



# WOKING@HOME

## DEAR RESIDENT



**Welcome to our first tenant and leaseholder newsletter! It aims to bring you the latest housing-related news and key information from around the borough. We plan to publish four**

**issues a year and hope you find it an interesting and informative read.**

I'd like to start by introducing myself as Woking Borough Council's Director of Housing. I joined the authority in April 2019. The past two years have flown by. I had high hopes of getting out to meet many of you, but sadly the pandemic has prevented this – for the time being.

These are unprecedented times. I know many of you will be missing friends and family, but it is important that we all play our part and continue to follow the national restrictions. The rollout of the vaccination will hopefully bring fresh hope and allow us to once

again enjoy all those little things we took for granted before the pandemic.

In case you missed it, the Council will be bringing its housing and asset management services back in-house from April 2022, as well as directly procuring and managing contracts with repairs and maintenance contractors.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent consultation, with 82% of tenants and leaseholders who responded supporting the Council's proposals. The reasons for these changes are to improve your experience and enable us to work more closely with you in shaping our services. It is early days, but we will keep you updated on progress in future newsletters.

Finally, we'd welcome your ideas and suggestions for future issues.

Please keep safe and look forward to the months ahead, which will hopefully bring warmer weather and easing of restrictions.

**Louise Strongitharm**  
Director of Housing

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## CONTACTING US

During the national restrictions, you can still reach New Vision Homes on:

 0300 373 0373

 [enquiries@nvhwoking.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@nvhwoking.co.uk)

Emergency out of hours:

 0203 701 3590

## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

We are keen to hear what residents want and how we can improve our service to tenants and leaseholders.

If you have something to say and, are interested in volunteering to help us shape the future, please email [resident.engagement@woking.gov.uk](mailto:resident.engagement@woking.gov.uk) to find out more.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITY AT THE TOP OF ITS GAME

The last brick of a new independent living extra care housing facility in Old Woking was laid during a topping out ceremony in February, attended by The Mayor of Woking, Cllr Beryl Hunwicks.

Situated in the centre of Old Woking, the four-storey residence, named Hale End Court, will provide 48 new one and two-bed flats, for older occupants. It will be equipped with everything that its residents require to enable them to continue living independently.



Each flat will have its own fully equipped kitchen, in addition to communal areas. An on-site salon will also be created to meet creature comforts, and mobility scooter charging ports installed.

All of the homes will be fully accessible and appropriately modified for secure living with devices such as door buzzers, accessible bathrooms and emergency pull chords fitted as standard. The facility will be the tenth supported living facility in Woking Borough Council's portfolio of affordable independent living dwellings.

The development remains on schedule for completion



by September 2021. For more information and to see footage of the development site, visit [www.woking.gov.uk/oldwokingindependentliving](http://www.woking.gov.uk/oldwokingindependentliving)

## COUNCIL SECURES APARTMENTS FOR HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION

**A previously-disused office block has a new lease of life as affordable accommodation to help rough sleepers get back on their feet.**

The empty premises were converted by ThamesWey Ltd, a company wholly owned by Woking Borough Council, into 25 comfortable, self-contained studio apartments. The block of flats will give residents who have fallen on hard times a home for up to three years, whilst they rebuild their lives and secure permanent homes.

Cherisse Dealtry, CEO of York Road Project, said: "No one should be without a roof over their head and it is vital that we continue to support the most vulnerable members of our community, to prevent them falling through the cracks of society again once life returns to the new normal."

The project is part-funded by grant funding from the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), with the aspiration of supporting local authorities to continue to keep rough sleepers off the streets.



## ARE YOU LOOKING TO DOWNSIZE?

If your children have grown up and moved on, maybe it's time to think about downsizing your home? If this sounds like you, our Housing Team, can assist you.

If your council property is larger than your current or long-term needs,

we encourage you to move to a smaller property. We can support you with any worries or concerns related to relocating, including the costs associated with moving and the stress of uprooting from familiar surroundings.

By volunteering to downsize your property, we can offer you a wide range of incentives, including:

- receive a financial incentive (according to how many bedrooms you are giving up)
- priority housing (Band B)
- have your removal costs paid by us.

Interested? To find out more, please email [housingneeds@woking.gov.uk](mailto:housingneeds@woking.gov.uk) or call **01483 755 855**.

# NEW SHEERWATER LEISURE CENTRE NAMED AFTER FORMER COUNCILLOR



The new £26m leisure centre in Sheerwater has been officially named the Eastwood Centre in

honour of former Woking Borough Council member, Ian Eastwood.

Doors will open to the public later this year once the exterior works have been completed and each fitness area has been kitted out with the latest equipment.

During his time as a councillor, Ian Eastwood campaigned passionately for better sports facilities in Sheerwater, alongside David Bittleston, former Lead Member of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project.

Bishop David Brown School has shared use of the Eastwood Centre, giving its pupils access to brand new high-quality facilities to support their physical education.

The Eastwood Centre is an integral part of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project, a multimillion pound regeneration project that will transform the centre of Sheerwater into a thriving, sustainable community and an attractive new neighbourhood.

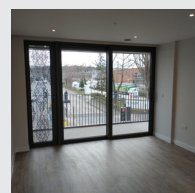
# SHEERWATER REGENERATION PROJECT: FIRST PHASE NEARS COMPLETION

With most of the building work and exterior finish now complete, the first phase of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project nears completion.

The Purple Phase is a medium rise development incorporating Murray Green, 10 three-storey town houses and 82 one, two and three bedroom apartments.

All of the apartments and town houses in this phase are available for either private or affordable rent, none are for sale. The property mix, size and build quality are identical.

The modern interior design and full height windows give each of the spacious properties a light and airy feel. In terms of floor space, these properties are bigger than the ones they replace and more energy efficient, making staying warm more affordable.



## SOCIAL DISTANCING

**BE SENSIBLE**  
Limit contact with others and keep your distance

**BE MINDFUL**  
Follow the measures in place to protect you and others

**BE SAFE**  
Self-isolate if you or anyone in your household has symptoms

## TIME RUNNING OUT TO APPLY FOR EU SETTLED STATUS

**EU nationals have less than 100 days to apply for EU 'settled status' before time runs out on 30 June 2021.**

EU nationals who have lived in the UK for at least five years have to apply for "settled status" to secure

their right to stay, whilst those who have been in the country for less than that can get 'pre-settled status' and build up their five years. People granted pre-settled status have the same rights to work, study, receive healthcare and benefits as those with settled status.

If this applies to you, act now before time runs out. Visit [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/eligibility) for more information.

**PROTECT YOUR FAMILY'S RIGHTS IN THE UK  
APPLY TO THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME BEFORE 30 JUNE 2021**



## HELP US DEVELOP OUR ONLINE SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

We're looking for volunteers to assist us in developing our online self-service housing portal.

Currently, the housing portal provides tenants and leaseholders with online access to basic information held in our databases. It enables you to view your personal details, tenancy details and rent account/transaction information in the form of an online statement, along with access to the Choice-Based Lettings portal which has been live for some time now.

Volunteers are needed to explore the housing portal and provide feedback on your experience, so that we can continue to develop and improve the system.

If you are interested in helping to shape the future of our self-service housing platform, please email [resident.engagement@woking.gov.uk](mailto:resident.engagement@woking.gov.uk) for further information.

## HAVE YOU RESPONDED TO CENSUS 2021?

# census 2021

**The Census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of the population and households. If you've not already, it is important that you return your census.**

It informs decisions nationally and locally on vital services and ultimately ensures millions of pounds are invested in emergency services, mental health care, school places, hospital beds, houses, roads, GP's and dentist's services based on the information people give.

Your census response is required by law. To complete it, or find out how you can get help, visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk) or call **0800 141 2021**.

## YOUR FUND BIG IDEAS ARE COMING IN THICK AND FAST

Late last year, Surrey County Council launched its £100m Your Fund Surrey, designed to empower communities to deliver big place-changing projects that local areas need.

Projects must improve equal opportunities and quality of life for residents, and ideas are plotted on an interactive online map for people to comment on. The Fund offers one off building costs for projects and cannot be used to pay for overheads such as running costs, salaries or maintenance.

If your project meets the criteria you will need to go through an application process and must then build support for your idea in the local community, so remember to shout about it on social media!

Local county councillors can provide advice on getting started and link you up with local groups who can help make it happen. For more information or guidance on the application process, please contact [funding@woking.gov.uk](mailto:funding@woking.gov.uk) or call **01483 743890**. See what ideas are being generated in Woking by visiting [www.surreycc.gov.uk/yourfund](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/yourfund) for further information.

## LOCAL ELECTIONS – THURSDAY 6 MAY 2021

**On Thursday 6 May 2021, elections will be held to elect councillors to Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council, and choose a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Surrey.**

Voting in elections is one of the most effective ways of making sure that your voice is heard by decision-makers within your community.

This year, there is no voter ID pilot, so voters will not require photographic identification when voting.

All British, European Union and qualifying Commonwealth electors on the Electoral Register are entitled

to vote in Surrey County and Woking Borough Council elections. To vote in the elections, you must be on the Electoral Register. You can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

The deadline to register to vote is Monday 19 April 2021.

All eligible voters will receive a poll card setting out their voting arrangements before the election.

For more information about the election process, please visit [www.woking.gov.uk/elections](http://www.woking.gov.uk/elections), email [elections@woking.gov.uk](mailto:elections@woking.gov.uk) or call **01483 755855**.

### Polling stations will be safe places to vote this May

Cleaning, personal protective equipment and social distancing measures will be in place on polling day to ensure your safety and the safety of polling station staff. When visiting your polling station, please:

- wear a face covering
- sanitise your hands
- maintain social distancing
- bring your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot paper, if possible