

Report of the Design South East Design  
Review Panel

# Land east of Maybourne Rise, Woking

26<sup>th</sup> August 2026

## The design review meeting

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| <b>Reference number</b>        | R27014/120826                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Date</b>                    | 12 <sup>th</sup> August 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Meeting location</b>        | Woking Borough Council, Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking GU21 6YL.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Panel members attending</b> | Chris Bearman (Chair), architecture, urban design and masterplanning<br>Andrew Cameron, transport planning, active travel and street design<br>Fenella Griffin, landscape architecture, green/blue infrastructure and public realm<br>Anna Ryten, architecture, housing and urban design                               |
| <b>Panel manager</b>           | Reshma Upadhyaya, Design South East                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Presenting team</b>         | Chris Cox, Corylus Planning & Environmental<br>Gary Dickens, Corylus Planning & Environmental<br>Jason Lupton, Corylus Planning & Environmental                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Other attendees</b>         | Alice Gilbert, Motion<br>Phil de Jongh, Motion<br>James Ahearne, Astrantia Development Management Group<br>Harsha Bhundia, Woking Borough Council<br>James Rodger, Woking Borough Council<br>Matthew Lambert, Woking Borough Council<br>Tricia Gurney, Surrey County Council<br>Ronald Musasiwa, Surrey County Council |
| <b>Site visit</b>              | A site visit was conducted by the panel prior to the review.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Scope of the review</b>     | As an independent design review panel the scope of this review was not restricted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Panel interests</b>         | Panel members did not indicate any conflicts of interest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Confidentiality</b>         | This report is confidential as the scheme is not yet the subject of a detailed planning application. Full details of our confidentiality policy can be found at the end of this report.                                                                                                                                |

## The proposal

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| <b>Site location</b>            | Land east of Maybourne Rise, Woking GU22 0SH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Site details</b>             | <p>The 2.10-hectare site is located within the Green Belt and is bounded to the west by Public Right of Way FP37 and to the east by a golf course. There is access from the site to nearby bus services, a national cycle route and local recreational trails, with Worplesdon railway station providing connections to Woking, London, Guildford and Portsmouth. The site contains a veteran tree and its associated protection zone on the eastern boundary, a number of Category A trees located around the site perimeter and a number of dead Category U trees.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Proposal</b>                 | <p>The proposal seeks permission for up to 40 dwellings, comprising 19 affordable homes and 20 market homes, together with areas of open space and play provision. The proposed housing mix includes detached and semi-detached houses, as well as flats and maisonettes.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Planning stage</b>           | <p>Pre-application. The target submission date for an outline planning application is October 2026, with a target committee date of March 2027. An inception meeting and initial informal discussions have been held with Woking Borough Council, and pre-application plans submitted on 23 July 2026 are currently under review. A Planning Performance Agreement is being progressed with the local planning authority.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Local planning authority</b> | Woking Borough Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Planning context</b>         | <p>The site is located within the Green Belt. The local planning authority has not yet formed a view on whether the site should be considered as Grey Belt or whether the proposal would comply with paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework, with this assessment dependent on the site's sustainability. Relevant planning policy includes Core Strategy Policy CS11, which seeks an appropriate housing mix with flexibility to respond to local character, and Policy CS21, which addresses place identity, character and scale, amenity relationships, and landscaping. The site adjoins a golf course that is the subject of a live planning application (ref. PLAN/2026/0042) for up to 650 dwellings, a care home, commercial and community uses, and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). This proposal was reviewed by the Design South East design review panel in December 2025.</p> |

## Summary

We welcome the comprehensive site analysis undertaken and believe the site can support a high-quality residential development, with the landscape setting, topography and long-distance views providing a strong foundation on which to create a distinctive and characterful place. We also recognise the benefits of connections to the adjacent site and proposed development at Sutton Green Golf Course, but consider this site to have the potential to come forward independently.

However, we are unconvinced that the analysis of the site and its context have informed the masterplan and we do not think that the site's landscape assets and wider landscape character, including the topography, mature trees and long-distance views, have been used as well as they should be to shape a scheme with a distinctive sense of place.

The rationale behind key decisions relating to movement, density, character and landscape structure is insufficiently clear and the movement strategy, street hierarchy, housing arrangement and integration with the landscape do not yet work together to create a well-connected, characterful development with a clear identity rooted in the opportunities presented by the site and its context.

We would welcome the opportunity to review this scheme again once the panel's recommendations have been taken into consideration and ahead of a planning submission.

## Key recommendations

1. Establish clear design parameters, informed by site analysis, landscape character, topography, movement and density, and demonstrate how the masterplan layout has evolved.
2. Develop a series of conceptual diagrams which, together, clarify the key design drivers for the masterplan and reinforce the rationale behind the street layout, placemaking, housing typology and landscaping within the scheme
3. Deliver a comprehensive movement strategy that prioritises high-quality, safe walking, cycling, and public transport connections, including to Worplesdon Station, local bus stops and along public rights of way. Demonstrate how these will be delivered in partnership with Surrey County Council and relevant stakeholders.
4. Refine the street hierarchy, parking strategy and residential layout to create more characterful and distinctive streets and prioritise placemaking over highway infrastructure.

5. Explore and respond to the site's landscape character in the masterplan, including topography, ecology, mature trees, views and wider landscape context, and embed landscape character and biodiversity in the development.
6. Use the site's landscape assets, such as the mature oak tree views and long-distance landscape views, to create a strong sense of arrival, a coherent open space network and a distinctive identity for the development.
7. Secure the quality of streets, frontages, parking, cycle storage, landscape treatment and biodiversity measures across the development through a robust and site-specific Design Code.
8. Create a distinctive sense of place through the careful arrangement of housing typologies, density, landscape and public realm, ensuring that different parts of the site respond to their specific context and character.

## Detailed comments and recommendations

### 1. Design and masterplan strategy

- 1.1. We commend the comprehensive site analysis conducted so far; however, further development is required to demonstrate how the masterplan has evolved from this analysis and how the key parameters informing the development have been established. There is a missing element in the design development process - from site analysis to a proposed layout - and a clearer justification of the process, including iterative design and testing of options, would provide greater confidence that the proposed masterplan is the most appropriate response to the opportunities and constraints of the site.
- 1.2. Key decisions and site parameters must be established before the masterplan layout, with greater clarity provided on the fundamental drivers of the masterplan, including landscape character, topography, street typologies, density, and the treatment of site edges and existing landscape features, trees and planting. A stronger parameter-led approach is essential to provide confidence that the approach, density and layout are appropriate for this specific site.
- 1.3. Further consideration of how the identity and character of the development are created is required, including how different parts of the development could respond to the distinct landscape context and character within the site. A more deliberate approach to the clustering of homes, density and typologies could help create two distinct and recognisable areas that respond to different parts of the site.
- 1.4. Whilst we are not opposed to the proposed density in principle, its success is dependent on the careful arrangement of homes, parking and landscape provision and selection of housing typologies. Aspects of the proposed layout, including parking spaces between gables and inconsistent garden sizes, raise concerns about the quality and efficiency of the layout.

### 2. Connectivity and movement

- 2.1. Whilst there is potential to establish stronger active travel and public transport connections from the development, it is not yet clear in the proposals how this will be delivered and more work must be done to ensure these are developed in sufficient detail to be realised. We recognise that some connections are more complex to achieve and will require collaboration with stakeholders and relevant authorities but connectivity and transport, including to Worplesdon Station, Woking and Guildford, must be prioritised as the key drivers for the scheme.

- 2.2. The delivery of improvements to Prey Heath Road to allow a feasible pedestrian and cycle route to Worplesdon station is critical to the success of the scheme and must be delivered in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) and other local developers. These improvements are unlikely to meet the requirements of the Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 but may require the footway and carriageway to reduce in width in places, with single-lane shuttle working for portions of the road. We are encouraged by the intention from SCC's highways authority to include Prey Heath Road as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and works should be co-ordinated to show onwards connections to this site.
- 2.3. The connection to the potential adjacent development at Sutton Green Golf Course is positive and should be tested alongside the indicative proposals for this scheme to determine the most beneficial location for a pedestrian/cycle connection. The location of bus stops and mixed-use facilities should also be considered.
- 2.4. In light of future improvements to Prey Heath Road and a connection between this development and Sutton Green Golf Course, the route through the development onto Maybourne Rise has the potential to become a key local cycling connection. This should be fully explored to ensure a high-quality and attractive cycle route is provided.
- 2.5. The upgrading of the "dirt track" to the east of the site is welcomed, however the additional connection along Pyle Hill towards New Lane, rather than through the proposed SANG on the adjacent development, should also be considered. This would provide a safer route with more frontages and overlooking from dwellings, especially at night, in the early morning and winter.
- 2.6. The improvements and extension of footpaths on Maybourne Rise are supported, but this must include the routes east towards Guildford Road, Egley Road and local bus stops. For example, the narrow footpaths through the trees could be widened and made continuous and accessible, and the missing footpath on Maybourne Rise to the southbound bus stop should be included.
- 2.7. The proposed connection to the public right of way appears to be broadly in the correct location, although further consideration should be given to overlooking, safety and the relationship with adjacent dwellings. The pedestrian movement along the public right of way should be clearly prioritised over the vehicle movement along the dirt track, which could be achieved through junction design and materials, for example with a Copenhagen Crossing type approach.
- 2.8. The provision of safe and comfortable routes and connections for all, especially women, girls and vulnerable people, must be considered, addressed through engagement with the community and demonstrated in the design, including lighting provision.

### **3. Street design, layout and parking**

- 3.1. A loop road layout is the preferred approach for the site to reduce cul-de-sacs and turning heads, allow for efficient deliveries and refuse collection, support wayfinding, and reduce hardstanding, and this should be developed further.
- 3.2. The organic street form could be supported, subject to the retention of as many existing trees as possible, and a further de-engineering of the street could contribute to its character as a lane in a woodland environment. For example, greater variation in street widths could provide natural traffic calming, opportunities for amenity areas and visitor parking, and a reduction in the overall amount of hardstanding and materials required.
- 3.3. The character and identity of the “dirt track” to the east should be considered further, including its name which could be explored in collaboration with the existing residents. The strategy of fronting onto this street is positive, but we do not support the locating of car parking directly in front of homes, especially in this location. The existing dirt track should be improved, whilst retaining its more informal character as a secondary route to the main street through the development. Changing the priority at this junction so the dirt track is a side street and the link from the site to Maybourne Rise is more direct should be considered.
- 3.4. The central street and street along the southern boundary could adopt distinct characters, with a clear hierarchy between them and the nature of the routes through the development changing as one moves through the site. For example, the central street may be more structured with materials relating to Maybourne Rise, whilst the southern street could take on a looser, more informal character akin to a lane through the woods. This character should also be reflected in the residential typologies and housing arrangements along these streets.
- 3.5. Car parking must be located at the side of dwellings wherever possible, rather than to the front where there are at times up to nine parking spaces in a row, to ensure a positive relationship between homes and the street, to ensure that cars do not dominate the street scene and establish active travel as the primary choice for movement.
- 3.6. Given the presence of existing gates directly from homes onto the public right of way to the north-east of the site, the provision of gates for direct access from the proposed homes in this location should be considered.
- 3.7. Streets with continuous frontage lined with street trees are preferable to single-sided streets, to create a sense of activity and place.

- 3.8. Cycle parking must be considered as a crucial opportunity to promote active travel from the development, given that Worplesdon station can be accessed by a 5-minute cycle ride. Cycle storage should be located at the front of homes, not in back gardens, sheds or garages, and must be easy to access. This could be provided with Sheffield stands in front gardens, although greater security should be considered for e-bikes.
- 3.9. Requirements for vehicle and cycle parking should be included in the Design Code, with simple mandatory codes stating that cycle parking must be located at the front of homes and that end-on parking at the front of dwellings is not permitted.

#### **4. Landscape**

- 4.1. The context of the Thames Basin Heaths and Thames Basin Lowlands National Character Area (NCA), nearby Whitchurch Common and Prey Hill Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), priority habitats, and copses of woodland must be fully analysed and understood, including the level of sensitivity, the site's impact, the topography and views. For example, had the site not been used as a paddock (and golf course on the adjacent land) it may have been a common or heathland and the opportunity to recover some of this character through the selection of species such as oak, pine and birch should be explored.
- 4.2. The arrival to the site at the top of the hill from Maybourne Rise presents a significant placemaking opportunity that is not yet fully reflected in the masterplan. The elevated position, long-distance views to the landscape and relationship with the SANG and veteran trees must be considered as key design parameters. The layout, landscape and movement network must be approached holistically to create a strong sense of arrival and celebrate the distinctive qualities of the site.
- 4.3. A relationship between the mature oak tree and eastern landscape corridor could form the basis of two connected green spaces that provide a clearer structure for the development, make greater use of the site's existing qualities, and strengthen the sense of arrival to a place rooted in the landscape.
- 4.4. The landscape spaces are too concentrated at the site's periphery, and more should be done to integrate landscape through the rest of the site. Most of the green space in the development comprises private gardens, but measures within a Design Code or plot passports could facilitate the inclusion of small copses of trees and heathland planting distributed throughout the development site to create a positive landscape identity.

- 4.5. The opportunity to create social spaces where people can meet and dwell should be explored further. For example, new spaces could be integrated with the water management system, alongside attenuation and rainwater capture within wide verges to create characterful spaces. These could also incorporate community growing areas
- 4.6. The potential access to the SANG on the adjacent site would be a benefit for this development, however further exploration of how a more integrated landscape area and walking route could be provided on the eastern boundary and the implications if the adjacent SANG is not delivered is required.
- 4.7. The front gardens and frontages of homes should be explored further with a more informal and relaxed approach than the proposed ornamental hedges and opportunities for personalisation. The opportunity to increase biodiversity should also be explored, for example by introducing mixed native hedgerows incorporating blackthorn to support brown hairstreak butterflies. The Building for a Healthy Life principles should be considered to inform the approach to frontages.
- 4.8. The existing oak tree at the west of the site must be retained and is a valuable and essential asset to support ecology, habitat and carbon sequestration.
- 4.9. We support the inclusion of street trees; however, a looser and more staggered arrangement should be explored.
- 4.10. The approach to biodiversity net gain must be developed further to maximise the opportunity for nature to inform and be embedded in all aspects of the development.
- 4.11. A clear landscape management and stewardship strategy must be developed, with particular attention to ecological management including how communal spaces are treated and how their quality is upheld so they do not become residual spaces.

## **5. Sustainable design**

- 5.1. The emerging approach to sustainable design and renewable energy was not discussed in detail at this review.

- 5.2. The standing advice from Design South East is that at a subsequent design review and at planning application stage the proposal must produce a clear strategy that details how the development will minimise embodied, operational, and transport-related carbon emissions, and optimise the use of renewable energy to align with the Government's legal commitment to Net Zero Carbon by 2050. The proposal should demonstrate its compliance to a respected zero carbon pathway, for example the UKGBC Net Zero Whole Life Carbon Roadmap for the Built Environment. The sustainability strategy should be tied to measurable targets and detailed modelling work informed by respected calculation methods (as applicable), and also address water use, biodiversity net gain, waste reduction and circular economy principles.

## 6. Community engagement

- 6.1. The approach to community engagement in the development of this scheme was not discussed in detail at this review.
- 6.2. The NPPF (2024, Chapter 12, paragraph 137) states that "*Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should...work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.*"

## 7. Materials and detailing

- 7.1. The approach to materials and detailing was not discussed in great detail at this review. Paragraph 140 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) states: '*Local planning authorities should seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used).*'
- 7.2. In order to be consistent with this national policy, the applicant team and local authority should note Design South East's general guidance on material quality and detail. At an appropriate planning application stage, the quality of the detailing should be demonstrated through large scale drawings at 1:20 and 1:5 of key elements of the building/landscape and should be accompanied by actual material samples which should be secured by condition as part of any planning approval.
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This report is a synthesis of the panel's discussion during the review and does not relate to any discussions that may have taken place outside of this design review meeting. A draft report is reviewed by all panel members and the chair ahead of issuing the final version, to ensure key points and the panel's overarching recommendations are accurately reported.

The report does not minute the proceedings but aims to provide a summary of the panel's recommendations and guidance.

### **Confidentiality**

If the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the panel, this report is offered in confidence to those who attended the review meeting. There is no objection to the report being shared within the recipients' organisations provided that the content of the report is treated in the strictest confidence. Neither the content of the report, nor the report itself can be shared with anyone outside the recipients' organisations. Design South East reserves the right to make the content of this report known should the views contained in this report be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). Unless previously agreed, pre-application reports will be made publicly available if the scheme becomes the subject of a planning application or public inquiry. Design South East also reserves the right to make this report available to another design review panel should the scheme go before them. If you do not require this report to be kept confidential, please inform us.

If the scheme is the subject of a planning application the report will be made publicly available, and we expect the local authority to include it in the case documents.

### **Role of design review**

This is the report of a design review panel or workshop. Design review is endorsed by the National Planning Policy Framework and the opinions and recommendations of properly conducted, independent design review panels should be given weight in planning decisions including appeals. The panel does not take planning decisions. Its role is advisory. The panel's advice is only one of a number of considerations that local planning authorities have to take into account in making their decisions.

The role of design review is to provide independent expert advice to both the applicant and the local planning authority. We will try to make sure that the panel are informed about the views of local residents and businesses to inform their understanding of the context of the proposal. However, design review is a separate process to community engagement and consultation.

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