of the views of the people of Woodley.

2. Respondent Profile

All wards in Woodley were well represented, with none being underrepresented.

All kinds and sizes of households were well represented, from single person households to large families and including households with one or more older people. 64% of households responding included people who were members of local groups or organisations.

The age group of respondents was:

Age group	% response
Under 16	1
16-25	17
26-40	21
41-64	20
65-74	24
75 +	17

Employment

According to the 2001 census:

“A large proportion of the district’s population is engaged in full-time employment, compared to the South East and England and Wales. The Wokingham district has a particularly low rate of unemployment and a small proportion of the population is permanently sick or disabled.”

	Wokingham district	Berkshire	South East	England and Wales
All people aged 16-74	111,090	587,174	5,766,307	37,607,438
Economically active people aged 16-74				
In part time employment *	11.9%	11.1%	12.2%	11.8%
In full time employment *	49.2%	49.0%	43.2%	40.5%
Self employed	9.2%	8.6%	9.6%	8.3%
Unemployed	1.5%	2.2%	2.3%	3.3%
Full time student	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%
Economically inactive people aged 16-74				
Retired	11.3%	10.7%	13.4%	13.6%
Student	4.1%	4.2%	4.2%	4.7%
Looking after home/family	6.0%	6.2%	6.5%	6.5%
Permanently sick/disabled	1.9%	2.6%	3.4%	5.5%
Other	1.7%	2.4%	2.4%	3.1%

* Part-time employment is defined as 30 hours or less per week. Full-time employment is defined as 31 hours or more per week.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001 Census KS09

In this survey 52% of households included people working full time, 23 % had people working part time. 27% included retired people – considerably higher than the national local average. 2% of households included people who would like to find work but cannot.

Of the households who responded to the survey, the population included 11% school age students, 8% older students (probably reflecting that the local population includes some Reading University Students) .

21% of households responding included people who either work in Woodley or for a Woodley based business. Of these, 44% were self employed.

31% of households included a member who did voluntary work, 9% included someone who was disabled.

How aspects of development were rated (% response):

Respondents were asked to give a rating for aspects of development that the Woodley Community Partnership had identified as important through previous public consultation. The ratings given are shown below. They confirm that the Community Partnership has identified aspects of development that are important to local people, and allow priority areas to be identified.

Environment	Very important	Quite important	A little important	Not important
1. Woodley should keep the current mix between open spaces and built up areas	88	10	2	0
2. There should be a wide variety of habitats to protect local wildlife.	86	13	1	0
3. There should be range of and sufficient number of recycling facilities in Woodley.	79	21	0	0
4. To keep Woodley's character and identity, it is important to look after the following "green gaps" and open spaces:				
a) Bulmershe playing Fields	94	5	1	0
b) Highwood	95	5	0	0
c) Ashenbury Park	97	3	0	0
d) Dinton Pastures	98	2	0	0
e) Reading Road Allotments	64	33	3	0

Economy	Very important	Quite important	A little important	Not important
1. People should be able to find work in Woodley	68	30	1	1
2. There should be a variety of shops in Woodley	97	3	0	0
3. The local community should support existing and new businesses in Woodley.	74	24	1	0

Getting Around	Very important	Quite important	A little important	Not important
1. Local public transport should be increased and improved.	58	37	3	1
2. There should be more safe cycling routes in Woodley	44	16	28	12
3. It is important to be able to get around easily by car in Woodley	37	26	29	8

Social and Community Facilities	Very important	Quite important	A little important	Not important
1. There should be more facilities for young people.	78	20	2	0
2. There should be modern and accessible facilities for sport, education, cultural and leisure activities	86	12	2	0
3. More should be should be done to make people feel safe in the town and at home.	77	15	8	0
4. The Town Centre should be updated so that it is a more lively and attractive place.	89	9	2	0

3. Summary of comments

Local residents were encouraged to make comments about the aspects of development that they had rated. These are summarised below, using the words of respondents, in order of the comments most frequently made, to those least suggested. These help to illuminate local residents views in more detail.

3.1 Most important aspects

- Keep current mix between open spaces and built up areas
- Have a wide variety of habitats to protect local wildlife
- Maintain all green gaps, especially Bulmershe Playing fields, Highwood, Ashenbury Park, Dinton Pastures
- There should be a variety of shops
- Local community should support existing and new businesses in Woodley
- There should be more facilities for young people

3.2 Of lower importance:

- Maintain Reading Road Allotments (but very important to many people)
- People should be able to find work in Woodley

- Local Public Transport should be increased and improved (but still rated important by a high percentage of people, especially those without access to a car, including young people and people aged over 65 – then this is of vital importance)
- Modern and accessible facilities for sport, education and cultural activities – still important
- Updating the town centre – perceived as having been done by many, the main problems are about the mix of shops, rent and rates, and needing more community feel there
- More being done to make people feel safe

No aspect was consistently of little importance or not important.

3.3 Big Issues

Development

- Stop building in Woodley
- Do not allow infill building
- Prioritise more affordable housing
- Don't build near the rivers

Town Centre

- More variety of shops is needed
- Why so many card and charity shops, please get rid of some
- We need more variety of shops, including greengrocers, butchers, bookshop, menswear shop
- Need a family friendly café that turns into a wine bar/restaurant at night
- Need another supermarket – Waitrose has no competitors and is too expensive
- Have a regular general market (even once a month would be good)
- Have other specialist markets like the French Market and the farmers market, but ones which are a bit cheaper
- Do things to make the town centre more lively all the time, not just occasional activities – e.g.,. Bars and restaurants, social places
- Encourage independent traders back into the town centre
- The town centre has the potential to be an individual place full of small traders but it is being over taken by big corporate shops
- Do something about the rent and rates in the town centre or we will lose all the identity it once had

Green spaces/environment

- Keep our beautiful green spaces
- Do not build on any green land
- The greenery in Woodley is what makes it the place it is – don't destroy it!
- Woodley is trying to be a small city instead of a more countrified place which is the kind of place it should be
- Woodley is in danger of becoming overtaken by concrete and tarmac, please stop!
- Encourage the authorities to deal with the silting of the River Loddon as it is harming wildlife
- Retain all the open spaces, and especially those around Lands End/Beggars Hill Road/Waingels, as well as Bulmershe and Loddon mead.
- Plant more trees all around the town
- Maintain the upkeep and presentability of the whole town and especially the town centre, including removing graffiti and dealing with litter.

3.4 Other issues

Parking

- Car park charges are too high
- Free parking for half an hour is needed to encourage people who are “just popping in” and thus increase town centre shop use
- Main car parks are too full
- Do something (i.e. bollards) to prevent parking on grass verges and protect the verges as green places

Public Transport

- More frequent buses, including late at night
- More public transport links needed with:
 - Twyford and Winnersh Triangle train stations
 - Wokingham
 - Royal Berks Hospital
- A community bus (such as in Earley and Twyford) is needed
- Build a train station, with a car park near Waingels College
- Have more accessible (i.e. kneeling/low-rider) buses
- Improve the bus shelters

The community

- The community feel of Woodley is very important, work hard to preserve it
- Have more community activities to help build the sense of community in the town

Children and young people

- Need a good youth centre in the middle of Woodley
- Need more activities and facilities for 16-18 year olds, the kind they want to use – maybe an alcohol free bar?
- Encouraging young people off the streets will make everyone feel safer and reduce anti social behaviour problems

Cycling

- Take measures to stop cyclists riding on pavements
- More cycle lanes – but on roads not pavements

Local facilities

- Easier access to Woodford Park Leisure Centre from the Reading Road/Western Avenue side of the park
- There should be a formal memorial near the town centre for the war dead
- Use Bulmershe Leisure Centre more as a community centre, with extended activities for all ages
- Modernise sports and leisure facilities in the town
- Have more toilets in Woodford Park Leisure Centre
- Improve the toilets in Headley road car park, they are a disgrace to the town
- Update the play equipment in Woodford Park

3.5 Ideas

- Have an ice rink in Woodford Park in December and January
- Build a skate park for the youngsters
- Have a soft play facility for young children

- Laser quest or similar for the over eights