

## **LOCAL PLAN MEMBER WORKING GROUP**

### **DRAFT BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES AND VISION**

MEETING DATE: 8<sup>TH</sup> December 2015

OFFICERS REPORTING: FLO CHURCHILL (BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN TEAM LEAD)

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Local Plan Member Working Group of the draft objectives and vision for the Borough Local plan (BLP). One set of objectives has been presented and a draft vision for the BLP is put forward.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That the LDF Member Working Group agrees the draft objectives for inclusion in the emerging Borough Local Plan and agrees the draft vision to be included as part of the draft Borough Local Plan.**

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the first core planning principle of the planning system is that the system should be plan led with the local plan setting out a “Positive vision for the future of the area.”<sup>1</sup> The vision also needs to set out a “Clear economic vision and strategy for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.”<sup>2</sup> The NPPF goes onto state that the local plan should “As far as is possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area...”<sup>3</sup>

3.2 The Vision will describe how we want the borough to continue to develop over the next 15 years or so and the policies in the draft Borough Local Plan will help frame planning decisions to deliver the vision based on themes drawn from the Corporate Strategy. The draft objectives represent priorities for the sustainable development of the Borough.

#### **4.0 Draft Objectives for the Borough Local Plan**

4.1 The draft objectives for the Borough Local Plan are drawn from the main themes in the emerging corporate strategy. These are:

- **Residents first**
- **Delivering together**

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF Paragraph 17

<sup>2</sup> NPPF Paragraph 21

<sup>3</sup> NPPF Paragraph 155

- **Value for money**
- **Equip ourselves for the future**

#### 4.2 Objective 1

The Borough Local Plan will:

Continue to protect and enhance the special qualities of the borough's built and natural environment for the enjoyment of all our residents. We will do this by continuing to protect the Green Belt for its intrinsic value and openness. We will aim to retain the special qualities of our existing settlements through guiding development towards the most sustainable locations and ensuring that any new development is of the highest quality design. We will continue to protect our historic and built environment and heritage assets acting as guardians for our residents and will aim to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Borough.

This objective meets the following themes:

**Residents first, Value for money**

#### 4.3 Objective 2

The Borough Local Plan will:

Meet the varied needs of our residents for housing including affordable housing in the most appropriate way whilst focusing development towards the most sustainable locations. We will aim to provide sufficient housing to meet the needs of our residents and to allow them to remain living in their homes through adaptation and the development of homes to meet Lifetime Homes standards. We will discharge our Duty to Cooperate with our neighbouring boroughs. We will make the most of previously developed land

This objective meets the following themes:

**Residents first, Value for money**

#### 4.4 Objective 3

The Borough Local Plan will:

Enable the continued success and evolution of the Borough's distinct visitor economy by reinforcing the key tourism centres of Windsor, Ascot and the River Thames. We will aim to provide sufficient visitor accommodation and facilities whilst promoting opportunities for tourism related development where appropriate. We will enable the evolution and growth of the local business economy including tourism through maintaining a buoyant and broad based local economy and managing growth in employment to maintain a sustainable balance between jobs, local labour and demand for housing,

This objective meets the following themes:

**Residents first, Value for money**

#### 4.5 Objective 4

**The Borough Local Plan will:**

**Promote the vitality and viability of our town centres so they are at the heart of our communities through endorsing the town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead as the principal locations for office (Including Council facilities), retail, tourism and leisure development.**

**This objective meets the following themes:**

**Residents first, Delivering together, Value for money**

#### 4.6 Objective 5

**The Borough Local Plan will:**

**Minimise the impact of development in the Borough on climate change through promoting sustainable design and construction in our spatial strategy, promoting the use of renewable energy where appropriate and adapting to climate change through managing flood risk. We will reduce the need to travel in the Borough and encourage sustainable modes of transport by locating new development in a sustainable manner and providing access to safe, convenient and sustainable means of transport.**

**This objective meets the following themes:**

**Residents first, Delivering together, Value for money, Equip ourselves for the future**

#### 4.7 Objective 6

**The Borough Local Plan will:**

**Seek to retain, enhance and provide new facilities and other infrastructure to enable a high quality of life for all of our residents by requiring new development provide environmental, infrastructure and service improvements and by providing the best educational opportunities for all to develop their aptitude and abilities**

**This objective meets the following themes:**

**Residents first, Delivering together, Value for money, Equip ourselves for the future**

### 5. Draft Vision for the Borough Local Plan

- 5.1 This vision represents a strategy where the main development focus is Maidenhead Town Centre. In this vision the Town Centre will be expected to accommodate the majority of the level of 'Objectively Assessed Need' (OAN) for housing and for employment land. This will require a step change in the density of development in the town centre and may necessitate a number of tall buildings with heights potentially reaching in excess of 20 storeys in different locations.

5.2 In order to inform the debate about the capacity of the town centre a study has been undertaken by consultants to look at the design implications of pursuing an intensification strategy. This report, the Maidenhead Capacity Study would form part of the evidence base supporting the development of local plan policies.

5.3 The Vision should act to help deliver the objectives drawn from the corporate strategy. Members of the Local Plan Working Group may wish to adapt the vision and to express their development aspirations for the Borough.

5.5

### **Vision**

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will remain a place where everyone can thrive in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.

The varied nature of the Borough is recognised and the distinct and different values of Windsor and Maidenhead are valued both separately in their own right and collectively in terms of the contribution they make to the continuing success of the Borough. The particular and special characteristics of the Borough in terms of the countryside and open spaces; Green Belt; historic environment; River Thames; woodland and parkland remain part of the heritage that continues to be valued, enhanced and protected.

Development will be expected to promote sustainability and will add to the special qualities of the Borough through high quality design, effective and efficient use of land and protection for those valued heritage, natural and other assets. Development will aim to protect the open countryside from unnecessary development and promote the inclusion of open and green space wherever possible. Particular consideration will be given to flooding and traffic implications arising from development with regard paid to the capacity of existing infrastructure. Additional infrastructure including healthcare, highways, social infrastructure and telecommunications will be provided alongside development to ensure that people, goods and communications can freely connect and travel across the Borough. Transport infrastructure in particular will be maintained to ensure that interdependencies between places within the Borough and outside are maintained.

Development will be targeted towards the urban area of Maidenhead and its surroundings with more limited development aimed towards Windsor and our other centres that already have a degree of services present.

The Borough will continue to prosper and provide a good range of jobs and homes for all of our residents close to where people chose to live with Maidenhead as a particular focus for sustainable residential development. Our smaller villages and settlements within the Green Belt will be protected from pressure arising from additional housing development whilst still allowing for an appropriate level of growth supported by appropriate infrastructure.

## Vison continued

We will continue to provide an excellent education through our Schools and Colleges relevant to the needs of our existing business community

The wider Thames Valley region will continue to be a focus for economic development with Maidenhead playing a vital role. Maidenhead Town Centre will continue its programme of regeneration to enable the town to continue to provide a focus for economic development and employment and together with Windsor and Ascot High Street will continue to meet the aspirations of residents at the heart of the community. Windsor and Eton will continue to be a national and international focus for tourism as thriving visitor destinations for both the domestic and international tourist market.

The Green Belt will be protected to ensure that the setting of our towns and villages remain protected from inappropriate development. Access to the countryside will be promoted to take advantage of the benefits offered by the rural setting of the Royal Borough.

We will continue to provide an excellent education through our Schools and Colleges relevant to the needs of our existing business community whilst also helping to attract and retain new business opportunities.

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## 6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Member of the Local Plan Working Group are asked to consider the objectives derived from the emerging corporate strategy and agree them for inclusion in the draft Borough Local Plan if it is felt that they accurately express the aims of the strategy.
- 6.2 There have been a number of different consultations on various stages of the draft Borough Local Plan. These consultation raised a number of issues such as concerns

about traffic; concerns about flooding; protection of and need for green and open space; wildlife and the impact of development on the Green Belt; the distribution of housing; the need for Maidenhead to remain attractive to business and for Windsor and Eton to remain primary tourist destinations; the quality of design; opposition to building and development in certain settlements; concerns about the capacity of infrastructure to cope with increased in population; and the function and use of the countryside. All of these concerns will be reflected in the emerging draft Borough Local Plan

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