# STATE OF GUILDFORD BOROUGH REPORT

## OVERVIEW

Guildford Borough is Surrey's most populous district with an estimated population of 134,400 in 2007 (compared to 129,700 in the 2001 census). Projections by the Office of National Statistics, which do not make any allowance for local housing development, predict that the population will have risen by 18,400 (13.8%) to 151,500 by 2026 (the proposed timeframe for the Guildford Development Framework and Sustainable Guildford Strategy). The Borough is the second largest district in the county in terms of area, covering approximately 104 square miles (269 square kilometres).

The two principal urban areas are the town of Guildford and the urban area of Ash and Tongham in the west of the Borough. Approximately half of the Borough's population live in the town of Guildford. The topography and various protective designations surrounding the town have had a significant influence in its historic development and continue to constrain and shape opportunities for new infrastructure and development. Ash and Tongham have a population of approximately 18,000 and are mostly residential in character. Ash has a local shopping centre and some small industrial estates. The surrounding area is subject to various environmental and policy designations and restrictions.

Outside of the urban areas, most of the Borough is designated as green belt. The southern part lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Borough also contains special protection areas, special areas of conservation, sites of special scientific interest and non-statutory designations of sites of nature conservation importance and local nature reserves. These rural areas provide an accessible amenity for a wide range of users, including walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Borough has a rich and varied architectural heritage, with 1,200 listed buildings and 38 conservation areas.

Guildford Borough is, in the main, an affluent area and crime levels are low. Residents are largely healthy, enjoying well above average life expectancy, and the workforce is generally well-educated, highly skilled and well-paid. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, which provides a measure of deprivation based on factors such as income, employment, health, education, housing and crime, ranks the Borough as one of the least deprived 10% of districts in England.

However, there are pockets of deprivation. For the purposes of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Borough is divided into 84 smaller areas called super output areas. Whilst 68% of the Borough's super output areas are within the least deprived quartile in England, part of Westborough is within the most deprived national quartile and is the fourth most deprived area in

Surrey. A further 10 areas (located in Stoke, Westborough, Ash Wharf, Friary and St Nicolas and Worplesdon) are within the most deprived half of super output areas in England and amongst the 70 most deprived in Surrey (out of a total of 709). The impact of such relative deprivation can be exacerbated in an area such as Guildford Borough. For example, high house prices mean that access to appropriate housing is a major challenge for many.

The Guildford Borough community is not very ethnically diverse, with 93% of residents describing themselves as white in 2006. This proportion is higher than for Surrey (92%) and England (87%). The largest ethnic group in the Borough is Indian with 1.1% of the population followed by Chinese (1.0%). There are no significant concentrations of ethnic minority groups, although there is a sizeable traveller community, particularly in the Ash area. This provides a challenge in ensuring that the needs of these small groups and individuals are met.

The current global economic downturn will clearly have an impact on the Borough, particularly on local businesses and employment opportunities. There will be implications for many of the themes set out in this report, such as housing, health and wellbeing and crime and disorder. Relevant agencies, both statutory and voluntary, will need to work together in the short-term to mitigate the detrimental effects. However, the Partnership's vision for 2026 will focus on the longer-term aspirations for the future of the Borough and its economy.

***Guildford town is identified in the draft South East Plan as a regional hub - a focus for investment in transport and infrastructure to support higher levels of economic activity and housing development.***

***Many residents attach a high priority to the preservation of the natural landscape, including the green belt.***

***The current global economic climate will clearly impact on the local economy and jobs. Relevant agencies will work together in the short-term to mitigate the problems, but the Partnership's vision for the Borough for 2026 needs to focus on longer-term aspirations.***

The draft South East Plan, which sets out the government's vision for the region up to 2026, identifies Guildford town as a regional hub. This envisages the town as being a focus for investment in transport and infrastructure to support higher levels of economic activity and housing development. Whilst the need for transport improvements and additional (particularly) affordable housing is proposed, this has created tensions as high priority is given by many residents to the preservation of the natural landscape, including the green belt. Achieving an appropriate balance will be, perhaps, the key challenge facing the Borough.

## LOCAL ECONOMY

The UK Competitiveness Index measures the competitiveness of localities across the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) based upon both the development and sustainability of businesses and the economic welfare of individuals. In 2008, Guildford Borough (in common with seven other Surrey districts) was ranked as one of the most 25 competitive localities in the UK (out of a total of 408). Outside London, it was the most competitive location in the country with a population over 100,000, followed by St Albans and Cambridge. However, the Borough's ranking fell by eight places from 13$^{th}$ to 21$^{st}$ between 2006 and 2008.

The general affluence of Guildford Borough is reflected in high house prices and high car ownership. Unemployment levels are low by both regional and national standards and have remained relatively stable in recent years. The unemployment rate in the Borough in October 2008 (based on jobseekers' allowance claimants) was 1.0%, compared to the south east (1.6%) and UK (2.6%).

In recent years, the number of jobs has risen and there has been an increase in the number of registered businesses to over 5,000. Employment levels are high and a higher proportion of working age residents are employed in the most senior types of employment than the regional and national averages. Residents generally have a higher level of skills attainment than found regionally and nationally, including at degree level, and many are employed in the knowledge-driven sectors. There is, however, a skills shortage in some sectors.

The average income of residents (£32,770 in 2006) is significantly higher than the regional (£27,538) and national averages (£24,976) and there is a high level of commuting out of the area to higher paid jobs. These high incomes, together with high house prices and a shortage of affordable housing, make the area unaffordable for many people and present difficulties in attracting much-needed lower paid workers, key workers, young people and migrant workers. The business sector is concerned about the detrimental effects.

***Guildford Borough is one of the most competitive districts in the UK***

***Highly skilled workforce, high average earnings and low unemployment … but some skills shortages in some sectors.***

***High house prices and not enough affordable housing are making it difficult for local businesses to attract lower paid workers.***

***Traffic congestion is now seen as substantially increasing business operating costs … and the Hindhead tunnel is due to open in 2011.***

***Small pockets of deprivation with concentrations of people on low incomes and benefits and with no or low qualifications***

Guildford town centre is a focus for major commercial and administrative functions and is a primary regional shopping and leisure destination. Guildford is consistently one of the most sought-after retailing locations in the country and the extension of the Friary Centre would provide a significant expansion of retail floorspace within the town. The Borough is a tourist destination and attracts 4.2 million visitors each year. Guildford town centre also has up to 6,000 visitors to its vibrant night-time economy at any one time.

Despite the general prosperity, there are pockets of deprivation with concentrations of people on low incomes and benefits. Part of Westborough is in the national quartile with the highest proportion of the population in receipt of means-tested benefits (27%), the fourth highest figure in Surrey. Parts of Stoke, Westborough, Ash Wharf and Worplesdon (with between 17% and 21% of their populations receiving such benefits) perform worse than the national average and, on this basis, are amongst the most income deprived areas in the county. Helping the economically inactive back into work would help all residents share in the Borough's economic success and prevent the gap between the richest and poorest growing.

Although the workforce is generally highly-skilled in nature, parts of the Borough appear in the national quartile with the lowest skills levels. The proportions of working age adults in parts of Stoke (51%), Westborough (40%) and Ash Wharf (36%) with no or low qualifications are very significant and amongst the highest in the county. Raising levels of literacy, numeracy and employability will again enable the success of the local economy to be shared more widely and help in addressing existing skills shortages.

There is significant traffic congestion in the town centre and on major routes during peak hours and this is forecast to increase, particularly in the light of the anticipated opening of the new Hindhead tunnel in 2011. Traffic congestion is now seen as substantially increasing business operating costs in the Borough and tackling congestion hotspots to reduce their financial impact will be crucial. Businesses themselves have a role to play in minimising the need to make journeys, implementing travel plans and adopting more flexible approaches to the way in which their employees work.

Continued economic success will be vital to the quality of life and well-being of residents. Investment will be required to maintain competitiveness and retain and attract businesses. In this respect, Guildford is identified in the draft South East Plan as a regional hub and, as such, will be a focus of investment to promote sustainable development and economic growth. Key issues will include the provision of high quality business and commercial sites, housing and associated infrastructure, transport improvements and the protection of the natural and built environment. The rural economy will also need to be nurtured and diversified and local services retained to provide sustainable communities.

***The current global economic problems will have a significant impact on the local economy and its historical ability to maintain very low levels of unemployment.***

It is worth emphasising that this report has been prepared at a time of deepening concerns regarding the global economic climate. This will clearly impact on the local economy and the ability to maintain very low levels of unemployment.

## HOUSING

The quality of housing has a major influence on the overall health and wellbeing of the community, including social inclusion, educational achievement, crime and disorder and mental and physical health. It also impacts on the local economy by enabling a workplace with the necessary skills to secure decent affordable housing.

The high cost of housing in Guildford Borough is apparent in both the owner-occupied and private rented sectors. House prices are expensive, almost 70% above the average for England and Wales and well above the average for the south east. For the period July to September 2008, average house prices were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Guildford Borough | £382,993 |
| South East England | £270,571 |
| UK | £224,064 |

***House prices 70% above national average and more than ten times residents' average annual earnings.***

Prices in the Borough increased by 59% between 2002 and 2007 and, by early 2008, the price of even one bedroom properties in good repair was estimated to be in the region of £161,500. Average house prices are now more than ten times average annual earnings and, therefore, despite falls in prices over the last year, the housing market remains accessible only to households with either large existing equity or very high incomes. Renting a one-bedroom flat costs around £700 per month and a two-bedroom property in excess of £900. Cheaper properties are difficult to find as Guildford's large student population means that demand for private rented sector properties usually outstrips supply, although the situation is becoming more fluid in the current economic downturn. The importance of affordable housing to the local community was emphasised in the 2008 Residents' Survey. Of all Borough Council services, only affordable housing received a negative satisfaction score (51% dissatisfaction) and residents identified it as a key spending priority.

West Surrey is distinctly different from the regional and national pattern regarding its housing market. Compared to the national picture, West Surrey has about 10% less terraced housing, 5% less semi-detached property and 15% more detached property. The proportion of owner-occupied housing in the Borough is 76% (compared to 69% nationally) and the main difference from the national pattern is the much lower proportion of social rented stock (13.6% compared to 19% for England). The private rented sector, at 10.7%, is slightly smaller than the national average of 12%.

As referred to in the opening paragraph, the population of Guildford Borough is projected to increase to 151,500 by 2026 (excluding any allowance for additional housing development), with the greatest

increase being in the proportion of elderly residents. Changes to household formation, including a large increase in single person households through elderly people living longer, separation and divorce and young people living alone, will result in household numbers rising at a faster rate than population growth.

The substantial increase in the older population over the next 20 years will require a significant increase in home support for the most frail and vulnerable to enable them to continue living independent lives. New housing developments will also need to take account of this trend by providing appropriate levels of accommodation for elderly occupants.

The South East Plan asserts that there needs to be a significant increase in housing provision across the region. The latest target figure for new dwelling provision in Guildford Borough is 422 dwellings per annum up to 2031, a total of 10,550 homes.

***Draft South East Plan would require 422 new dwellings per year up to 2031 – a total of 10,550 homes.***

***Number of households on housing needs register has increased by 50% over last five years.***

***1,194 new affordable homes would be required each year over the next five years to meet needs.***

***New housing will need to cater for an ageing population and support will be required to enable the most frail and vulnerable to continue living independent lives.***

The number of households on the Borough Council's housing needs register increased by 50% from 2,435 in 2002/03 to 3,656 in 2008/09. At the same time, the supply of affordable housing has reduced resulting in an ever-increasing gap between the numbers seeking assistance and the property available. For example, in 2007/08, the total number of affordable home vacancies was 473, which included 55 new build properties. The supply of new build affordable properties is expected to increase to approximately 110 in 2008/09 but, as the number of vacancies in the existing stock continues to fall, it is likely that the overall supply of available properties will still be below 500.

The most recent housing market assessment for the Borough suggests that, in order to meet affordable housing needs over the next five years, 1,194 new affordable homes are required each year. Realistically, the Borough cannot hope to meet the total shortfall of affordable housing, as it greatly exceeds even the total annual housing provision target in the regional plan. The Borough Council has an existing target of ensuring that 400 affordable homes are built in the four year period up to April 2012. However, the current economic situation and, in particular, the state of the housing market is likely to have an impact on the ability to meet this target without government intervention.

Despite high house prices and the shortage of affordable housing, homelessness and rough-sleeping in the Borough has remained at low levels in recent years. However, the latest trends indicate a gradual increase in homelessness applications and instances of rough sleeping and, in view of the current economic down-turn, there is a risk of significantly higher numbers of home repossessions.

The need for new housing development and associated infrastructure is a particularly sensitive issue for local people, with preservation of the high quality natural landscape, including the green belt, being a high priority. The topography and special designations of much of the Borough also constrain locations for potential development. These concerns must be balanced with development needs, including the need to provide affordable housing and local employment in rural areas to maintain balanced and sustainable communities.

## TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Both road and rail routes converge at Guildford. Four major roads pass through the Borough. The M25 enters the Borough briefly at Wisley at its junction with the A3. The A3 runs from north to south through the Borough and provides road links to both London and the south coast. The A31 runs along the top of the Hogs Back and joins with the A331 Blackwater Valley Road at the western end of the Borough. The A25 also runs in an east-west direction between Guildford and Reigate. The Borough is well served by rail with direct lines to London, Portsmouth, Reading and Gatwick.

Car ownership is high in Guildford Borough compared to regional and national levels and it also has a significantly greater proportion of households with two or more cars. Most journeys to work by Surrey residents are by car (72%). In addition, 42% of trips to school in Surrey are by car, compared with 36% in the south east and 31% nationally. Over-reliance on the car for the school run adds to congestion, a problem exacerbated when schools are not within easy walking or cycling distance.

The major roads, together with the town centre gyratory, become congested at peak hours. A study undertaken as part of the preparation of the local transport plan, identified Guildford, Redhill/Reigate and Woking as the urban areas in Surrey with the most highway problems. During peak periods, small incidents on the major routes can often give rise to serious delays. With regard to the trunk road network, the A3 through Guildford was seen as the route with most problems (ahead of sections of the M25 and M3). Congestion is forecast to increase, particularly following the opening of the new Hindhead tunnel in 2011, which will significantly increase traffic flows into Guildford along the A3. The local transport plan aims to limit the increase in road traffic to 14% by 2011, compared to 1998 levels. The scale of the problems indicates the need for significant investment.

***72% of Surrey residents commute to work by car and 42% use a car for the school run.***

***Congestion on major routes during peak periods and small incidents often give rise to serious delays.***

***A3 through Guildford one of most problematic routes … traffic will increase following the opening of the Hindhead tunnel.***

***Park and ride, public transport, cycling and walking key to future plans to reduce congestion.***

The Borough has high levels of rail commuters. Nearly, 7.2 million travellers passed through Guildford's main rail station in 2006/07, making it the most heavily used station in the county. A further 2.3 million travellers used the Borough's eleven other stations during the year.

Four park and ride sites (Artington, Spectrum, Ladymead and Merrow) operate within the Borough providing a total of 1,300 spaces during the week and 1,540 spaces on Saturdays. These have been successful in diverting traffic from the centre of town. Further sites are planned at the Manor Farm, University of Surrey site and on the northern corridor. 3,000 spaces are available for short-stay parking to assist shoppers, businesses and visitors, with a further 2,000 long stay spaces at York Road and Farnham Road car parks. Phased reductions in long-stay parking are planned as more park and ride spaces become available and improvements are made to public transport, whilst short-stay parking levels will be maintained.

In addition to the further development of park and ride, measures to increase the use of public transport, cycling and walking form the key component of future plans to reduce traffic congestion in the Borough (including reducing car journeys to school). Based on 2004 levels, current targets are to increase journeys on public transport, foot and cycle to 15%, 23% and 6% of all journeys respectively by 2011. Whilst no measurable data is currently available for journeys on foot, the cycling and public transport targets are likely to be exceeded, a major contributing factor being concessionary fares for older people (who now travel free during off-peak periods) in the latter case.

Improved traffic management systems will also be required to make optimum use of the existing highway capacity and major forms of traffic generating development will need to be located in places which are well served, or capable of being well served, by cycling, walking and public transport. As referred to previously, local businesses also have a role to play in minimising the need to make journeys, implementing travel plans and adopting more flexible approaches to the way in which their employees work.

Guildford Borough's extensive network of major and minor roads and footpaths has evolved over many years. Residents frequently report damage and wear to the highway, which Surrey County Council (as local highway authority) must ensure is safe for users. However, maintaining roads and paths in the Borough is a challenge and a current priority for the County Council.

In line with the picture for Surrey as a whole, there has been a gradual but steady decline in the number of people being killed or seriously injured on the Borough's roads. In 2007, 82 people were killed or seriously injured in road accidents compared to an average of 129 in the mid-1990s. Despite this reduction, road injuries and deaths are higher than the England average and the numbers in Guildford Borough are higher than other Surrey districts. This is largely due to the size of the Borough, extent of the road network and high volumes of traffic. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 show particularly high road traffic accident rates in Friary and St Nicolas, Worplesdon, Holy Trinity, Westborough, Lovelace and Stoke.

***Those without a car (particularly the young and old in rural areas) may find it difficult to access services and employment.***

***£30 million bid to government for transport improvements.***

***Improvements will need to sit alongside the Highways Agency's plans for the A3.***

In an area with high car ownership and usage, those without access to a car can find it particularly difficult to access services and employment. In the more rural parts of the Borough, limited services and infrastructure and accessibility issues can cause isolation and increase challenges for more vulnerable people. Young people have less access to services and employment opportunities and older people may need transport to enable them to continue living independently. In rural parts of the Borough, there are fewer bus routes and services are less frequent (sometimes only on certain days and with as few as two return services a day). Dial-a-ride bus services and other community transport provision have an important role to play in these circumstances.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 give an indication of accessibility to services (based on proximity to primary schools, food stores, GP premises and post offices). Whilst these figures should be treated with some caution, 51% of the 84 super output areas in Guildford Borough are within the national quartile with the poorest access to such services.

Guildford town is identified in the draft South East Plan as a regional hub - a main centre for investment in transport and other infrastructure, economic activity and new housing development. As such, Guildford, together with the two other hubs in Surrey (Woking and Redhill/Reigate), will provide a focus for investment in transport and tackling congestion in future years to support a higher concentration of economic activity and housing and associated development. Priority in Guildford will be given to achieving a high level of accessibility, especially by public transport, and the development of high quality public transport interchanges.

As a hub, the government will provide funding for schemes in Guildford costing more than £5 million. A bid of £30 million has been submitted by Surrey County Council for improvements in Guildford, largely based on public transport, park and ride, cycling and walking measures. Proposals will now need to be developed and it is anticipated that approved schemes could be built between 2013 and 2018. The impact of the opening of the Hindhead Tunnel and other traffic growth will need to be modelled and any proposals will need to sit alongside the Highways Agency's plans for the A3.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The health of people in Guildford Borough is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy of men (80.1 years) and women (83.9 years) is amongst the highest in the country and the mortality rate is the lowest of any Surrey district and significantly below regional and national levels. The Borough has a lower prevalence of cancer, cardiovascular diseases and respiratory illnesses than the south east and England and, again, has amongst the lowest rates of any of the districts in the county. A greater proportion of the population of the Borough describe their health as being "good" than for Surrey, the south east and England and fewer perceive themselves as suffering from a limiting long-term illness.

Despite this encouraging overall picture, the pattern is not uniform. Male life expectancy in parts of Stoke, Westborough, Onslow, Ash Wharf and Ash South and Tongham is 5.8 years shorter than that in the least deprived areas. Guildford Borough has the widest gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived income groups of all the Surrey districts. Higher proportions of the populations of Lovelace, Stoke, Normandy, Shalford, Westborough and Ash Wharf wards describe their health as "not good" than the average for the region and, similarly, a higher percentage of people in those areas perceive themselves as suffering from a limiting long-term illness.

Although mental health needs in Guildford Borough are relatively low, some areas are estimated to have needs greater than the national average. Parts of Friary and St Nicolas, Holy Trinity, Ash South and Tongham, Ash Wharf, Stoke and Ash Vale are within the top quartile nationally in terms of mental health problems and within the areas in Surrey with the greatest mental health needs.

***Life expectancy of residents is amongst the highest in the country … but 5.8 year gap between the most and least deprived areas.***

***Sustained ageing of the population will be one of the greatest challenges, particularly in terms of the numbers of the very elderly.***

The greatest increase in population over the next 20 years will be of older residents, with forecasts indicating that, by 2026, the number of residents aged 65 and over will have increased by 6,300 (31.5%) to 26,300 and those over 75 by 4,100 (41%) to 14,100. In common with other areas, the sustained ageing of the population will be one of the greatest challenges in forthcoming years, particularly in terms of the growth in the numbers of the very elderly. In these circumstances, support for unpaid carers will be important in reducing future social care costs.

Amongst the general affluence, two areas in Guildford Borough are in the national quartile with the greatest proportion of older people living in income deprived households. Parts of Stoke (29%) and Onslow (27%) have the seventh and fourteenth highest proportions of older people living in income-deprived households in Surrey.

A higher proportion of the Surrey population is estimated to have dementia than in the UK generally, probably reflecting the greater proportion of older people. Whilst Guildford Borough currently has the second lowest rate of dementia of the Surrey districts, dementia in the county is forecast to increase by 7% by 2011 and 16% by 2016. This represents a significant increase in the number of the most frail and vulnerable who will need support in the short and medium term.

The importance of care services for the elderly was underlined in the 2008 Residents' Survey. For the first time, this service area was identified as residents' top spending priority.

Much ill-health can be prevented by positive lifestyle choices, including:

- not smoking;
- reducing alcohol intake;
- maintaining a healthy body weight;

- eating a healthy and balanced diet;
- keeping active; and
- safe sun exposure.

Smoking is a major contributor to ill-health, with more cancer and other deaths across the UK being attributed to smoking than any other risk factor. It is a significant factor in accounting for the differences in mortality between the most and least deprived population groups. Smoking prevalence in Guildford Borough is 20.7%, which is significantly lower than the national average (24.1%). However, this represents the highest number of smokers in any Surrey district and the second highest rate of smoking prevalence. Smoking attributable deaths and deaths from lung cancer are much lower than for England, although smoking still accounts for 160 deaths each year. District-level rates mask wide variations, with the prevalence of smoking rising to 30.2% in Westborough and 27.8% in Stoke.

***One in five residents smokes – lower than the national average – but this rises to 30% in one ward and smoking still accounts for the deaths of 160 residents each year.***

***The Borough has amongst the highest levels of hazardous drinking in the country.***

Alcohol misuse is associated with premature death from stroke, cancers, liver diseases, criminality and violence, including domestic and child abuse. It contributes to work absenteeism, unemployment and a higher use of health services. The North West Public Health Observatory has developed alcohol profiles for England for 2007, including estimated prevalence for hazardous, harmful and binge drinkers by local authority, as defined below:

- *Sensible (low risk) drinking* **-** drinking within limits that do not pose any risk of harm to the person or others (i.e. staying within the current guidelines on alcohol consumption)

- *Hazardous (increasing risk) drinking* - drinking above recognised sensible levels, but not yet experiencing harm (measured by consumption of between 22 and 50 units per week for males and between 15 and 35 units per week for females)

- *Harmful (high risk) drinking* - drinking above recognised sensible levels and experiencing harm, such as an alcohol-related accident, acute alcohol poisoning, hypertension, cirrhosis (measured by consumption of over 50 units per week for males and over 35 units per week for females)

- *Binge drinking* - drinking over double the daily recognised sensible levels in any one day (over eight units a day for men and over six units a day for women)

On this basis, one in four adults in the Borough drink above sensible levels which, in common with six of the other ten Surrey districts, places Guildford in the top ten local authority areas nationally for hazardous drinking. All Surrey districts are below the national average for both harmful and binge drinking, although Guildford Borough has the highest rates in the county for each category. Hospital admission rates due to alcohol-related harm are similar to the Surrey average and below national levels. There is no significant difference in the rate of deaths attributable to alcohol in Guildford compared to Surrey as a whole or England.

Obesity is one of the most serious public health and economic problems facing the UK. It is an important cause of premature death (decreasing life expectancy by up to nine years) and increases the risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure. Obesity costs the NHS over £1 billion per year and society as a whole up to £3.5 billion. In England, nearly a quarter of men and women are obese and national forecasts indicate that this will increase to 47% of males and 36% of females by 2025. Whilst below national levels, it is estimated that one in five adults in Guildford Borough is obese.

The trends for obesity in children are an even greater cause for concern. Increasing numbers of children in Surrey are obese and, for example, in 2006/07, one in four 10 and 11 year olds in Surrey state schools was either overweight or obese. The trends are of particular concern as excess weight in childhood is tracked through to adulthood with the associated health and economic implications. The proportion of children classified as obese in Guildford Borough (7.3%) is below the national average (9.9%), although physical activity levels are lower.

Up to a third of deaths from cancer may be related to unhealthy diets. Proper fruit and vegetable consumption is the second most important cancer prevention intervention after stopping smoking. Evidence produced by the Department of Health suggests that the consumption of at least five proportions of fruit and vegetables a day could decrease the risk of death from heart disease, stroke and cancer by up to 20%. Healthy eating levels in Guildford (based on the five portions a day definition) are high (34.4%) and significantly higher than England (26.4%). However, Guildford includes wards identified as having the most people eating less than one portion of fruit or vegetables a day.

***Obesity amongst children and adults are both below the national average, although one in five adults is estimated to be obese***

***Physical activity by adults is higher than the national average, but levels are lower amongst children.***

***Healthy eating levels in Guildford are high, but some wards have high proportions of residents eating less than one portion of fruit or vegetables a day.***

People who are physically active have about half the risk of developing coronary heart disease compared to those who have a sedentary lifestyle. Regular physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and colon cancer and improved mental health. In older adults, physical activity is also associated with increased functional capacity. Sport England's Active People Survey 2008 indicates that 28% of adults in Guildford Borough are physically active (defined as participating in at least 30 minutes of sport and active recreation of at least moderate intensity, including walking and cycling, on at least three days a week), the second highest level of Surrey districts and higher than for the county overall (25%) and England (21%). The London 2012 Olympics will provide an opportunity to encourage people to follow healthier lifestyles.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

By 2026, the number of residents aged 19 and under is forecast to have increased by 4,700 (15.1%) to 31,100. This would result in a marginal increase in the proportion of the population aged 19 and under to 23.6%. A larger increase in the number of those aged four and under is predicted (22.5%).

Children and young people in the Borough are generally healthy, safe and achieve well above the national, regional and often Surrey average in terms of educational attainment. However, a small proportion have significant needs and, in certain parts of the Borough, a high proportion of children are living in income deprived households. Parts of Westborough, Stoke, Ash Wharf and Worplesdon are amongst the most deprived areas for children in Surrey and within the most deprived national quartile, with between 31% and 42% of children (aged 0 to 15) living in income deprived households. Due to future medical advances, there is likely to be an increase in the level and complexity of needs of some children with disabilities. The co-ordination, support and extension of existing services for children and young people in more deprived areas will be key to providing effective preventative services which avoid the need for later high cost interventions.

GCSE results are amongst the best in the country, with 70% of young people achieving five or more A* to C grades in 2007 (compared to 66% for Surrey and 58% in England). However, parts of Stoke, Westborough, Ash Wharf, Worplesdon, Ash South and Tongham, Pirbright and Ash Vale are amongst

the worst performing areas in the county in terms of educational performance and within the lowest national quartile, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007. Stoke and Westborough also have high pupil absence rates from school. Narrowing the gap in educational achievement for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people is a key challenge.

Offending by young people is lower than in other parts of Surrey and truancy and schools exclusions are generally at very low levels. One in seven offenders are aged under 18, but offenders aged 18 to 25 account for 43% of crime. Offenders under 18 years are most likely to be involved in theft, handling offences, violent crimes and, to a lesser extent, criminal damage. Violent crime dominates the 18 to 25 age group. Young people are far more likely to have experienced crime than other residents and were also at least twice as likely to think they would be mugged, robbed, insulted, harassed or attacked.

***GCSE results amongst the best in the country - 70% achieve five or more A* to C grades … but pockets of poor educational performance.***

***High proportion of children living in income deprived households in some wards.***

***Offending by young people is lower than in other parts of the county.***

***Lack of affordable things to do and places to go is a common complaint.***

As discussed elsewhere in the health and wellbeing section of this report, national trends predict significant increases in obesity in children in future years. Currently, childhood obesity in Guildford Borough is below the national average, despite physical activity levels also being lower. In 2006/07, 83.3% of 5 to 16 year olds in the Borough spent at least two hours per week on high quality PE and school sport compared to 85.7% in England. The London 2012 Olympics provides an opportunity to promote participation in sport and exercise and encourage young people to adopt healthy lifestyles.

There are frequent calls for more affordable activities and facilities for young people. The 2008 Residents' Survey again identified facilities for young people as being one of the key spending priorities of residents. The responses of young people themselves (aged 16 to 20) suggested that there is a lack of affordable things to do and they would wish to see more being spent on live music, sports and outdoor leisure facilities, arts projects, youth centres and affordable housing. Vulnerable young people and those living in more isolated rural communities also need support, such as transport and equipment, to enable them to participate in existing activities.

## SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Guildford Borough is generally seen by residents as safe and the vast majority are very satisfied with the area as a place to live (94%). The relatively stable local population means that many residents (65%) can rely on their neighbours to help them if they have a problem. Friary and St Nicolas was the only ward where a minority of residents feel that they can rely on their neighbours (49%), followed by Stoughton (51%), Stoke (56%), Ash Wharf (56%), Westborough (58%) and Ash Vale (59%). This compares with high sense of community figures in Tillingbourne (87%), Effingham (79%) and Christchurch (79%).

The majority of residents (74%) believe that the statutory agencies are doing a good job in tackling crime and disorder. The highest dissatisfaction was in Ash Vale and Stoughton wards, with 16% of residents in each stating that the police and other agencies are doing a poor job.

Based on crime statistics, the Borough is one of the safest parts of the country to live, work and visit. From 2003/04 to 2007/08, crime in the Borough (based on a basket of ten types of crime fell by 14.2%, one of the best performances of any Surrey district. Over the same period, there was also a slight reduction in the proportion of residents experiencing all types of anti-social behaviour. Crime fell against each of the categories, except wounding and cycle thefts, as shown below:

| | Actual Change | Target | Number of Incidents 2007/08 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal robbery | -69.6% | -20.0% | 24 |
| Theft from a person | No change | -66.4% | 50 |
| Domestic burglary | -14.7% | -10.0% | 422 |
| Theft of a vehicle | -51.0% | -17.5% | 203 |
| Theft from vehicle | -24.9% | -17.5% | 590 |
| Vehicle interference | -27.6% | -12.5% | 144 |
| Common assault | -4.0% | -10.0% | 476 |
| Criminal damage | -11.6% | -19.0% | 2,046 |
| Wounding | +11.9% | -12.5% | 731 |
| Theft of pedal cycle | +68.7% | No change | 221 |

The figures generally reflect national trends, although the rise in violent crime has been much steeper than the national average and is currently the second highest of the Surrey districts. Younger age groups are more likely to be victims of violent crime and, in 2006/07, just under half (49%) were aged under 25. Whilst the figures up to 2007/08 showed an increase in violent crime, there has been a marked reduction in recent months.

The highest rates of crime and anti-social behaviour are found in Westborough ward and the town centre (Friary and St Nicolas and Holy Trinity). Two areas within Westborough have the second and fourth highest levels of crime in Surrey and are within the worst national quartile. Outside these particular "hotspots", the next highest levels of overall crime are found in Stoke, Onslow and Ash Wharf. In Westborough, 42% of residents identify anti-social behaviour as being a problem, followed by Stoke (41%), Stoughton (40%) and Ash Wharf (40%).

***High satisfaction with the Borough as a place to live.***

***One of the safest places in the country to live and work.***

***Crime fell by 14% in the five years up to 2007/08 – violent crime bucked the trend.***

***Disproportionate fear of crime, despite the evidence.***

***Highest levels of crime found in Westborough and the town centre.***

Home Office figures suggest that 0.5% of offenders are responsible for 10% of offences. In Surrey, this means that 120 prolific and priority offenders commit around 7,200 offences each year, or 60 each. The number of offences committed by such persistent offenders alone each year in Surrey exceeds the whole of the crime reduction target for the county. Of the 14,677 notifiable crimes in Guildford Borough in 2006/07, 2,733 individuals were responsible for the 6,154 detected offences (i.e. those offences resulting in formal action by the police against an offender).

13% of residents indicate that the use of drugs is an issue where they live, with the greatest areas of concern being Stoke (21%) and Westborough (20%). The greatest concerns about drunk and rowdy behaviour relate to Friary and St Nicolas (40%), Westborough (39%) and Holy Trinity (36%). Numbers in treatment for drug and alcohol misuse have remained stable. Clients are mainly males aged between 19 and 39, with heroin being the main problem followed by alcohol. However, numbers in treatment is only the tip of the iceberg and does not reflect the real issues. Alcohol is the main problem, cannabis is the most widely used illegal drug and Class A drug use is at very low levels in the Borough.

There has been some success in increasing the reporting of domestic abuse, but the proportion of repeat incidences has not reduced.

In terms of quality of life issues, residents identify speeding traffic (68%), litter and rubbish (59%), and anti-social driving (56%) as being the main problem in their areas. Complaints about neighbour noise have also tended to rise in recent years. Other issues affecting some residents in certain wards

include parking problems, traffic noise, congregations of young people and dog-related issues. Whilst speeding traffic is a major issue for many people across the Borough, the greatest concern about this issue was expressed by residents in Send (83%), Clandon and Horsley (83%) and Ash Wharf (80%).

***Speeding traffic, litter and rubbish and anti-social driving identified as some of main problems.***

***High level of concern about drunk and rowdy behaviour in the town centre and residents feel particularly unsafe in the town centre after dark.***

Despite generally low crime rates, there is a disproportionate fear of crime, particularly regarding the town centre, and there are concerns about anti-social behaviour at a local level. For example, in 2007, 75% of residents felt that crime levels had stayed the same and 15% that they had increased, despite the evidence to the contrary.

Residents' perceptions of the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime are higher than the actual incidence. Break-ins to garages and sheds, break-ins at home and being the victim of a bogus caller were the three types of crime that residents thought were most likely to happen to them. Nearly one in four residents were worried that they would experience a break-in at home.

One in four residents feels unsafe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood or when in the local shopping area after dark when the shops are shut. The area where people feel least safe is in Guildford town centre after dark when the shops are shut, with 30% feeling "a bit unsafe" in this situation.

The 2008 Borough Council Residents' Survey identified tackling crime as one of the key spending priorities of residents, although it has fallen from being the top priority in 2006 to third in 2008 (behind care services for the elderly and affordable housing).

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is now considered by many as the most important issue of the 21st century. Action to combat climate change is needed by individuals, businesses, public bodies and local community groups. However, surveys show that there is little awareness amongst businesses and residents of the part they can play through behavioural change.

The carbon footprint of the south east is approximately 14% above the national average. To provide all the goods and services needed to maintain the region's current way of life for all people across the world would require around 3½ Earths. Surrey's daily water consumption is 180 litres per person (compared to a national average of 129 litres) and water companies in the south east expect household demand to increase by about 20% by 2030, mostly as a result of new housing. The south east is currently designated as an area of water stress, where annual seasonal shortages are predicted, exacerbated by climate change.

Conversely, whilst climate change may increase the number of dry summers and associated water shortages, it is apparent in Guildford Borough, along with many other areas, that changes in climate combined with development growth is bringing about new land drainage problems. The subtle change in climate has influenced what farmers grow and the run-off from agricultural land. Together with the increased likelihood of extreme weather conditions and predicted increases in winter rainfall, this will increase the risk of flooding in the Borough and the requirement for mitigation measures.

In accordance with national objectives, significant efforts will be required to reduce the Borough's $CO_2$ emissions and resource use in general, including though increased use of renewable energy sources and energy conservation, reduced consumption and more recycling. The public, business and domestic sectors have vital roles in contributing to such objectives. Sustainability, including renewable energy and resource conservation, will be an increasingly important element of any new developments and major schemes will need to be served by good public transport links.

***Increased periods of water shortages and flooding predicted.***

***Significant efforts required to reduce $CO_2$ emissions in accordance with national requirements.***

***Target to achieve a recycling and composting rate of 60% by 2010.***

***Preservation of the natural landscape and green belt is a high priority for many.***

Transport is estimated to account for between 40% and 53% of greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon dioxide emitted from vehicles depends primarily on traffic flow and, therefore, quantities are expected to increase in line with traffic growth. This increase will be affected a little by the level of congestion and offset to a small degree by increasing the use of more efficient engines. Measures to reduce reliance on the car and increase alternative modes of transport will have a positive impact in this regard. Despite heavy traffic in the area, the Borough generally enjoys good air quality.

On average, a household in the Borough generates 900kg of waste annually (compared to an average of 940kg for Surrey districts and 990kg nationally). The Borough Council has a target to reduce the amount of municipal biodegradable waste being sent to landfill to 75% of the 1995 figure by 2010 and 35% by 2020. It is estimated that the target for 2010 will be achieved with a total of 14,800 tonnes of biodegradable waste being sent to landfill against the target of 17,316 tonnes, but progress beyond this reduction will be more difficult. To complement this, the Borough's target is to achieve a combined domestic recycling and composting rate (including home composting) of 60% by 2010. In 2007/08, the recycling and composting rate had risen to 52%.

As referred to previously, the need for new housing and associated infrastructure is a sensitive issue for local people, with preservation of the high quality natural landscape, including the green belt, being a high priority. The provision of the level of development necessary to meet people's needs and sustain a successful economy whilst preserving the Borough's character and environment will be a major challenge, particularly as a result of Guildford's designation as a regional hub in the draft South East Plan.

**Principal References:**

Guildford Development Framework Core Strategy Submission Document (Guildford Borough Council, 2006)

Guildford Borough Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010 (Guildford Borough Council, 2005)

Safer Guildford Partnership Plan 2008 – 2011 (Safer Guildford Partnership, 2008)

Perceptions of Crime Surveys (Safer Guildford Partnership, 2007)

Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Surrey Primary Care Trust, 2008)

West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Guildford Borough Council, 2008)

Surrey Local Transport Plan 2006/07 to 2010/11 (Surrey County Council, 2006)

Draft South East Plan (South East England Regional Assembly, 2008)

Climate Change Strategy (Guildford Borough Council, 2004)

Index of Multiple Deprivation (Communities and Local Government, 2007)

UK Competitiveness Index (Centre for International Competitiveness, 2008)

Office of National Statistics (Various Publications)

Draft Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy (Surrey Strategic Partnership, 2008)