

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN –
REPORT OF PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT
CONSULTATION**

Date: 9th March 2010

Member Reporting Councillor Burbage

Officer Reporting: Tim Slaney, Head of Planning & Development, extn 5712

Wards affected: Maidenhead (Oldfield, Belmont, Boyn Hill)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the outcome of the recent consultation on the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and to make recommendations to take this document forward to a 'publication version' for submission to the Secretary of State in the summer 2010, as a planning strategy to bring about the rejuvenation of the town centre.
- 1.2 The Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM) has been involved in laying the foundations for a comprehensive approach to rejuvenation of the town centre, working in partnership with others both within the Council and external organisations, primarily to devise strategies and plans. The evidence of successful rejuvenation programmes demonstrates the importance of sound planning and widespread community support for an agreed way forward. Without this work, piecemeal approaches and opportunistic planning applications will prevail.
- 1.3 Key to the rejuvenation programme is the emerging AAP. When adopted, the AAP will replace the existing planning policies for the town centre within current planning strategy - the Local Plan, and will form part of the Council's Local Development Framework.
- 1.4 Consultation took place between 14 January to 12 February 2010 on the Preferred Options for the AAP. This part of the 'process' is one of many steps along the way to producing a final version of the plan. This consultation document set out the preferred approach to the rejuvenation based around a vision, the strategy for achieving it and six areas allocated for specific uses. The document was produced following views previously expressed through consultation and wide-ranging research. Copies of the consultation documents are available in the Group Rooms and can be accessed on the council's website at http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/pp_mtc_aap.htm

- 1.5 A total of 125 responses with 649 individual comments, and 175 comments received at the workshop event, were received on the document. The feedback has been analysed and the key issues raised are:
- There is significant support for the overall aim of rejuvenation the town centre
 - The need to review the capacity and extent of some of the Opportunity Areas
 - The importance of a sound evidence base to support the plan (nb. a significant amount of evidence has been produced to date, for example, employment land review and retail study, and other evidence is currently being finalised).
- 1.6 Officers are currently drafting the final plan for submission along with finalising the evidence base. Whilst the final plan is not available for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, this report sets out the key issues raised against each policy and any new matters, and the implications to consider in drafting the submission version of the AAP. A more detailed draft plan will be produced in time for Cabinet and Full Council.
- 1.7 Once approval is given by Full Council, the final AAP will be submitted to the Secretary of State and will then be subject to independent examination by a Planning Inspector prior to its adoption in 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) The Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options: Report of Consultation be agreed and made available on the council's website, and that consequential changes be incorporated into the draft Area Action Plan.**
- ii) Authority be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Development, and Lead Member for Maidenhead, to agree the final wording of the Area Action Plan taking on board the results of this 'Preferred Options' consultation and any further changes prior to the submission of the document to the Secretary of State in 2010.**
- iii) Following Submission to the Secretary of State, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Development, and Lead Member for Maidenhead to approve any further proposed amendments which may arise during the Examination process.**

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
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Residents will be able to understand the scale of change proposed for the town centre and influence the programme of works being undertaken, and have a greater degree of certainty over what is likely to happen.
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3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

The Maidenhead town Centre Area Action Plan - Preferred Options Document

- 3.1 The 4-week period of consultation on the Maidenhead Town Centre AAP Preferred Options document came to an end on the 12th February 2010. A copy of the Preferred Options Document together with its associated reports, including sustainability appraisal, is available for viewing in the Group Rooms, Members' Room and from Democratic Services.
- 3.2 The AAP will form an important part of the planning strategy for the Royal Borough and a key part of the Council's emerging Local Development Framework including the Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The main components of the draft Plan include:
- Development control policies for design (streets and spaces, greening spaces, waterways, built environment, gateways and building heights); the economy (retail, food and drink, markets and events, offices and visitor accommodation); people (housing and the community, culture and leisure); movement (connections and transport infrastructure); and delivery and implementation;
 - site-specific land use allocations for key 'opportunity areas' within the defined AAP boundary (Broadway; West Street; York Road; Railway Station; High street East/York Stream; Stafferton Way) together with site specific policies that will guide appropriate development;
 - amendments to the Adopted Local Plan Proposals Map as it applies to Maidenhead Town Centre.
- 3.4 Importantly, it provides the main formal planning document to underpin and drive forward the rejuvenation of the town centre which is a key priority of the Council and also the local community. This rejuvenation is also a key objective expressed through the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Area Action Plan, once adopted, will eventually replace a number of saved policies set out in the adopted Local Plan for the Borough.
- 3.5 Details of the consultation are set out in Section 5 of this report. The following sets out: the key issues arising from the 649 comments received on individual matters of the consultation draft AAP and the 175 comments received at the workshop event (nb. Appendix 1 outlines the key areas of comment against the individual policies of the consultation draft plan); the main implications arising from these comments to be taken in to account in drafting of the final version of the AAP; and, the next steps in producing the final draft plan.

Key Issues

- 3.6 Key issues from the consultation include:
- Significant general support for overall aim of regenerating the town centre.

- Support for retail expansion but it must be well integrated with the existing shopping area. Some comment on need to consider provision for other retail need eg. bulky goods retail.
- Some concern raised about the amount of office floorspace within the town centre.
- Support for more, better open spaces, improving appearance of existing and any new streets, greening the town centre, and improving the waterways.
- Concerns from some owners about use of their land in the Opportunity Areas (OAs) and request from other owners for other land to be included.
- Some concern about the suggested wording of certain policies particularly tall buildings, gateways and housing.
- Ensuring evidence is available particularly relating to traffic and transport, leisure, flooding, historic environment, infrastructure and commercial viability

Implications

- Where appropriate, take on board points raised about policies and amend wording.
- Opportunity Areas: 1) retain the boundary of the the York Road Opportunity Area but re-assess design principles, quantum of development and implications in order to retain the football ground; 2) retain St. Mary's Church land within the Land to East of High Street Opportunity Area but re-assess design principles to avoid linkages across this site and refer to retention of community buildings and land – re-assess design principles, quantum of development and implications; 3) consider further changes to the Opportunity Areas including whether any additional land put forward should be incorporated into the Opportunity Areas.
- Consider reviewing the overall amount of office floorspace.
- Consider how to plan for retail floorspace needs not identified in the plan.
- Continue to work on producing the evidence base.

Next steps

3.7 The Preferred Options Consultation forms the final element of consultation before the document is published and submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with statutory regulations. The next stages are as follows:

	Key Milestones
Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan Development Plan Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet agree way forward for producing 'Publication draft' AAP (March 2010) • Full Council approval of 'Publication draft' AAP (April 2010) • Publish AAP (Regulation 27) and public consultation and Regulation 28) (May 2010) • Submit AAP document to Secretary of State

	(Regulation 30) (July 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Examination of AAP (November 2010) • Adoption of AAP (March 2011)
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4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	Continue moving forward with the Area Action Plan	Recommended. It is important that the Report of Consultation is made publically available and that the AAP is informed by the views of the community in the next stage of the process.	Revenue: Costs include a further round of consultation which is required under the relevant Planning Regulations, the appointment of a 'Programme Officer' to support a Planning Inspector at the Examination, and thirdly the costs of the Examination itself. These costs fall partly within revenue budget for 2010/11. Capital: Approved capital programme includes £50K towards costs of additional consultancy and Inspector's fees which should cover the remaining costs.
2.	Do Nothing	Not recommended. Failure to take into account the views of consultees would put the AAP at risk of being found unsound. Failure to make the results of consultation publicly available means that the LDF process would not be wholly transparent. More widely, if the programme is reduced or halted the town will decline, as businesses	Revenue: No direct costs although the maintenance of declining fabric and infrastructure will affect revenue budgets. Capital: If the current programme is halted, some of the £400K indicative budget for 2010/11 would be released for other rejuvenation initiatives. If the whole

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
		and the public have less reason to visit or invest.	rejuvenation does not progress there could also be a potential loss of capital receipt to the Council.

4.2 Risk assessment

4.2.1 The main risks to the progression of the AAP have been assessed and fall into the following two main areas:

- A significant amount of evidence has been produced to date, for example, employment land review and retail study, however, other evidence is currently being finalised. Mitigation – examples include: detailed transport modelling work for the Borough which is progressing and will show the impacts of alternative development options; a detailed infrastructure implementation and delivery plan which clearly indicates the trigger points for infrastructure to be completed prior to development coming forward; and financial viability assessment. By the time the AAP is reported to Full Council, the evidence will be complete.
- The risk of proceeding with an Area Action Plan in advance of the completion of work on the Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). Mitigation - Justification for proceeding with the Area Action Plan has been discussed and agreed with GOSE officers and the plan now forms a part of the approved Local Development Scheme (the detailed project plan for the delivery of the LDF).

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

5.1.1 The consultation began on the 14th January 2010 and ended on the 12th February 2010. It involved:

- a leaflet drop at key locations in the town, together with letters to key stakeholders and consultees;
- a rolling exhibition, workshop and press releases;
- 2 page spread within the Maidenhead Advertiser.
- Workshop in early February 2010 attended by approximately 70 stakeholders including key landowners, amenity groups and young persons.

5.1.2 To reach some of the wider groups in the community, a youtube video was available with links through the AAP web pages and young persons web pages. To date, 125 responses with 649 individual comments have been recorded and processed in relation to the Preferred Options document, providing an indication of the views of the community, interest groups and other statutory consultees. A report summarising the

response is currently being prepared and will be available prior to the Cabinet meeting in Group Rooms, Members' Rooms and from Democratic Services. It is proposed that the Report of Consultation is, in due course published on the Council's website.

5.1.3 The preferred options consultation document of the AAP has been shaped by other consultation exercises namely:

- Key Stakeholder Workshop (June 2009)
- Newsletter Consultation (September/October 2009)
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report
- Young persons workshop January 2009

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1.1 The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report : 23 August 2009

Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre – Final Report of PRoM, January 2009

Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan – Preferred Options Document (January 2010)

Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009

Planning Policy Statement 12: Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning (May 2008)

Associated documents:

- i) Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Appraisal) of the Preferred Options Document
- ii) Consultation Report on Representations received on the Preferred Option Document

APPENDIX 1.

List of policies and key issues arising from consultation comments

Preferred Options Policy	Key issues
MTC1 – Spatial Strategy for Maidenhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generally AAP boundary acceptable. Some argue it is too widely drawn, others want new areas included and parts excluded. ➤ Commercial Boundary (an inner boundary within AAP boundary) should be extended to include Stafferton Way Retail Park. ➤ The Primary Shopping Area (an inner boundary within the AAP boundary) should be extended to include Queen Street and King Street.
MTC2 – Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support. ➤ Include reference to sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) when improving public spaces.
MTC3 – Greening the Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support. ➤ Green space should be more widely dispersed across the town centre. ➤ Include Grenfell Park within the AAP boundary. ➤ Should be a clearly identifiable green infrastructure network particularly linking Kidwells Park to Green Way.
MTC4 – Waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support. ➤ Flood risk will need to be considered. ➤ Presumption against development which prejudices waterways project is premature until a viable, deliverable scheme for the project has been worked up.
MTC5 – Quality Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should be more specific to Maidenhead to create a unique and exciting identity. ➤ Should make more references to sustainable design and construction.
MTC6 – Gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The gateways are too focussed around vehicular entrances. ➤ All gateways should have landmark buildings. ➤ There needs to be evidence to support the justification of these.
MTC7 – Building Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support but some key points raised by a few consultees. ➤ Need to define tall buildings. ➤ The policy is locationally too prescriptive. ➤ Greater flexibility is required with locations for tall buildings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Absence of a rationale for proposed locations of tall building areas. ➤ Southern end of Broadway Opportunity Area (OA) should be an area where taller buildings are appropriate.
MTC8 – Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support for retail expansion. ➤ Retail expansion should be integrated with the existing Primary Shopping Area. ➤ Concentrating a significant amount of the overall retail floorspace in to one area is “risky”. Should consider alternative ways to improve the retail offer including non-town centre sites particularly for bulky goods. ➤ Where will the residual retail floorspace provision as highlighted in the Retail Study be provided? ➤ Suggestions for new areas to be incorporated into the proposed expanded Primary Shopping Area. ➤ Plan fails to provide for the need for convenience goods floorspace. ➤ Retail should be allowed in the other OAs. ➤ Financial and professional services should not be excluded from Shopping Frontages.
MTC9 – Food & Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Need more information about managing the night time economy. ➤ Bars and restaurants need to be carefully controlled.
MTC10 – Markets and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support for policy. ➤ Farmers Market should remain at Grove Road.
MTC11 - Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for offices in town centre but some concern that there is too much office floorspace proposed. ➤ Too prescriptive – offices should be allowed outside of OAs. ➤ This policy should include all employment uses and not just offices.
MTC12 – Visitor Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support. ➤ Encourage medium sized hotels.
MTC13 - Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for housing in town centre but some concern the quantum of housing is too much and that it will largely constitute apartments. ➤ Some concern regarding housing figures in SHLAA and the identified shortfall that could make the AAP and Core Strategy unsound. ➤ Should acknowledge family housing may not be appropriate in Primary Shopping Area. ➤ Various points about numbers, timescales, viability and

	<p>affordable housing thresholds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Need to protect existing stock but wording should be expanded to include housing provided through redevelopment where that property is no longer suitable for that use. ➤ Specify mix, type and tenure of dwellings.
MTC14 – Community, Culture and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General support. ➤ Need to show evidence about such needs.
MTC15 - Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This section should refer to parking being on periphery of town centre. ➤ Need to assess impact on strategic road network. ➤ Denote new pedestrian connections through railway embankment. ➤ Key linkage should be shown along Green Way through the railway embankment. ➤ At grade crossings should not be discounted. ➤ Mixed views on underpasses. ➤ Roads should be lowered with pedestrian/cycle routes above. ➤ High level footbridge between railway station, Queen Street and Stafferton Way.
MCT16 – Potential Travel Infrastructure Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deliverability, implementation and financing of infrastructure need to be addressed. ➤ Needs a wider assessment of impacts. ➤ Some support for Stafferton Way and Blackamoor Lane Link roads. ➤ Concern about capacity on A4. ➤ Innovative new transport solutions required. ➤ Consider reversing flows to certain roads and pedestrianisation of other roads. ➤ Community transport needs have been ignored – not everybody is able bodied.
OA1 – Broadway Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More details on retail mix and unit sizes. ➤ The office element should be increased from 6,000m² to 15,000m². ➤ Groundwater level issues. ➤ Too much reliance placed on this OA to deliver and question whether the site can accommodate all of the need and taking so much of the overall need identified for the town centre. ➤ CPO will take a long time. ➤ Comments on design principles
OA2 – West Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support better links to Kidwells Park.

Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The OA should be extended to include the dual carriageway and no. 2 Marlow Road (War Graves Commission). ➤ Reference to the United Reform Church should include its associated accommodation and not just the listed building. ➤ Question whether all the floorspace / uses can be accommodated on this site. ➤ Hotel should be included as one of the appropriate uses. ➤ Friends Meeting House and Portland Arms should be retained.
OA3 – York Road Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The football club should remain and not be included in the redevelopment proposals. ➤ Query whether the uses and quantum are right for this site, particularly office element. ➤ Support for improved community/leisure facilities but need to evidence this. ➤ Evidence required to demonstrate satisfactory flood risk
OA4 – Railway Station Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support for a transport interchange. ➤ Should emphasise need to make the most of the levels at this site. ➤ The office building to the north of the railway station must be incorporated into the OA. ➤ Flexibility for alternative uses to offices should be considered (Network Rail and Prudential). Need a comprehensive redevelopment funding plan to avoid an undue burden on a single scheme. ➤ Limit the retail offer to complementary and small scale uses so not to detract / dilute the Primary Shopping Area.
OA5 – High Street East / York Stream Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Highlight need to protect important buildings. ➤ Opportunity to link library to High Street by creating a green space. ➤ There is potential to include a taller building. ➤ It should be part of the gateway. ➤ Need greater flexibility in terms of mix of commercial uses. ➤ Question potential for bringing this site forward given the variety of ownerships and constraints. ➤ Policy needs to include reference to watercourses and improvement of the environment. ➤ Residential should be sequentially tested with other sites ➤ AAP conflicts with the masterplan drawn up for St Marys Church and whilst the Church would be protected the plans would lead to a segregation of their other buildings if these were forced to be demolished and provided elsewhere. ➤ Object to key connection from St Ives Road to St Mary's

	<p>Close. There should be restricted access to the church and the preferred key connection should be St Mary's Walk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evidence required to demonstrate satisfactory flood risk.
OA6 – Stafferton Way Opportunity Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This should not be an OA, others welcome the inclusion and believe it should be expanded. ➤ Former Mini Centre site owners do not wish to see offices built on their site – it should be allocated for industry, warehousing, car service, sales, leisure, bulky goods retail or food store. ➤ There should not be a blanket restriction on retail warehousing and the policy should be amended to reflect this. ➤ Evidence required to demonstrate satisfactory flood risk.
IMP1 – Compulsory Purchase Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Some support ➤ Question deliverability if compulsory purchase (CPO) is required.
IMP2 – Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Need to refer to sewerage infrastructure ➤ S016 funding for healthcare and the police should be sought
Other key matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should include reference to improving and enhancing the physical environment as a separate theme. ➤ Need specific policy on flooding, biodiversity and surface water drainage. ➤ The allocations of the OAs lack demonstrable evidence and question the AAP being in advance of the Core Strategy ➤ The supporting text to the plan needs a diagram explaining Local Development Framework process, more cross references, better links to South East Plan and more information on the Sustainability Appraisal. ➤ Need to consider impact on infrastructure – health care facilities, sewage, etc. ➤ Consider phasing of sites because of complex land ownership issues and transport implications. ➤ Need more on conservation of historic heritage