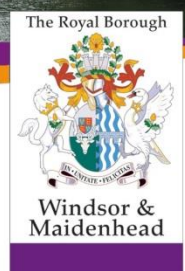


Borough Local Plan

Draft Borough Local Plan
June 2016



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We are delighted to introduce the Regulation 19 Publication Version of the Borough Local Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The Borough Local Plan promotes a sustainable pattern of development for the Borough over the plan period until 2032. The new development that is proposed in this plan aims to provide for new housing and affordable housing to fulfil the needs of all of our residents, whilst at the same time protecting our valued natural and built historic environment and assets. We are privileged to be home to one of the most recognisable and valued historic assets in the country, Windsor Castle and the Windsor Great Park. The plan aims to protect this and our many other valued assets and to ensure that any development helps protect and enhance those elements that make our Borough special in the eyes of not only our residents but all of those who choose to visit, work and invest in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead whilst at the same time meeting the needs of our residents, workers and visitors.

The Borough Local Plan is based on a substantial and robust evidence base; and on the results of the many consultation exercises we have carried out in the past; and guided by national policy and legislation. Representations that you make at this stage will be presented to the Planning Inspector, (Appointed by the Secretary of State) who will examine the Plan in public. We urge you to submit any comments you may have relating to the legal and technical soundness of the Plan.

Cllr Simon Dudley, Leader of the Council and Cllr Derek Wilson, Lead Member for Planning

Foreword by Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder

How can I express my views?

The Borough Local Plan (Regulation 19) has been published for a six week representation period from 13th August 2016 to 23rd September 2016. This is the final opportunity to comment on the Borough Local Plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for an independent examination. The Council does not have the ability to amend the Borough Local Plan at this stage and can only suggest proposed modifications that the Borough Local Plan Inspector can choose to accept or not. The purpose of the Regulation 19 stage of consultation is to enable people to make representations on issues of technical and legal soundness which they want to have taken into account during the examination.

The Borough Local Plan will be examined by an independent Inspector whose role is to assess whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the “Duty to Cooperate”; legal and procedural requirements; and whether or not it is sound according to the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework. The tests of soundness that the Borough Local Plan needs to meet are that the Plan is:

- Positively prepared - being based on a strategy that aims to meet objectively assessed needs for development and infrastructure;
- Justified - being the most appropriate strategy;
- Effective – being deliverable over the plan period based on effective joint working; and
- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Views are sought on the legal and technical soundness of the Borough Local Plan. Any representations that you make must make clear the reasons you believe that the Plan is not sound, having regard to the tests of soundness as set out above. Representations should be supported by evidence to show why you think the Borough Local Plan has failed to meet the tests of soundness. When making representations please clearly indicate which policy, paragraph or page number you are referring to. Please be aware that your comments and a summary of them will be publicly available.

ALL REPRESENTATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5PM ON FRIDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER 2016. THE COUNCIL WILL BE UNABLE TO ACCEPT ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS TIME.

Where possible representations should be made electronically as this is the quickest and easiest way. Alternatively there is a paper form for you to complete and send back. This can be found on our website, the Council Offices and Libraries. When making representations please use a separate sheet for each comment, marking each sheet with the relevant policy, paragraph, or page number. Please be aware that a summary of all representations received and the representations themselves will be publicly available for people to read on the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead website. Personal details will be redacted.

How can I express my views?

Box Contact Details 1

Representations can be made online at:

<http://consult.rbwm.gov.uk/portal>.

Alternatively completed representation forms can be sent to:

planning.policy@rbwm.gov.uk

or to:

Planning Policy Team

FREEPOST

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Town Hall

St Ives Road

Maidenhead

SL6 1RF

Next Steps

Following the end of the Regulation 19 consultation on 23rd September 2016 all representations received will be summarised as part of the submission arrangements. If representations have identified any fundamental issues relating to soundness then further advice will be sought from the Planning Inspectorate as to the most appropriate course of action. Providing that no fundamental issues relating to soundness are identified then the Borough Local Plan will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State as close as possible to the end of September 2016.

Following on from formal submission an independent examination into the soundness of the Borough Local Plan will take place. It is currently anticipated that the examination will take place in early 2017, and subject to the Inspector finding the Borough Local Plan sound, it is anticipated that it will be adopted by the Royal Borough in mid 2017.

Next Steps

Introduction

1 Introduction

1.0.1 This Publication version of the Borough Local Plan is a key step in the journey of providing an up to date Local Plan that sets out a proposed strategy and set of policies to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the area up to 2032. The purpose of the Publication version of the Borough Local Plan is to seek comments on the legal and technical soundness of the plan. Any comments received will be collated by the Council and sent to the Secretary of State for consideration by an Inspector as part of the examination in public.

1.0.2 The Borough Local Plan, when adopted will set the long term strategy for managing development and infrastructure from 2013 up to 2032. The adopted policies will implement the strategy, setting out where development is planned to occur and key areas that will be protected. Development will be guided by allocations for specific sites or by principles for other applications. This includes our approaches to delivering housing, employment, retail, leisure, community and infrastructure and where necessary safeguarding land for future development. In terms of those areas that will require protection areas will be designated on the Policies Map where development proposals are considered inappropriate or where there are matters of particular concern such as the Green Belt or the setting of the River Thames.

1.0.3 Ultimately the function of the Borough Local Plan, together with other parts of the statutory development plan is to act as the starting point for making decisions on planning applications. The Borough Local Plan will also form the strategic framework for Neighbourhood Plans and more detailed guidance in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents.

1.0.4 The Borough Local Plan sets out the strategy for the future development of the area establishing a suite of policies to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges over the plan period until 2032. The adopted plan will implement the strategy that sets out what development will occur, where it will happen and what key sites and areas that should be protected. This will include an approach to delivering housing, and where land will be protected or safeguarded for business, housing, shopping, leisure, community and other uses. Areas that are to be protected will be designated on the Policies Map

1.0.5 The main purpose of the Borough Local Plan is to provide a sound basis for making decisions on applications for development. Together with Neighbourhood Plans it will provide the framework for sustainable development across the borough during the plan period.

1.1 How has the Publication Version of the Borough Local Plan been prepared and what is it trying to achieve?

1.1.1 Local Plans are required to be based on adequate, up to date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. The presumption in favour of sustainable development should be seen as a golden thread running through both the borough Local Plan and decision taking. In particular the Local Plan should be seeking to positively meet the development needs of the Borough and therefore this Borough Local Plan provides a positive environment that aims to encourage sustainable growth and development.

1.1.2 In preparing the Borough Local Plan a clear direction has been indicated by the Members for the way in which the Borough Local Plan is to provide for growth and development. There are also a number of technical studies and other evidence base documents; the outcomes of which in combination with professional judgement have been used to help guide the production of the Borough Local Plan and its policies. Evidence base documents support the development of policies to be included in the Borough Local Plan but do not themselves set policy or make allocations. Evidence base documents are not subject to the same process as the Borough Local Plan and are not subject to public examination.

1.1.3 The evidence base documents that have been produced include:

- Functional Economic Market Area assessment including the Economic Development Needs Assessment;
- Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment;
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Townscape Character Assessment;
- Landscape Character Assessment;
- Green Belt Purposes Analysis;
- Edge of Settlement Study Volumes I and II;
- Transport study;

- Retail and Town Centre Study; and
- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment including the Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.1.4 Evidence base documents can be found on the Evidence tab of the Borough Local Plan Examination Page of the Council's website.

1.2 What is the Policy Context for the Borough Local Plan?

1.2.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out the 'duty to co-operate'. This applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England. It informs the plan-making process. The duty:

- relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council
- requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues
- requires that councils and public bodies 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies
- requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

1.2.2 The Borough Local Plan must take account of relevant national guidance, policy and legislation. The wider policy context for the Borough Local Plan is formed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which explains the statutory provisions and provides guidance about the operation of the planning system and how government policy should be applied. Supporting the NPPF, the National Planning Practice Guidance provides further clarity about the operation of the planning system. As a matter of good practice the Borough Local Plan does not repeat national policy but does aim to explain how the policy has been applied.

1.2.3 As required by the NPPF the main theme running through the Borough Local Plan is one of sustainable development. The Council's Development Management Service as part of the wider Planning Service has sought to pro-actively engage with applicants through a formal paid-for 'Pre-Application Process' in order to find solutions to problems and where there is no up to date policy, to grant planning permission without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.2.4 In March 2013 the Government partially revoked the South East Plan which was the regional spatial strategy for the South East apart from Policy NRM6 which is concerned with the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, and this remains in force.

1.2.5 The statutory development plan for the Royal Borough comprises the Saved Policies from the Adopted Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 2004, the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan 2011, the Replacement Minerals Local Plan (Incorporating alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2000) and the Waste Local Plan December 1998.

1.2.6 Following the introduction of the Neighbourhood Planning process via the Localism Act of 2011; the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Borough in April 2014 and therefore forms a constituent part of the statutory development plan for the appropriate area within the Borough.

1.3 How do Neighbourhood Plans fit in?

1.3.1 A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led development framework, which in combination with a local plan will help guide the future development of an area. Neighbourhood planning offers a formal opportunity to add real value to the planning process by setting out community aspirations

1.3.2 Neighbourhood Plans should support the strategic development needs set out in the Borough Local Plan and should also plan positively to support local development in accordance with Paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies in this Borough Local Plan are clearly marked if they are considered to be 'strategic policies' in order to guide the production of Neighbourhood Plans across the Borough. In general 'strategic policies' are those that have an impact across the Borough as a whole or that deal with the amount of development that the Borough Local Plan is prescribing.

1 Introduction

1.4 Duty to Cooperate

1.4.1 Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out the ‘Duty to Cooperate.’ This applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England. It informs the plan making process. The duty:

1.4.2 Relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council;

- d. Requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
- e. Requires that councils and public bodies ‘engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis’ to develop strategic policies;
- f. Requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan making

1.4.3 The NPPF sets out the strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate and gives further guidance on ‘planning strategically across local boundaries.’ It highlights the importance of joint working to meet development requirements that cannot be wholly met within a single planning area, through either joint planning policies or informal strategies such as infrastructure and investment plans. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides further guidance on how the Duty to Cooperate should be applied in local planning.

1.5 Duty to Cooperate in the Borough

1.5.1 The Duty to Co-operate is an on going and evolving process for strategic policy areas and will involve several iterative steps. The Council is actively engaged in contributing to the process, through initiatives such as joint working on the Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA), Functional Economic Market Area, retail study work, The Special Protection Area joint working, work with Thames Water and other statutory undertakers, major highway schemes such as on the M4, and other transport issues such as Cross Rail. The Local Enterprise Partnership has also been involved. The Royal Borough also works at officer and elected member level on a wide range of strategic planning matters with a wide range of stakeholders. This process has helped steer and inform policy development and to help develop an appropriate evidence base for the emerging Borough Local Plan.

1.5.2 For many years the Borough has worked with a variety of stakeholders on strategic cross border planning issues. In order to ensure that the process is appropriate for the emerging Borough Local Plan under the NPPF, a scoping exercise was undertaken with stakeholders. This established who were the key stakeholders and what are likely to be the relevant strategic policy areas for them; this then formed the basis for the council’s approach to the duty to co-operate, along with the well established working relationships.

List of Policies

List of Policies

Policy	Strategic?
BLP1 Spatial strategy	Yes
BLP2 Community led development	No
BLP3 Design	Yes
BLP4 Townscape and landscape	Yes
BLP5 River Thames Corridor	Yes
BLP6 Green Belt	Yes
BLP7 Countryside character	Yes
BLP8 New residential development in the Green Belt	Yes
BLP9 Reuse and replacement of residential development in the Green Belt	No
BLP10 Equestrian development in the Green Belt	No
BLP11 Important previously developed sites in the Green Belt	Yes
BLP12 Amount and distribution of housing	Yes
BLP13 Allocated housing development sites	Yes
BLP14 Meeting a range of housing needs	No
BLP15 Affordable housing	Yes
BLP16 Affordable housing rural exception sites	Yes
BLP17 Gypsies and travellers	Yes
BLP18 Protection of residential land and housing stock	Yes
BLP19 Housing layout and design	Yes
BLP20 Housing density	Yes
BLP21 Subdivision of dwellings	No
BLP22 Development involving residential gardens	No
BLP23 Extensions and outbuildings in residential curtilages	No
BLP24 Residential amenity	No
BLP25 Economic development	Yes
BLP26 Defined employment sites	No
BLP27 Other sites and loss of employment floorspace	No
BLP28 Hierarchy of centres	Yes
BLP29 Maidenhead and Windsor town centres	Yes
BLP30 District and local centres	No
BLP31 Shops and parades outside defined centres	No

List of Policies

Policy	Strategic?
BLP32 Markets	No
BLP33 Visitor development	No
BLP34 Visitor accommodation	No
BLP35 Historic environment	No
BLP36 Listed buildings	Np
BLP37 Ancient monuments	Np
BLP38 Archaeology	Np
BLP39 Registered parks and gardens	No
BLP40 Conservation Areas	No
BLP41 Windsor Castle	No
BLP42 Local heritage assets	No
BLP43 Sustainable design and construction	Yes
BLP44 Renewable energy	Yes
BLP45 Managing flood risk and waterways	Yes
BLP46 Environmental protection	No
BLP47 Air pollution	No
BLP48 Artificial light pollution	No
BLP49 Noise	No
BLP50 Contaminated land and or water	No
BLP51 Nature conservation	No
BLP52 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	Yes
BLP53 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands	No
BLP54 Open space	Yes
BLP55 Rights of way and access to the countryside	No
BLP56 Community facilities	Yes
BLP57 New sports and leisure development at Braywick Park	No
BLP58 Sustainable transport	No
BLP59 Infrastructure and developer contributions	Yes
BLP60 Telecommunications	No
BLP61 Water supply and sewerage infrastructure	Yes

Table 1 List of Policies

List of Policies

Spatial portrait

3 Spatial portrait

3.0.1 The Borough enjoys a predominantly countryside setting with some 83% of the area falling within the Metropolitan Green Belt. In addition the Borough also has a number of sites that enjoy protection under both national and international legislation such as the small area of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, SSSIs, Conservation Areas and other designations such as Flood Zone 3. These designations may, in isolation and in combination, serve to act as constraints on development in line with the NPPF.

3.0.2 Pressure for development comes from a number of sources including a changing and growing population with a shifting demand for different types of housing and infrastructure, the presence of good transport links including closeness to Heathrow Airport, a successful urban and rural economy, a high quality environment that serves to attract new residents, businesses and visitors; and the borough's relative proximity to London. The Borough Local Plan will need to find a way of balancing the demand and pressure for development against the need to continue to protect those elements that contribute to the specialness of the environment such as the Green Belt.

3.0.3 The population of the Borough is continuing to change with an ever increasing and ageing population. This shift in the demographic profile of the Borough will bring with it particular challenges especially with regard to making appropriate provision for sustainable development to meet those challenges.

3.1 Scene setting

3.1.1 Pressure for development comes from a number of sources including a changing and growing population with a shifting demand for different types of housing and infrastructure, the presence of good transport links including closeness to Heathrow Airport, a successful urban and rural economy, a high quality environment that serves to attract new residents, businesses and visitors; and the Borough's relative proximity to London. The Borough Local Plan will need to find a way of balancing the demand and pressure for development against the need to continue to protect those elements that contribute to the specialness of the environment such such as the Green Belt.

3.2 Linkages to surrounding areas

3.2.1 Located in the heart of the Thames Valley, less than 30 miles to the west of Central London, Windsor and Maidenhead enjoys a predominantly countryside setting with 83% of the borough falling within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Borough borders several other administrative local authorities but the wide area sees important inter-connections such as employment and housing catchments, plus strategic transport links. The Borough benefits from having 10 railway stations, served by a combination of main line and branch line services. Maidenhead is on the Great Western Main Line, which connects London Paddington with South West England and Wales, incorporating branch lines to Marlow and to Windsor and Eton Central. Windsor and Eton Riverside is the western terminus for services from London Waterloo, while Ascot lies on the junction of the Waterloo to Reading and the Ascot to Guildford lines. Maidenhead will also be the western terminus for Crossrail, linking it to London and beyond.

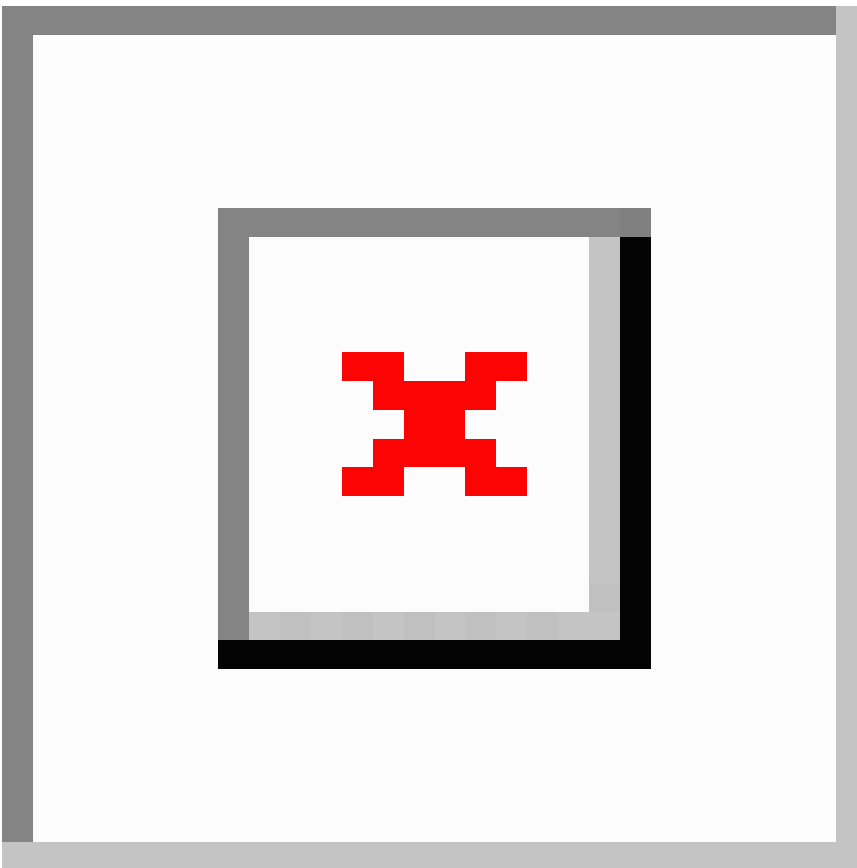
3.2.2 The Borough is located only a short distance away from the UK's primary international airport, London Heathrow. This affects the surrounding area in terms of aircraft noise, traffic and business tourism. Aviation policy is set at the national level and the Royal Borough actively engages in discussions at a strategic level in the process of discharging the Duty to Cooperate. Aircraft noise is an issue affecting a number of communities within the Borough which it seeks to mitigate wherever possible. The Borough adopts a robust position on the more negative aspects arising from local operations at Heathrow Airport, and is committed to working with others to balance the competing interests. The Borough objects to and continues to resist expansion proposals for Heathrow, especially given the alternative options throughout the south-east and the United Kingdom, on the grounds of the likely severe impact upon the quality of life of local residents and the significant negative and irreversible adverse impacts upon the local environment.

3.2.3 Reading is a major shopping attraction in the region, and a source of jobs. The Borough contributes to the workforce of Slough, London and other nearby employment centres. Indeed more than one in ten of East Berkshire's jobs are located in the Slough Trading Estate. In turn, the Borough provides some of the main tourist and visitor attractions in the surrounding area, with historic Windsor Castle and its' Great Park, Eton College, Legoland Windsor and Ascot Racecourse.

3.2.4 The River Thames forms much of the northern boundary of the Borough, and the Council continues to work with the Environment Agency and other such organisations to consider fluvial impacts on settlements and neighbours further downstream. The Borough also provides several crucial River Thames crossing points, enabling movement north and south of the river. These are located at Bisham, Cookham, Maidenhead, Windsor and Datchet.

3.2.5 It will be important to assess the impact of development from other areas. Additional planned development in the surrounding areas (through other Development Plans) could increase pressure on the Borough's infrastructure, demand for housing, or on open spaces and access to the countryside. The planned redevelopments of both Slough and Bracknell town centres will impact upon the Borough, meaning towns in the borough will need to focus on their unique distinctiveness to maintain their vibrancy and vitality. The Borough continues to engage positively with neighbouring authorities through the discharge of the Duty to Cooperate on such matters.

3.2.6 Figure 1 Map showing the linkages between RBWM and the surrounding Local Authorities



Picture 1 Image is not in suitable format or has not been uploaded to the system

3.3 The built and natural environment

3.3.1 The Borough enjoys a predominantly countryside setting interspersed with villages and settlements, and contains three main urban centres of Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot. 83% of the Borough is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. The Borough has 27 Conservation Areas, over 1,000 Listed Buildings, a number of Scheduled Monuments including Windsor Castle and ten registered historic parks and gardens including six which form part of the Royal Windsor Estate. Trees, woodlands and open space play an important role in defining the Council's area as a 'Green Borough.'

3.3.2 3.5 There are a number of areas in the Borough that are internationally designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar Sites designated under the Natura 2000 Convention. The Borough also has a number of national designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific

3 Spatial portrait

Interest (SSSI) that cover 1,663 Hectares or 8.41% of the Borough's area. There is one National Nature Reserve (NNR) at Chobham Common that is 0.27 Hectares in size, sitting within the Borough in Sunningdale. There are also a number of local nature reserves and wildlife sites around the Borough.

Heritage

3.3.3 The Borough has 27 Conservation Areas, predominantly located in the north of the Borough, designated around rural settlements, although the urban towns of Windsor and Maidenhead have several designations also. Listed buildings are distributed across the borough, with over 1000 listed buildings, and Windsor Castle as a Scheduled Monument.

3.3.4 The Borough has ten registered historic parks and gardens, six of which are part of the extensive Royal Windsor Estate. The others are Ditton Park, Datchet; Eton College, Eton; Civil Service College, Sunningdale; and Hall Place, Burchetts Green.

3.3.5 The intrinsic historical and cultural value of the heritage assets of the Borough provides a framework for the continued attraction of visitors to the Borough and is part of what makes the Borough special not only for local residents but also those people who work, shop, visit and invest in the Borough and who come from all over the world.

Landscape and Trees

3.3.6 A key feature of the Borough is the vast number of trees and open space that residents and businesses alike can enjoy. Trees and woodlands play an important role in defining the character of the Borough as a 'Green Borough', helping shape the Borough's environment and peoples' appreciation of it. Within the borough there are a number of larger sites such as Windsor Great Park, Ashley Hill near Burchetts Green and other open space containing trees and woodlands which are important for nature conservation. The River Thames and its associated tree lined and wooded banks also make distinctive features.

3.3.7 The Borough's landscape provides opportunity for conservation, enhancement, restoration and creation, to strengthen distinctive character through design and management. The landscapes that border urban areas, or are attractive tourist destinations (such as Windsor Great Park) are deemed to be particularly at threat from change, although overall the landscapes of the Borough are deemed to have low capacity for change.

Biodiversity

3.3.8 In the Borough there are areas internationally designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites. The Borough also has several national designations, including 11 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) covering 1,663 hectares (8.41% of the borough).

3.3.9 The Borough's only National Nature Reserve (NNR) is Chobham Common; only 0.27ha of Chobham Common sits within the Borough in Sunningdale. The NNR at Chobham Common is also designated as a Special Protection Area under the Natura 2000 European convention. In addition to these international and national designations there are also several local nature reserves and wildlife sites, located around the Borough.

3.4 Community

Population

3.4.1 The 2011 Census counted that the Borough has 144,560 residents, an 8.2% increase in last 10 years since 2001 Census, when the population was 133,626 (see figure 1). The population of the Borough is showing signs of ageing in line with national trends, seeing 16.7% of the population aged 65+; nationally this was 16.4%.

3.4.2 Figure 1 – RBWM age structure compared to 2011 Census. Source ONS

3.4.3 The Borough also has a slightly higher than national average percentage of young people aged 0 – 19 years at 24.3% of the population, compared to 24.0% nationally. A further trend in the Borough is fewer young adults (19 – 30 years of age) than nationally (see figure 2). This could in part be linked to few further education opportunities such as universities within the borough, but also potentially the high cost of living in the area. It is possible that this also reflects employment opportunities in the area.

3.4.4 Figure 2: 2011 Census comparing RBWM population structure with England and Wales

Spatial portrait

Housing

3.4.5 The 2011 Census counted 58,349 households in the borough. In 2008, 1.4% of the Borough's dwelling stock comprised second homes; nationally it was 0.9% at this time. In April 2011, the tenure of dwellings across the Borough was 85.5% private rented or owner-occupied, and 13% Registered Social Landlord (RSL); nationally this was 82% and 10% respectively). The 2011 Census counted 3,495 people living in communal establishments (e.g. care homes, boarding schools) in the Borough.

3.4.6 3.9 In the last ten years, the dwelling stock of the Borough has remained relatively unchanged, seeing only a slight shift to smaller dwellings, e.g. in 2001 Band C properties made up 14.4% of the dwelling stock, but by 2011 this was 14.7%, and similarly B and G accounted for 15.4% in 2001, but was down to 15.0% in 2011.

3.4.7 At April 2013, the average property price in the Borough was £341,890 compared to £209,750 for the South East. This is more than double the national average. This makes the borough one of the most expensive places to live in the country outside London.

Health

3.4.8 Access to doctors and hospitals is often cited as a cause for concern in consultations. The Borough has three hospitals (St Marks, Maidenhead; Heatherwood Hospital; Ascot; King Edward, Windsor) but no A&E services as the Borough is reliant on Wexham Park in Slough, the Royal Berkshire in Reading, Frimley Park in Frimley and St Peters in Chertsey.

3.4.9 Modelling undertaken in October 2011 suggests that 87% of households are within 15 minutes of a GP surgery using public transport and walking (99% are in 30 minutes). For hospitals, 90% of households can access services within 30 minutes; although only 1% can access Wexham Park Hospital within this time (71% could access it within an hour).

Education

3.4.10 There are 62 state schools in the Borough: three nurseries, 45 primary schools, thirteen secondary schools and one special school. Of these 9 are currently academies. Demand for primary school places in the Borough has been rising in recent years as a result of a rising birth rate and new housing. A significant number of new primary school places have already been provided in both Windsor and Maidenhead, and more are likely to be needed in the early part of the plan period. There is only a small amount of movement across boundaries into and out of primary schools.

3.4.11 Demand for secondary schools places in the Borough has remained relatively steady in recent years, but it is expected that significant numbers of new secondary school places will be required from 2017 onwards. Substantial numbers of children and young people living in the Borough attend secondary schools in Slough and Buckinghamshire. There is also significant movement into the Borough's secondary sector from neighbouring areas. Independent schools in and around the Borough educate around 15% of the Borough's children and young people.

Recreation

3.4.12 The Borough manages and maintains 53 parks, open spaces and play areas, providing opportunities for sports activities, informal play, or gentle strolls in pleasant surroundings – covering a total area of around 186 hectares. Any intensification or infilling development in the urban area could result in access to open space for recreation becoming an increasingly important local issue. There are several indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including leisure centres and sports pitches.

Arts and culture

3.4.13 Both the Firestation Centre for Arts and Culture in Windsor, and the Norden Farm Centre for Arts in Maidenhead provide events such as film, live music, theatre, comedy, workshops, dance and exhibitions. There is also a heritage centre in Maidenhead and a museum in Windsor.

3 Spatial portrait

3.5 Economic prosperity

3.5.1 The Borough falls within two Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs). These are the local areas within which the economy of a place functions, and Council's position reflects the different economic pulls upon the borough. To the west, the Borough is part of a FEMA that also includes Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest boroughs, forming a Central Berkshire FEMA at the heart of the Thames Valley economy. To the east the Borough is part of an Eastern Berkshire FEMA that also encompasses Slough Borough and South Bucks District, and is subject to stronger pulls from Heathrow and London.

3.5.2 Within each FEMA an Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) has been produced, to assess the future demand for employment land and floor space in each borough. For the Borough this exercise shows a continued demand for new office floor space and a much larger apparent demand for new industrial and warehousing floor space, with the distribution sector being the main driver of the latter. While based on collaborative research and prepared on a cross-county basis, these results would point to a significant restructuring of the local economy and must be considered in the context of market signals that suggest a continued low demand for industrial and warehousing development.

Retail

3.5.3 The Borough has two sub-regional shopping centres (Windsor and Maidenhead), two district centres (Ascot and Sunningdale) and several local centres which provide vital services for residents in the wider urban areas, or villages outside of the main urban settlements.

3.5.4 Overall the larger centres predominantly provide comparison and services retail functions, with local centres providing more convenience and service shops. A similar trend is seen with regards to whether the shops are independents or large national multiple chains; main town centres tend to see a large proportion of the latter, with local centres seeing an increased variety of occupiers.

Visitors and tourism

3.5.5 Tourism is crucial to the local economy, with over seven million people visiting the Borough each year. Windsor itself is home to two of the UK's top 20 visitor attractions, Legoland and Windsor Castle. The Borough is also home to other attractions and world class events including Ascot Racecourse with Royal Ascot, Windsor Racecourse, the Windsor Royal Tattoo, Eton College, Windsor Great Park, and other historic villages.

3.5.6 An estimated 612,000 staying trips were spent in the Borough in 2010, of which around 72% were made by domestic visitors and 28% by overseas visitors. It is estimated that 51% of overseas trips to Windsor & Maidenhead were holiday related, 28% were business related and 17% were primarily for visiting friends and relatives. Total expenditure by visitors is estimated to have increased by 10.8% between 2008 and 2010.

3.5.7 Whilst not offering the same variety of tourist attractions as Windsor, Maidenhead nevertheless saw 59% of all visitors indicate that the River Thames was the main reason they had chosen to visit Maidenhead. A high proportion of visitors to the town gave the reason that they were visiting friends or family, i.e. it was not a holiday visit. Tourism-related expenditure is estimated to have supported 6,425 full time equivalent jobs in the Borough; an actual total of 8,710 if part time and seasonal work is accounted for.

3.6 Climate Change and Environmental Management

Flooding

3.6.1 Just over 27% of the Borough is located within floodzone 2 (1:100 – 1:1000 year risk of flooding), and 20.3 % within floodzone 3 (1:100 year risk of flooding). Therefore managing new development not to put new and existing residents at increased exposure to flooding is essential.

3.6.2 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment suggests that there will not be a marked increase in the extent of flooding, so only a few areas that are currently situated outside floodzone 3 (high probability) will be at risk of flooding in future years. Research in other areas suggests that the future 1:100 year floodzone could extend to the current 1:1000 year floodzone. However it is important to take into consideration that property and areas currently at risk of flooding may be more susceptible to more frequent and severe flooding in future years. Climate change could also potentially increase the frequency and intensity of localised storms over the borough, exacerbating localised drainage problems. There is also a need to consider the potential for surface water flooding, particularly as this can be exacerbated by the use of non-porous materials in construction.

Efficient use of energy and resources

3.6.3 The Borough actively encourages residents and businesses to recycle as much as possible, with recycling, reusing or composting accounting for over 40% of waste in 2010/11. This is in line with the national average for the same period.

3.6.4 Energy consumption is currently mostly from fossil fuels and not renewable sources, although the Borough is increasingly seeing developments incorporating sustainable aspects, and has seen hydro-electric turbines built at Romney Weir and the retrofitting of homes.

3.6.5 Water usage is a key consideration for the future of the Borough, with alterations in climate patterns having the scope to impact water resources. If spring and autumn become drier and warmer seasons, then the recharge season may be shorter resulting in overall less groundwater recharge. Indeed there are already several areas across the Borough that are covered by Source Protection Zones, but the most significant are SPZ1s (where development could have greatest risk to groundwater supplies). These include but are not exhaustive to the following locations: Cookham Rise, Hurley, Maidenhead, Bray and north Datchet.

Sustainable transport

3.6.6 The Borough has high car usage and ownership, partially due to the rural nature of some settlements where regular public transport services are not viable, and also as a result of the area being relatively affluent. Car ownership was 86.7% at the 2011 Census, which has increased since the 2001 Census when it was 85.7%. The population is therefore very mobile, increasing the amount of commuting and social journeys undertaken.

3.6.7 Figure 3: Change in Car and Van availability since 2001

3.6.8 The Borough has 3 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) to monitor and seek to improve air quality in urban areas that experience high levels of traffic pollution (Maidenhead town centre, Royal Windsor Way in Windsor, and where the M4 crosses the A308 at Holyport, Bray).

Spatial portrait

Vision and Objectives

Vision and Objectives

4.0.1 The Vision for the Borough is set out in the Sustainable Community Partnership Strategy and the Borough's Strategic Plan. The main themes in the plan are:

- Residents First
- Delivering Together
- Value for Money
- Equip Ourselves for the Future

4.1 The Vision

Vision

The vision for the Borough Local Plan sets out what the Borough will look like following the implementation of the Plan:

- The Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will remain a place where everyone can thrive in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. The varied characteristics of the Borough are 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 education, 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 sustainably located within and around the urban area of Maidenhead as the major service centre of the Borough. Sustainable development will also be focused in and around Windsor and our other centres that already have a degree of services present.
- 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 will continue to meet the aspirations of residents at the heart of the community. Windsor and Eton will continue to be promoted and enhanced as thriving visitor destinations for both the domestic and international tourist market.
- 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. 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 suitable infrastructure.
- The Borough 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.
- 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 Borough

Vision and Objectives

4.2 The Objectives

The Borough Local Plan will continue to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Borough for the enjoyment of all our residents, visitors and businesses. 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***

The Borough Local Plan will aim to 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. The Plan 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. The Council will actively engage in our efforts to discharge our Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring boroughs. The Plan will make the most of previously developed land

*This objective meets the following themes: **Residents first, Value for money***

The Borough Local Plan will enable the continued success and evolution of the Borough's distinct visitor economy by supporting and promoting the key heritage attractions of Windsor, Ascot and the River Thames. The Council will aim to provide sufficient visitor accommodation and facilities whilst promoting opportunities for visitor related development where appropriate. The Council 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 alignment between jobs, local labour and demand for housing,

*This objective meets the following themes: **Residents first, Value for money, Equip ourselves for the Future***

The Borough Local Plan will promote the vitality and viability of our town centres so they are at the heart of the communities through endorsing the town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead as the principal locations for office (Including Council facilities), retail, visitor, leisure, arts and cultural development and other town centre uses.

*This objective meets the following themes: **Residents first, Delivering together, Value for money***

Vision and Objectives

The Borough Local Plan will minimise the impact of development in the Borough on climate change and the environment 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. The Council will aim to 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***

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 residents, visitors and businesses 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***

The Strategy

The Strategy

5.0.1 The Borough Local Plan sets out a strategy to achieve sustainable development across the Borough that responds to the challenge of accommodating population growth and the economic needs of the borough within environmental limits. From the 2011 Census it is known that from 2001 to 2011 the population of the Borough increased by 5,500 people. Similar increases have also occurred in neighbouring local authorities although large urban areas such as Slough and Reading have seen greater increases. Demographic and economic projections suggest that this growth will continue with the potential for around 12,000 additional households being formed over the plan period up to 2032 should trends continue.

5.0.2 The quality of the environment underpins the Borough as an attractive place to live, work and visit. In addition, large areas of the Borough are subject to designations where the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates that development should be restricted. These areas include the Metropolitan Green Belt, sites designated for their international or national importance to nature conservation such as the Special Protection Area, areas important for their historic importance and areas liable to flooding.

5.0.3 Published information on land availability across the wider area suggests that most local authorities have insufficient identified capacity to meet their projected Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for development. With regard to the Borough, the level of OAN has been identified as 712 dwellings per annum, equating to 13,528 over the plan period from 2013 to 2032. Capacity within the Borough has been identified to accommodate 600 dwellings per annum, equating to approximately XX% of the OAN.

5.0.4 The NPPF requires local authorities to meet the full level of objectively assessed need for housing unless the impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. This is set against a policy background of positively seeking opportunities to meet need. Where identified development needs cannot wholly be met within an individual area, local authorities are expected to work together to meet unmet needs where it is reasonable to do so.

5.1 Development of the strategy

5.1.1 In determining an appropriate strategic approach to meet these requirements three different strategic options were considered. Each of the options had different impacts as they each sought to balance the consideration of issues in different ways. The options were:

- Option 1: To restrict building to the capacity of existing built up areas, avoiding building in the Green Belt.
- Option 2: To permit sufficient building to meet the projected population growth and economic needs, recognising that this would require some building in the Green Belt
- Option 3: To permit building to a level that strikes a balance between meeting the projected population growth and economic needs and the environmental impacts, including allowing some building in the Green Belt.

5.2 The Spatial strategy

5.2.1 Based on careful consideration of the three strategic options, including taking into account the results of consultation with the wider community, Option 3 is considered to be the most appropriate, seeking a balance between social and economic needs and environmental impacts whilst at the same time seeking to meet the expectations of national policy and reflecting the need for all authorities to do more to increase housing supply. The Borough Local Plan Spatial Strategy is therefore based on the following main components:

- Within the context of the functional area, providing a balance between homes and jobs;
- Maintaining an environment that conserves the special qualities of the Borough and places within it;
- Focusing the majority of development within the towns and villages, optimising the efficient use of land which has been previously developed and keeping development in the Green Belt to the minimum possible, compatible with the requirements of the NPPF; and
- Promoting a strong network of town, district and local centres which are at the heart of the community, providing shopping, services, employment and leisure.

Achieving a balance

5.2.2 Achieving the sustainable balance between the level of development identified as needed and continuing to protect the environment requires the use of a range of sources of land supply for housing. This includes some limited development in the Green Belt where environmental impacts are considered to be limited and the

purposes of including land in the Green Belt are not compromised. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. A spatial strategy based on this approach will make a significant contribution to meeting the identified need for development and will provide long term protection for the Green Belt against speculative proposals for inappropriate development.

Conserving the special qualities

5.2.3 The high quality of the environment is one of the Borough's defining characteristics, The Borough comprises a number of distinct towns and villages, each with their own identity and character but all related by an attractive countryside setting which includes royal parkland, forests and woodlands, the River Thames valley and farmland. Throughout the Borough there are examples of the unique history and long association with the Crown, with many exceptional buildings and places.

5.2.4 The high quality environment of the towns, villages and countryside in the Borough underlies the attraction of the Borough as a place to live, work, and visit. To maintain the success of the Borough and its competitiveness into the future it is essential that development is compatible with the special qualities and character of places within the borough.

An urban focus

5.2.5 Redeveloping where buildings already exist or allowing the conversion of existing buildings helps meet the identified need for development without using undeveloped land. Building at higher densities in the right locations optimises the efficient use of land. It also reduces the amount of land required for development in less sustainable locations and can also help support local services and facilities.

5.2.6 To reflect the availability of suitable previously developed land, the spatial strategy will concentrate development in the urban areas of the Borough, outside the Green Belt. Higher residential densities will be particularly encouraged within and in proximity to Maidenhead Town Centre, and to a lesser degree Windsor town centre; however all land should be used as efficiently as possible in line with relative accessibility and local character. Employment will continue to be focused in the town centres and in existing employment areas where they continue to meet the needs of businesses.

A network of town, district and local centres

5.2.7 Town centres should be at the heart of the community, providing a range of services, shops, leisure opportunities and employment. The town centre and surrounding areas are the most appropriate location for higher density development and a mix of uses in accordance with their greater levels of accessibility relative to other areas. Local centres are also central to their communities, providing easily accessible services and facilities. A strategy for the rejuvenation of Maidenhead Town Centre is already in place. It envisages new shops, homes, employment and leisure opportunities, alongside a raft of improvements to the environment. Around 2,000 additional new homes are envisaged and opportunities to increase residential provision within the town centre will be pursued.

5.2.8 The rejuvenation of Ascot High Street is also an opportunity to create a community hub through mixed development, including new shopping and housing. This proposal is included in the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan which was made in 2015. A number of new homes are anticipated, of which approximately 50% will be located on land within the Green Belt, although this will be confirmed when a planning application is received.

The Strategy

5.3 BLP1 Spatial Strategy

Policy BLP 1

Spatial Development Strategy for the Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

1. The Borough Local Plan will provide for up to 11,400 new dwellings and enable 222,000 sq. metres of employment floor space (to include in the order of 53,000 Sq. M in Use Classes B1(a) and B1(b), and in the order of 167,000 Sq. metres in Use Classes B1(c), B2 to B8) and in the order of 13,500 sq. metres of additional retail floor space in the plan period up to 2032.
2. Development will be focused on the urban areas of Maidenhead with a proportionate development in Windsor and Ascot to reflect their relative functions and special characteristics as visitor attractions of national importance. Retail and employment development as well as other town centre uses will be focused on town centres with appropriate but limited development in other district and village centres. Existing employment uses including rural employment will be supported in line with the other policies in the plan.
3. Maidenhead Town Centre, as defined on the Policies Map, is identified as a Strategic Location for Growth to accommodate in the order of 2,000 dwellings, to enable the provision of at least 32,700 Sq. metres of employment floor space and to enable provision in the order of 13,550 sqm (net sales area)
4. Maidenhead Town Centre will be the main focus for sustainable growth in the Borough which in turn will help to support its role as a focus within the wider Thames Valley Region. High density development, well designed with appropriate infrastructure will make the most of the town's transport links and the development of a well integrated transport hub centred on Maidenhead Railway Station which will also enable the Borough to make the most of the advantages offered by Cross Rail connections. Within Maidenhead Town Centre development of tall buildings which enhance its image will be encouraged providing they do not compromise its character and appearance and that of nearby areas including Conservation Areas. Quality of design will be a very important consideration.
5. Maidenhead Golf Course, as defined on the Policies Map, is removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development needs. This land can only come forward for development following a local plan review.
6. Three other Strategic Sites as defined on the Policies Map, capable of accommodating development including housing and mixed uses have been identified as:
 - The Triangle Site
 - Land south of Ascot High Street
 - Heatherwood Hospital
7. Strategic Locations for Growth and Strategic Sites are defined on the Policies Map and appropriate uses for land within each of the locations and sites will be defined on proformas found in Appendix F
8. A site has been allocated for leisure uses at Braywick Park, as defined on the Policies Map to accommodate a relocated Magnet Leisure Centre and other indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Appropriate uses for the land within this allocation will be defined on the site proforma found in Appendix F.
9. The Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in line with the guidance contained in ministerial statements, legislation and policy. There are a number of previously developed important and major sites in the Green Belt, defined on the Policies Map and set out in Policy BLP11 where development associated with those uses and falling within the areas defined as previously developed on the Policies Map will be supported including the provision of hotel accommodation associated with Ascot and Windsor Racecourses.
10. Previously developed land will be exploited to make the best use of existing facilities. Proposals for the development of previously developed land will be acceptable in principle subject to assessment of impacts and mitigation measures arising from that development.
11. Development proposals will promote sustainability through high quality design, effective and efficient use of land and protection for heritage, natural and built assets. Proposals will be expected to make provision for appropriate infrastructure to support development and will also be expected to adapt to the requirements of climate change, with particular regard to mitigating and avoiding the potential for flooding.

The Strategy

12. The rest of the policies in the Borough Local Plan will illustrate how they deliver the overall spatial strategy for the Borough. Sites will be allocated to provide for new dwellings, new employment floor space, new retail development and specific development and infrastructure projects. Site allocation will be prescribed on individual site proformas which can be found in Appendix F.

13. Development must be well designed to enhance the unique and distinctive characters and attractiveness of district, local and neighbourhood centres. The Borough Local Plan will be supported by Neighbourhood Plans.

14. In exceptional circumstances community led proposals may deliver development on land that is not normally considered suitable or appropriate for development. Justification of such proposals will be expected to be included in the Neighbourhood Plans. Additionally on such sites there may also be a small element of market development provided for which justification must be provided, particularly with regards to viability.

5.4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

5.4.1 The main purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The government has placed the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of its approach to planning. The government's view of what comprises sustainable development is set out in the NPPF. This Borough Local Plan interprets the national guidance into the local area, and in so doing defines what constitutes sustainable development for the Borough. Further context is given for Maidenhead Town Centre by the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP), some of which is superseded by this Borough Local Plan. Details of which policies within the AAP remain extant are in Appendix H.

5.4.2 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is a central theme for the Borough Local Plan and guides development towards the most sustainable locations. There are some areas in the Borough where national guidance suggests that development should be restricted. The Borough is subject to a number of designations where national policy indicates development should be restricted including sites protected by the Birds and Habitat Directives, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Green Belt, designated heritage assets and land liable to flooding. These designations are shown on the Policies Map.

5.4.3 The approach adopted in the Borough Local Plan reflects current guidance on where development should be located. The approach in the Borough Local Plan also reflects the local context of the Borough and provides clarity about the expectations of national policy and guidance. The policy approach will be delivered through decisions made on applications for development, using the development plan as the starting point for making decisions.

5.4.4 Land within the Green Belt has been safeguarded for development beyond the plan period but is removed from the Green Belt in this plan. This approach will both reduce the need to amend Green Belt boundaries again during future plan periods, and ensure that Green Belt boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. It will also help to meet longer term development needs across the borough beyond the plan period. The safeguarded land is not allocated for development and will only come forward for development following a local plan review.

5.5 Community led development

5.5.1 Community-led proposals are those that are driven by local residents, rather than the Borough Council or commercial interests. The Borough wishes to encourage residents to directly engage in the planning of their communities and will support in principle community-led proposals which meet an identified need and have the agreement of the local community.

5.5.2 Engagement will be through the medium of Neighbourhood Plans. A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. It is about guiding and shaping development, not constraining the delivery of development in that area. The Borough is committed to enabling and assisting neighbourhood planning and recognises that, as part of this, proposals may emerge that have strong community support but are outside the scope of this plan.

5.5.3 Community-led proposals may be delivered on land where development is not normally permitted, for example a community facility on an employment site. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for a small element of open market development to be provided as part of community-led schemes. Where proposed, the need for the open market development must be demonstrated through financial appraisals which show that the scheme would otherwise not be viable.

5.6 BLP2 Community led development

Policy BLP 2

Community led development

1. The Borough will support community led development proposals where:

- a. Proposals are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Borough Local Plan set out elsewhere in this document, and accords with the other policies contained in the Plan;
- b. Proposals for development are contained in a made Neighbourhood Plan that has been subject to public consultation in line with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations and can therefore demonstrate clear community support;
- c. Proposals for affordable housing in Neighbourhood Plans may be supported in suitable Green Belt locations as an exception to normal policies of control provided that sufficient justification for such an exception has been provided, this should include how the scale of the scheme and range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures is appropriate to the location and level of identified local affordable housing need; It can be demonstrated that the scheme will be well managed and financially viable over the long term and that any benefits provided by the scheme can be retained by the local community in perpetuity;
- d. Elements of open market development delivered as part of a community led development scheme will be considered acceptable where:
- e. It can be demonstrated through a financial appraisal that it is essential to enable the delivery of community benefit; and
- f. It can be demonstrated that the community benefit (such as, but not exclusively affordable housing or open space) is greater than would be delivered on an equivalent open market site.

The Strategy

Quality of place

Quality of place

6.0.1 The quality of a place is not just about how an area looks, but is also about how it feels and how it is used, what facilities it contains, what jobs there are and how the community can access it. The quality of an area is important to the social, economic and environmental vitality of its community, and is often important beyond the immediate vicinity. These factors make it important to ensure that the quality of our towns, villages, hamlets, spaces, and communities are retained and that any new development contributes to the local values. This does not mean that change is not welcomed. Rather, by responding positively to its surroundings, development can enhance the look and feel of our area and improve how it functions.

6.0.2 New development is one factor that establishes the quality of a place. Development can help build community cohesion, define local distinctiveness, and foster a sense of place, or conversely it can harm these assets by not fully considering the impacts or opportunities that exist within a scheme. Development should be a long-lasting feature within an area, so it is important to get it right.

6.1 Design

6.1.1 All development, redevelopment and conversion should demonstrate design excellence and respond positively to its context. Development in the Borough should create safe, secure and pleasant environments both inside and outside of buildings, with careful consideration to the way people use spaces and places. These factors will not only improve quality of life, but will also attract business and visitors to the Borough.

6.1.2 Delivering good design is a key element to this plan and is necessary to ensure that development in the Borough is high quality. There are many different principles that go into delivering good design including visual factors, functionality, sustainability and local distinctiveness.

6.1.3 Design of any scheme should be a response to the context of a proposal both in terms of where it is located and what it is attempting to deliver. Generic designs are rarely suitable as they deliver development that fails to be distinctive and does not help establish a sense of place. Well designed schemes should look to make the most of existing buildings, greenery, topography, views and other features both on and off the site as an opportunity to develop a unique and attractive scheme. New design does not have to imitate architectural forms or features, but should recognise the rhythm, height, proportion and plot relationships of existing properties. Where a street has no dominant pattern or form of development, or this has already been radically altered, new development should still generally reflect the pattern of development of its wider context.

6.1.4 The local importance of design and the need to respond to an area is something that is very important to residents as demonstrated in the Cookham Village Design Statement, the Ascot Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan and emerging neighbourhood plans. Proposals should be designed to complement local character and, in areas where character can be seen to be low quality, development should seek to raise the standard.

6.1.5 The relationship with neighbouring properties should be considered to avoid conflict through proposals that are overbearing, reduce privacy or may harm outlook or light levels. Imaginative layouts can help reduce the impact of a scheme on neighbours and can create high quality spaces that are both pleasant and functional. Incorporating basic principles included in Secured by Design, such as ensuring that private and public spaces are clearly defined and that pedestrian routes do not become isolated, will assist in making spaces feel safe.

6.1.6 Access to, through and around a scheme should be carefully thought through so that users will feel safe and will not face any unnecessary impediment. New road layouts should prioritise safe, easy and direct pedestrian movement. Good permeability should be delivered and opportunities to enhance accessibility around the community should be secured, particularly where key routes to locations such as schools or retail centres can be provided. Generally gated developments will not be encouraged.

6.1.7 Strong landscaping schemes should be included in all development proposals as they can help to connect a scheme to the wider area and can soften the impact of new development. Landscaping should be used to reduce the domination of car parking, providing screening where appropriate and creating strong boundaries. Where possible, native species should be used, and consideration should be given to the future maintenance of schemes to reduce the costs for future occupiers.

6.1.8 The Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) identifies two areas where tall buildings are considered suitable in principle: the area around the railway station, and; south of Bad Godesberg Way. The AAP suggests a maximum height of 12 storeys (40m) based on the height of existing tall buildings. Maidenhead town centre provides an opportunity to create more dynamic contrasts in building heights. Elsewhere, contrasting building heights should generally be avoided. To assist the rejuvenation and optimise the use of land in

Quality of place

Maidenhead town centre, greater flexibility in building height than currently outlined in the AAP will be considered, including proposals in excess of the 12 storey (40m) maximum height suggested. Proposals across the town centre will be judged on their individual merits whilst ensuring the setting and character of heritage assets, and sensitive areas such as the Conservation Area are protected.

6.1.9 The Borough will view favourably those proposals that have actively sought, and incorporated the views of the local community throughout their design. Neighbourhood Plans may wish to set guidance for what level of community engagement is sought for different developments to be appropriate for the area.

6.2 BLP3 Design

Policy BLP 3

Design

1. Development will contribute towards achieving high quality design in buildings, spaces and areas connecting with the wider community. A borough wide design guide will be brought forward as a Supplementary Planning Document to further illustrate how this policy should be implemented.
2. All development proposals will need to demonstrate how they have had regard to the principles of sustainable design, construction and development including how they aim to mitigate climate change through the following:
 - a. Local character and context
 - b. Views
 - c. Appearance and orientation
 - d. Relationships with neighbouring buildings and areas
 - e. Movement and access for all modes
 - f. Legibility and permeability for ease of understanding and navigation
 - g. Public realm
 - h. Parking
 - i. Landscaping and amenity
 - j. Materials
 - k. Community safety
 - l. Storage for refuse and recycling
3. Within Maidenhead Town Centre (As defined on the Policies Map) including the area of the Town Centre Area Action Plan, greater flexibility on building heights will be permitted. Tall buildings will be supported where they demonstrate exceptional high quality design and do not cause unacceptable impacts. Advice provided by Historic England, or similar bodies, on tall buildings should inform development proposals.
4. Developments should be designed in partnership with:
 - a. The Council through the paid for pre-application service;
 - b. The local community through Neighbourhood Plan groups and other engagement methods appropriate to the proposals and in line with standards set out in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement; and
 - c. Design panels as appropriate for major schemes, with the cost of the Design Panel to be borne by the Applicant.

6.3 Townscape and landscape

6.3.1 The Borough has a varied landscape and townscape which contribute to its distinctiveness and its attraction to residents, businesses and visitors. Retaining this distinctiveness is essential especially in high quality areas of townscape or landscape. In areas of lower value, improvement should be sought where possible in all development proposals.

6 Quality of place

6.3.2 A variety of character types in both urban and rural areas each have their own defining features and attributes that contribute to the distinctiveness and attractiveness of the area. Within each area of distinct character there are individual opportunities and issues that should be central to approaches taken in development proposals.

6.3.3 Development proposals will be required, through design and access statements, to demonstrate how a proposal takes into account the character of its surroundings and responds positively to it through proposals. Positive features and views should be retained and opportunities to improve the distinctive character through development should be delivered.

6.3.4 The Royal Borough has carried out a detailed review of the character of its rural and urban areas. A Townscape Assessment was produced for all of the urban areas that are not within the boundaries of the Green Belt. Similarly, a Landscape Character Assessment was produced to provide a starting point for considering the character attributes locally for schemes in areas within the Green Belt, including villages and hamlets that are in the Green Belt.

6.3.5 In urban areas the Townscape Assessment identifies the character types across the Royal Borough. It should be used in development proposals to identify the character attributes of both the immediate and wider area. Development proposals should demonstrate how they integrate with the local area by making the most of features and by contributing to the specific characteristics, including capitalising on any opportunities to enhance local character.

6.3.6 The Landscape Character Assessment identifies a number of character areas which are formed by the nature and geology of the area. It should be used to demonstrate an understanding of the special qualities of the landscape area and how these are taken account of in development proposals. Key elements to local landscape character can include natural features such as trees and hedgerows and also structural features such as walls, fences, buildings and surface materials.

6.4 BLP4 Townscape and landscape

Policy BLP 4

Townscape and landscape

1. Development proposals in the Borough will respond to the local context, retaining important attributes and where possible enhancing the quality and character of the local area.
2. Using the Townscape Assessment, development proposals in the urban areas will maintain and enhance local character. This will be in terms of both the immediate surroundings and streetscene; and at the wider settlement or character type area, and will respond positively to defining features.
3. Using the Landscape Character Assessment, development proposals in rural areas will maintain and enhance the quality, distinctive local characteristics and features that contribute positively to landscape character and rural views.

6.5 The River Thames Corridor

6.5.1 The River Thames is one of the Borough's most important natural and cultural assets, providing extensive leisure, ecological, environmental, landscape and economic benefits. It is essential to ensure that this importance and attraction is preserved whilst welcoming the opportunities the river brings for positive change.

6.5.2 The NPPF states that 'the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.' High quality development proposals within the River Thames Corridor can make a positive contribution to the character and setting of this important landscape.

6.5.3 This policy helps by supporting and promoting the key heritage attractions associated with the River Thames and applies to development of all uses and scales that would have an impact on the River Thames and its setting. This includes the valley sides and crests which form a distinctive topographical feature and the flat open floodplain where change could have a significant impact on views from the river. In built-up areas, the setting may in places be defined simply by the line of buildings closest to the river; but in other places could

Quality of place

comprise a wider area including entire villages such as Bisham, Temple and Hurley due to their relationship to the river and the nature of the valley topography. Similarly, historic buildings and their settings that have a visual or historic link with the river, for example Windsor Castle and Eton College, would also form part of the river setting.

6.5.4 The River Thames flows through the Borough for 25 miles making a unique contribution to the environment and forming one of the Borough's most significant landscape features. It includes stretches of great scenic character, for example steep wooded slopes between Bisham and Maidenhead, and extensive floodplain valleys such as around Hurley. It also has stretches with deep historic associations, often with national importance, such as in Windsor, Eton and Ankerwycke.

6.5.5 The Borough's Landscape Character Assessment identifies landscape character areas including important aspects linked to the river, for example flat open floodplain, long distance views and views of historic buildings, diverse river edge habitat including linear woodland and quiet, remote landscapes. In addition to this, the Townscape Assessment identifies a number of different character types along the Thames area where it has developed over time. In many of these areas it is identified that the relationship with the Thames is central to the character areas, as a key reason for how and why these areas were developed.

6.5.6 The quality of the building and spaces alongside the river makes an important contribution to the Borough's environment and enjoyment of the river. Every stretch of waterway has its own character and this needs to be reflected in the design of new development. The principles of high quality design are set out in Policy BLP3. Particular care will be taken to ensure developments within the setting of the Thames compliment the distinctive character of the water frontage and important views. The extent of the setting of the Thames is defined on the Policies Map.

6.5.7 In addition to the scenic and cultural benefits, the River Thames Corridor provides many opportunities for sport and leisure. Some of these opportunities are active, some involving the water, and others simply benefiting from the calm and reflective feeling of being near water. Both active and passive activities can contribute towards improving the health of residents and visitors and should be protected. There is public access to much of the River Thames including the Thames Path National Trail.

6.5.8 River-related services, businesses, and infrastructure, make an important functional contribution to the character and use of the River Thames. This is especially the case for those involving the construction, repair and servicing of river craft; make a vital contribution to the continuation of the historic traditions and function of the River Thames. The Council endorses the principle of supporting sites associated with river-related activities and employment. Opportunities for generating renewable energy will also be supported in principle, provided that they do not adversely impact on the River Thames Corridor.

6.5.9 The variety of wildlife related to the river, its tributaries and islands adds to the enjoyment of the river. Policy BLP5 seeks to maintain the ecological value of the river and in appropriate circumstances, restore and enhance natural elements of the riparian environment.

6.5.10 In 2015, the River Thames Alliance published the Thames Waterway Plan, an integrated strategy for the river to 2021. Furthermore, the Environment Agency has produced a River Basin Management Plan, Thames River Basin District in 2009, which seeks to manage the pressures facing the water environment of the river basin. This policy seeks to promote the healthy growth in the use of the River Thames for communities, wildlife, leisure and business in ways that are compatible with its character and setting and ecology, and is in line with the objectives of these plans. The Borough will work with adjoining authorities and other partner organisations where needed for wider strategies or projects.

Quality of place

6.6 BLP5 River Thames Corridor

Policy BLP 5

River Thames corridor

1. The Borough will conserve and enhance the special character and setting of the River Thames, whilst protecting and promoting appropriate river-related economic, leisure and sporting activities including businesses directly related to river use such as Boat Yards. Every stretch of waterway has its own character and this needs to be reflected in the design of new development. Particular care will be taken to ensure developments within the setting of the Thames compliment the distinctive character of the water frontage and important views. Existing riverside access will be maintained and opportunities examined to extend access to the River Thames and adjoining sites.
2. Where appropriate, development proposals within the River Thames Corridor will be required to:
 - a. Protect, and where possible enhance, views to and from the river;
 - b. Meet the principles of high quality design set out in this plan, having special regard to the riverside setting and water frontage character, and considering views of proposals from all public vantage points, including from the river;
 - c. Protect and conserve landscape features, buildings, structures, bridges, archaeological remains that are associated with the Thames and its history and heritage;
 - d. Maintain, and where possible enhance, public access for riverside walking, river corridor cycling, and fishing and boating; and
 - e. Maintain tree cover, riverbank vegetation, stability of river banks and conserve or improve the ecological value of the area including its role as a wildlife network. There may be opportunities for the restoration and enhancement of natural elements of the river environment that should be incorporated within the design of new developments.
3. The Borough will support appropriate proposals for sport, leisure, and river-related employment, infrastructure, and renewable energy generation where they meet the above criteria and where they will not obstruct access along or to the river for any users, or harm its ecological value
4. The Borough endorses the principle of supporting sites associated with river-related activities and employment. Opportunities for generating renewable energy will also be supported in principle, provided that they do not adversely impact on the River Thames Corridor.
5. The Borough will seek to maintain the ecological value of the river and in appropriate circumstances, restore and enhance natural elements of the riparian environment and will also seek to promote the healthy growth in the use of the River Thames for communities, wildlife, leisure and business in ways that are compatible with its character and setting and ecology, and is in line with the objectives of the Thames Waterway Plan and the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plan.

Green Belt and countryside character

Green Belt and countryside character

7.1 Context

7.1.1 The whole of the Borough, with the exception of the larger settlements, lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt comprising 83% of the Borough's area. Much of the Green Belt is used for agriculture, forestry, open land and recreational uses, however it also includes a number of small villages and hamlets, educational establishments and other institutional uses, employment premises and mineral workings. The Borough Local Plan's spatial strategy is to build upon the existing pattern of towns and villages which are excluded from the Green Belt. These are regarded as the most sustainable locations for development by virtue of their existing access to services and facilities, and the availability of previously developed land.

7.1.2 The Borough will continue to restrict development in the Green Belt as set out in national policy. Green Belt is a significant part of the borough which is valued for not only its open countryside but also for its natural beauty, wildlife and historical and cultural associations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Another key way to achieve a sustainable pattern of development is by steering growth towards the urban areas as indicated elsewhere in the Borough Local Plan, but also by promoting a strong and vibrant countryside character. This approach is consistent with national policy that promotes economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity.

7.2 Green Belt

7.2.1 The Borough takes great pride in being described as the first countryside west of London along the M4 corridor. National policy assigns great weight to Green Belts and advises that, when considering any planning application, the Borough should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and to any other harm. Very special circumstances to justify development will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations; and any alterations to the boundaries of the Green Belt will need to be supported by a case of 'Exceptional circumstances.'

7.2.2 The aim of the Borough Local Plan approach is to preserve the openness and purposes of the Green Belt. National policy advises that changes to Green Belt boundaries should only be made in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Borough Local Plan. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map.

7.2.3 Land at the edge of Ascot High Street is identified as an area where development in the Green Belt would be supported to achieve specific community benefits. (BLP11 refers) The rejuvenation of Ascot High Street to create a community hub through mixed use development, including shopping and housing, which has been identified through the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan.

7.2.4 As mentioned elsewhere in this Plan, (BLP1 refers) it is proposed to remove Strategic Sites listed from the Green Belt in order to facilitate sustainable development. It is also proposed to remove an area in Braywick Park, as defined on the Policies Map (BLP55 refers) to be allocated for leisure development including a Leisure Centre and associated indoor and outdoor sports facilities. It is also proposed to remove the site of Maidenhead Golf Course from the Green Belt and safeguard it for development beyond the plan period. This will enable the spatial strategy to continue to protect the

7.2.5 There are a number of villages that are washed over by the Green Belt. Development proposals within these villages will continue to be determined according to the guidance in the NPPF. The NPPF is clear that the development of new buildings in the Green Belt are considered to be inappropriate. The exceptions to this general presumption are either proposals supported by a case of Very Special Circumstance or those detailed by Paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF which allow for limited infilling in settlements and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out elsewhere in this plan.

7.2.6 There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless supported by a case of Very Special Circumstances.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.3 BLP 6 Green Belt

Policy BLP 6

Green Belt

1. Within the Borough the Metropolitan Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. The open and rural character of the Green Belt will be maintained and supported to safeguard the Borough from inappropriate development.
2. Boundaries of existing settlements washed over by the Green Belt, (As defined on the Policies Map) will be maintained in order to identify limits to any infilling. The Borough will determine whether any local exceptional circumstances exist to warrant any changes to those boundaries.
3. Important previously developed and major sites, defined on the Policies Map and detailed in Policy BLP11 will be retained together with an approach to infilling and complete or partial redevelopment.
4. In those parts of the Borough on the edge of settlements that are excluded from the Green Belt, but conspicuous when viewed from it, development proposals will be supported where the proposal would respect or improve the visual amenities and openness of the Green Belt through scale, form, siting, design, materials and landscaping and that would soften the edge of the settlement when viewed both from within the Green Belt and from outside the Green Belt.

7.4 Countryside character

7.4.1 The Borough Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the distinctive character and heritage of its settlements and countryside that surrounds them, by steering growth towards the urban areas and by also promoting a strong and vibrant countryside character. The Borough Local Plan sets out to ensure that development seeks to maintain the open and rural character of the countryside; and Green Belt and other rural areas to help promote a living, working and vibrant countryside.

7.4.2 The Borough Local Plan translates five key countryside principles that are important to the delivery of the plan and those sit alongside and complement Green Belt objectives:

- a. The important role of the Metropolitan Green Belt as the first significant open space west of London;
- b. The protection and enhancement of the environmental quality of the borough;
- c. The conservation and enhancement of the Borough's natural beauty and historic and cultural heritage;
- d. The support and enhancement of people's understanding and enjoyment of the countryside; and
- e. The promotion of economic and social health and well-being of local communities

7.4.3 Whilst striving for greater versatility in the rural area the Borough Local Plan sets out a number of key tests. For example, to ensure that proposals for development in the countryside are appropriate to their location, small in scale and do not detract from the character of the area. Care should also be taken over the scale, siting, design and materials employed in any new buildings so as to limit the impact on the character of the countryside.

7.4.4 The Borough Local Plan also draws together key activities that the Borough wishes to support in the countryside; its purpose being to manage general change within the countryside. Suitable rural enterprise schemes in appropriate locations can help to support local communities and agriculture, and other rural pursuits can assist in maintaining rural character. There are also other policies that deal with the re-use or replacement of non-residential buildings, rural tourism, rural housing, infilling within villages and limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed sites all of which are subject to the normal Green Belt tests.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.5 BLP 7 Green Belt and Countryside Character

Policy BLP 7

Countryside Character

1. Within the Borough development proposals in the countryside will need to respect the character of the countryside. Development proposals for infrastructure in the countryside will be supported where Very Special Circumstances can be demonstrated that outweigh any harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. Communities within the Borough will be encouraged to identify important characteristics of their rural places and to develop suitable approaches to support the countryside through Neighbourhood Plans and or Village Design Statements.
2. The Borough will only support development proposals where very special circumstances can be demonstrated that also take into account the following principles:
 - a. Development should be located where it would be viewed against existing built form and sited adjacent to existing settlements, making the best use of existing community infrastructure;
 - b. The scale of proposed development should be appropriate to its location;
 - c. Design and layout should respect the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape setting;
 - d. Development proposals should not lead to a level of activity including traffic which is incompatible with the rural character of the area;
 - e. The best and most versatile agricultural land and woodland is protected from development; and
 - f. Development in the Borough should not lead to unacceptable harm to residential amenity
3. The Borough will support the following types of development:
 - a. Development for agriculture;
 - b. The re-use or replacement of non-residential buildings (BLP9 refers);
 - c. Rural tourism and leisure development that benefits businesses, communities and visitors in rural areas;
 - d. Limited infilling in village, and limited affordable housing for local community needs (BLP8 refers);
 - e. Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (BLP11 refers)

7.6 New residential development in the Green Belt

7.6.1 The acceptability of additional development in the Green Belt is guided by national policy where there is scope for a replacement of an existing building in the same use, or the extension or alteration of a building, or re-use of a building if of substantial and permanent construction. There is a general presumption that inappropriate development proposals not supported by a case of very special circumstances will not be supported by the Council.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.7 BLP 8 New residential development in the Green Belt

Policy BLP 8

New Residential Development in the Green Belt

1. The Borough will only support new residential development in the Green Belt where:
 - a. The development proposal relates to limited infilling within the boundaries of a village as defined on the Policies Map;
 - b. There is a proven functional and financial need for a new dwelling to be support an existing, agricultural or forestry use on the site and where it can be demonstrated that the dwelling has to be located on the site and there are no suitable buildings that could be converted or extended for this purpose;
 - c. The development proposal relates to the rebuilding or one-for-one replacement of an existing habitable dwelling of permanent construction where the residential use is not seasonal or occasional and which has not been abandoned and which will not have a materially greater impact than the original building;
 - d. The development proposal relates to affordable housing on rural exception sites (BLP16 refers)
 - e. The development proposal relates to affordable housing on rural exception sites through a community led proposal identified in a made Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - f. A case of very special circumstances has been demonstrated that outweighs any harm to the Green Belt or any other harm.
2. The Borough will support development proposals in the Green Belt where a case of very special circumstances has been demonstrated that outweighs any harm to the Green Belt and any other harm; and where:
 - a. The development proposal would be entirely contained within the boundary of a settlement; or
 - b. It can be demonstrated that no unacceptable effect will be caused to the openness of the Green Belt or the countryside character of the landscape.

7.8 The reuse and or replacement of non-residential buildings in the Green Belt

7.8.1 National policy states that the extension or alteration of a building (in the same use) or the replacement of a building, subject to key tests, is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. To apply this effectively, the policy balances the need to control the re-use and replacement of non-residential buildings in the Green Belt, with the Borough Local Plan's objective to maintain a buoyant and broad-based economy in the countryside parts of the Borough.

7.8.2 The Borough will impose such conditions as may be appropriate to ensure that the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it are maintained and identification of the extent of any residential curtilage. This may include withdrawal of permitted development rights. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(Amendment)(England) Order 2015) GPDO (As amended) permits existing buildings used for agricultural purposes to be used for purposes supporting rural growth.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.9 BLP 9 Reuse and replacement of non-residential development in the Green Belt

Policy BLP 9

Re-use or replacement of Non-Residential Buildings in the Green Belt

1. The Borough will support development proposals for the reuse or replacement of non residential buildings in the Green Belt subject to the following criteria:
 - a. When an existing lawful building remains that is substantially complete.
 - b. When the building is of permanent and substantial construction and its form is in keeping with its surroundings and would not require extensive reconstruction or a material change in size or scale.
2. Whether the proposed use would not have a materially greater impact than the present or last approved lawful use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.
3. The reuse of a building for business and industrial uses should be appropriate in size and viability to agricultural units or buildings on the farm. Appropriateness should be tested against the context of the locality as justified in a farm management plan.

7.10 Equestrian development in the Green Belt

7.10.1 The purpose of the policy is to guide equestrian development within the Green Belt so that proposals maintain the rural character and local distinctiveness of the Borough and to set size limitations and criteria within which proposals will be supported in order to maintain the openness of the Green Belt. The policy also aims to limit the impact of equestrian development on the amenity of nearby residential properties.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.11 BLP 10 Equestrian development in the Green Belt

Policy BLP 10

Equestrian Development in the Green Belt

1. The Borough will support appropriate development proposals that comprise enlarged equestrian establishment including large private establishments and commercial establishments offering overnight accommodation of horses subject to the following criteria:
 - a. The presence of any existing residential accommodation on or near the site in order to protect the residential amenity of properties;
 - b. The number of existing and permitted intensive equestrian establishments within the local area;
 - c. Traffic implications; and
 - d. The availability of suitable bridleways or other riding land close by.
2. The Borough will also support appropriate small scale private equestrian related development subject to the development proposal being able to demonstrate a case of very special circumstances and the following criteria:
 - a. The availability of grazing land at least 0.5 hectares per horse on one or more plots of land;
 - b. Limits being placed on the number of stables and field shelters and tack and feed rooms per 0.5 hectares up to a maximum of 4 stables on any site;
 - c. The need to minimise the visual impact of any proposed buildings;
 - d. The availability of suitable bridleways or other riding land close by.

7.12 Important previously developed sites in the Green Belt

7.12.1 National policy advises that infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, whether redundant or in continued use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development, is appropriate development. National policy no longer includes a defined approach to 'major developed sites' but the Borough has developed a policy approach that identifies Important Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt. The development envelopes o

7.12.2 The policy approach recognises the changes to national policy and guidance and identifies a number of important previously developed sites in the Green Belt with defined development envelopes, within which infilling development or partial or complete redevelopment is acceptable in principle as this allows organic growth and development within the sites. Of the sites identified by this Policy, Berkshire College of Agriculture, Beaumont College, Imperial College and Legoland all continue to aspire to rejuvenate and redevelop their sites during the plan period. This policy allows reasonable development activity within the defined site development envelope. In the cases of Heatherwood Hospital and Sunningdale Park (formerly the Civil Service College) these sites have been identified as being available for comprehensive development during the plan period.

Green Belt and countryside character

7.13 BLP11 Important previously developed sites in the Green Belt

Policy BLP 11

Important previously developed sites in the Green Belt

1. Development sites as defined on the Policies Map are designated as Important Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt. Site proformas (Appendix F) for each of these sites will define the development envelopes to be applied.:
 - a. Berkshire College of Agriculture, Burchetts Green
 - b. Beaumont Estate, Old Windsor
 - c. Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre
 - d. Legoland Resort, Windsor
 - e. Imperial College, Silwood Park, Sunninghill
 - f. Heatherwood Hospital Ascot
 - g. Sunningdale Park, Sunningdale
 - h. Windsor Race Course
 - i. Ascot Race Course
2. Within these designated sites and in accordance with guidance in the NPPF development proposals will be supported in line with individual site proformas contained in Appendix F. In particular Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot and Sunningdale Park in Sunningdale are allocated for housing development. (See Housing Site Allocations Policy BLP13) The requirement for Suitable Alternative Natural Green space (SANG), public open space and other infrastructure will also be identified as appropriate, and existing SANG will be protected.
3. The Borough will continue to seek appropriate provision of SANG and where this is located in the Green Belt such proposals will need to be the subject of a Planning Application for a Change of Use.

Housing

Housing

8.1 Context

8.1.1 Planning supports the provision of housing, helping to ensure homes are available to meet future needs. Deciding the scale, distribution and type of new homes that are to be provided in the future are amongst the most significant issues that the Borough Local Plan must address. The strategy for meeting the Borough's housing needs has many elements. It is vital to make the best and most efficient use of previously developed land so as to minimise the amount of new land required for house building. This includes the redevelopment of existing sites at higher densities, changing the use of some redundant employment sites, encouraging flats above shops and new housing development in town centre opportunity areas, and development on other previously developed windfall sites. Other strategies run in parallel to the planning system to maximise the supply of housing, for instance it is important to bring empty homes back into use.

8.1.2 The Council has determined that in order to aim to meet the level of need for housing in the Borough there will be a limited number of Green Belt releases and Maidenhead Golf Course will be removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development beyond the plan period. If, in the event the Golf Course site becomes available within the current plan period, this would then trigger a local plan review in order to bring the site forward for development.

8.1.3 The Council will monitor the supply of housing land to ensure that a five year supply of deliverable sites is maintained. The Council will also keep under review the monitoring and updating of housing land supply data through an Annual Monitoring Report. This will include updating the housing trajectory and will allow for the opportunity to review housing land supply and delivery. The current housing trajectory is included at Appendix G

8.2 Amount and distribution of housing

8.2.1 The NPPF requires local authorities to meet the full objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing unless the impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. This is placed against the background of positively seeking opportunities to meet need. The Borough Local Plan takes a positive approach to providing for the identified level of need across the Borough.

8.2.2 National policy and guidance requires an objective assessment of the future need for housing over a functional housing market area – an area which reflects the key functional relationships between places where people live and work. The assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing that meets the household and population projections, taking account of migrations and demographic change. The Borough forms part of a wider Strategic Housing Market Area and has close links with other Housing Market Areas in neighbouring areas. For the Borough Local Plan to be considered sound particularly with regards to housing provision it is necessary to identify the level of objectively assessed need and then to identify how much of that need can be accommodated in the Borough. The Council has worked collaboratively with the other Berkshire authorities and the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP to produce a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA.) The Berkshire wide SHMA has identified a level of OAN for the Borough of 712 dwellings per annum or some 13,500 new dwellings over the plan period from 1st April 2013 to 1st April 2032.

8.2.3 The Borough is subject to a number of designations where the NPPF indicates that development should be restricted. These include Green Belt which covers 83% of the Borough's area, sites designated for their international or national importance to nature conservation, areas of historic importance and areas liable to flooding. All of these designations limit the availability of land for development.

8.2.4 A development capacity has been identified for in the order of an additional 7,000 dwellings across the Borough on land where the NPPF advises that development is not restricted or where redevelopment of existing sites would be supported including approximately 2,000 new dwellings in Maidenhead Town Centre with ongoing work to identify opportunities for increased provision. Development capacity has also been identified on a number of sites formerly within the Green Belt which have been allocated and one site that has been safeguarded for future development beyond the plan period.

8.2.5 A key aspect of the strategy, within the context of the wide functional area is to provide for a sustainable balance between the number of new homes provided and the impact on the environment. Restricting development so that fewer homes are built than the level identified as OAN will affect the number and mix of people that can

live within the Borough. It will limit the number of young people who can live locally and could lead to an imbalance within the community, increased commuting into the Borough with resultant congestion, and lead to a loss of prosperity as a result of fewer people of working age and a resultant drop in disposable income.

8.2.6 It is not considered that the Borough's Objectively Assessed Need over the Plan period can be met in full, in a way that also comprises a pattern of sustainable development. The Borough has a predominantly countryside character, with a high quality landscape and environment and significant areas of land that are designated at national and international level. The identified site capacities on non-restricted sites and the identified former Green Belt sites could provide for approximately 66% of the OAN within the policy approach that aims to use a range of sources of housing land supply to achieve a sustainable balance between housing and social and economic needs, whilst at the same time protecting the quality of the environment and the Green Belt. This approach necessitates some development in those parts of the Green Belt where impacts are considered to be limited.

8.2.7 The approach to identifying sites makes a significant contribution to meeting the identified need for housing in line with the expectations of national policy and guidance and reflects the need for all local authorities across the Housing Market Areas to do more to increase housing land supply. It is important to note that the Borough Local Plan housing requirement does not represent the only source of new dwellings that can be accommodated. Ancillary accommodation created through the extension of properties and some forms of shared accommodation do not require planning permission but will still make an important contribution to meeting housing needs as will provision arising from changes to permitted development rights.

8.3 Strategic Housing Market Area, Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Target

8.3.1 The constraints across the Borough are considered to have a significant impact on the ability of the Borough to accommodate the full objectively assessed level of need, determined by the Berkshire wide SHMA as 712 dwellings per annum. The housing target for the plan is based on a level of development that the Borough can meet in a sustainable manner, having regard to the constraints that are operating and the potential development capacity of sites that have been identified. The housing target is therefore 469 dwellings per annum which comprise 66% of the level of OAN.

8.3.2 The Council continues to work constructively and co-operatively with neighbouring authorities and others to accommodate unmet needs in the Borough and adjoining areas. It is acknowledged that the plan aims to accommodate a significant increase in housing provision over the plan period but does not meet the entire quantum of identified need. The Council will continue to review matters that have impaired the ability to meet the identified level of need, and which, when resolved would enable housing provision to be increased. This includes continued work to identify emerging windfall brownfield sites and working with other agencies such as central government, to ensure that the optimum use of surplus land and facilities is made to accommodate need, and working with Neighbourhood Plan groups to identify further sites for housing.

8.3.3 The Borough Local Plan makes provision for 8,904 new dwellings over the plan period from 2013 to 2032. A significant contribution of 2626 new dwellings towards meeting this target has already been made by sites which have either been developed or are committed. A further contribution of 1639 dwellings is made by small sites and windfalls which means that 52% of the identified need remains to be allocated. It is proposed to allocate three former Green Belt sites to accommodate 320 new dwellings, and 1470 new dwellings within the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary.

8.4 5 year housing land supply and housing trajectory

8.4.1 Under national policy, the Council is required to illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period. For the purposes of the Housing Trajectory, which can be found in Appendix G the plan period is divided into the following :

2013-2017	2018-2022	2023-2027	2028-2032
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Table 2

8.4.2 The Council is also required to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against its housing requirements as set put in previous assessments. Housing delivery in the seven years proceeding the beginning of the plan period in 2008 was as follows:

Housing

Historic Housing Delivery	
Time period	Number of new dwellings
2008-2009	474
2009-2010	351
2010-2011	190
2011-2012	177
2012-2013	193
2013-2014	360
2014-2015	514

Table 3

8.4.3 The Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has historically delivered above its Berkshire Structure Plan housing target and South East Plan housing target with the exception of the reduced returns in 2010/11 and 2011/12 due to the effects of the recession. It is anticipated that delivery in 2015/16 is relatively high, between 700 to 750 new dwellings and this would cancel out any under delivery in the initial part of the plan period. Therefore an additional 5% buffer is appropriate in line with the requirements of the National Planning Practice Guidance and Paragraphs 47-49 of the NPPF. It should be noted that this is not an additional 5% supply but is supply brought forward from the latter part of the plan period. The Council will publish annually, via the Monitoring Report, details of the 5 year housing land supply which will include a list of the sites considered to comprise the supply as at 1st April each year.

8.4.4 For the Borough Local Plan the five year housing land supply figure is presented in Appendix G. It comprises sites that are considered to meet the criteria for deliverability as required by the NPPF, paragraph 47, in that they are available, suitable and achievable within five years. Included within the five year supply is an allowance for windfalls, based on previous historical patterns of delivery within the Borough, in line with the NPPF Paragraph 48, sites with planning permission, site allocations as identified in Policy BLP13, sites formerly in the Green Belt, and sites in Maidenhead Town Centre.

8.4.5 The total number of dwellings anticipated to be provided during the plan period, within similar categories to the five year supply, is identified in Policy BLP12.

8.5 BLP 12 Amount and distribution of housing

Policy BLP 12

Amount and Distribution of Housing

1. The Local Plan seeks to ensure the delivery of additional dwellings which would achieve a sustainable balance between housing and social and economic needs, and protecting the environment, especially the Green Belt.
2. The Borough Local Plan provides for 8,904 new dwellings over the plan period from 1st April 2013 to 1st April 2032, or approximately 469 dwellings per year.
3. The target is based on the delivery of housing where the NPPF advises that development is not restricted, the redevelopment of existing sites, sites with planning permission, and presently unidentified sites (windfalls) as follows:

Category	Amount
Completions since 1 April 2013	874
Commitments (Sites with planning permission)	2626
Small sites allowance/windfalls (Unidentified sites)	1639
Allocations (Defined in BLP13 Housing Allocations)	2295
Sites formerly in the Green Belt (Included in figure immediately above)	(320)
Other allocated sites (inc Maidenhead Town Centre)	1470
TOTAL	8904

Table 4

Housing

8.6 BLP 13 Allocated housing development sites

Policy BLP 13

Allocated Housing Development Sites

- The following sites are allocated for housing development . The sites are defined on the Policies Map and further information on the site allocations is presented on the site proformas in Appendix F. The proformas indicate the necessary infrastructure that will be required to support the sustainable development of the allocated sites.

Reference		Estimated Capacity
HA1	Ascot Town Centre	300
HA2	Saint-Cloud Way	500
HA3	Land south of Ray Mill Road East	60
HA4	Straight Works	20
HA5	95 Straight Road	10
HA6	Reform Road	100
HA7	Bridge Road Sunninghill	80
HA8	Whyteladyes Lane	40
HA9	Exclusive House	30
HA10	Broomhall Car Park	30
HA11	Maidenhead Lawn Tennis Club	30
HA12	99-103 Boyn Valley Road	35
HA13	Bolton Road	20
HA14	Baltic Wharf	60
HA15	Ascot Station Car Park	35
HA16	Summerlease	100
HA17	Wyevale Garden Centre	35
HA18	Tectonic Place	30
HA19	Shirley Avenue	80
HA20	Heatherwood Hospital	200
HA21	Silwood Park	25
HA22	Sunningdale Park	230
HA23	Belmont Road	15
HA24	Squires Garden Centre	40

Housing

Reference		Estimated Capacity
HA25	Windsor Police Station	35
HA26	Minton Place	75
HA27	Grove Business Park	80
	TOTAL	2295

Table 5

8.7 Meeting a range of housing needs

8.7.1 The Council wants to deliver a wide variety of high quality homes across the borough that will provide all tenures, types and sizes of housing to meet the needs and demands of different people in the community. This will include housing for older people, people with disabilities, the travelling community, students and others in the community with specialist housing needs. The provision of new dwellings will need to take account of local need in order to allow for a genuine choice of housing options and the need for new housing to create sustainable, balanced and mixed communities.

8.7.2 The Council is obliged to keep a register of people and interested associations that are seeking land to construct self build or custom build housing. The register can be found [here](#). Regard will be had to the information on the register when the Council is carrying out its planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions. Future demand for such plots will be kept under review and this may lead to the allocation of further sites to meet expressed demand.

8.8 BLP 14 Meeting a range of housing needs

Policy BLP 14

Meeting a range of housing needs

1. Across the Borough the provision of new homes should contribute to meeting the needs of current and projected households by having regard to the following principles:
 - a. Provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes;
 - b. Be adaptable to changing life circumstances; and
 - c. For proposals of 20 or more dwellings, at least 5% of dwellings should be delivered as fully wheelchair accessible.
2. Development proposals for residential care will be only be supported where they meet local commissioning priorities or a demonstrable local community need has been established.
3. Development proposals should demonstrate that housing type and mix has been taken into account and show how they seek to demonstrate how dwellings have been designed to be adaptable.
4. A Housing Supplementary Planning Document will further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

8.9 Affordable housing

8.9.1 The Borough is considered to be one of the most prosperous areas in the country with very high house prices and lack of supply, particularly with regards to affordable housing. The Borough enjoys a close proximity to London with excellent transport links, a great number of employment and leisure opportunities and a vibrant local economy, and this in turn serves to increase demand for housing which in turns leads to increased house prices. The Borough is one of the least affordable to live in across the whole country.

8.9.2 Affordability is a major concern to those on the lowest earnings, who are generally first time buyers seeking accommodation at the lower end of the size spectrum. The Borough's affordability ratio of median house price to salary is 13.45 according to Communities and Local Government in 2015 which means that houses cost, on average, over thirteen times the average salary.

8.9.3 One of the biggest concerns in relation to the provision of affordable housing is the lack of supply to meet the needs of all of the community, especially the lower paid residents and would be residents of the Borough. Due to the high price of housing many of the lower paid and lower skilled jobs are filled by people who cannot afford to live in the Borough and this has led to an increase in commuting.

8.9.4 The Council has a corporate policy to encourage affordable housing, and especially those forms of affordable housing that provide an element of equity or ownership. The Council want to encourage more residents to invest in securing their own housing in the Borough. Therefore the Council wishes to encourage a broader range of affordable housing products to meet demand across the whole of the local housing market.

8.9.5 Part of the supply issues in relation to affordable housing is the lack of supply of smaller units. The types of housing that are needed in the Borough are detailed in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Council will encourage development proposals to explore different ways of meeting the need.

8.10 BLP15 Affordable Housing

Policy BLP 15

Affordable Housing

1. Development proposals involving the provision of 10 dwellings and/or above (net), will provide at least 30% of the gross number of dwellings provided as affordable housing on site.
2. The quantum (subject to the minimum requirement of 30%), tenure, size and type of Affordable Housing unit will be negotiated on a site by site basis, having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors.
3. Development proposals that provide for a wide range of affordable housing products in line with government initiatives will be encouraged.
4. The Council will consider off site contributions, donor sites and contributions in lieu of on site provision.
5. A Housing Supplementary Planning Document will further illustrate how this Policy will be implemented.

1.

8.11 Affordable rural exception sites

8.11.1 The countryside areas of the Borough have high house prices and a very limited supply of affordable homes. This acts to restrict the ability for residents to live in a home that they have an element of equity in. There is a considerable component within the community across the Borough, particularly in the countryside

Housing

areas who cannot afford the homes that are available on the open market. There is justification, therefore for an exception to be made against normally restrictive policy such as Green Belt, to allow for affordable housing to be provided on sites that would not normally be considered for housing use.

8.11.2 There are few opportunities to build in the countryside due to the Green Belt which covers over 83% of the Borough's area. Certain parts of the Borough are designated as 'Rural Areas' under current guidance and legislation. There are provisions within legislation that allows for the provision of affordable housing provided on an exception basis and which will remain affordable in perpetuity, secured as appropriate by planning obligations. The Council will continue to work with a variety of housing providers including Registered Landlords and other developers to understand the needs of the local community for affordable housing and to explore the means to provide it on such rural exceptions sites.

8.11.3 The provisions of the legislation that allows for rural exceptions housing sites also allows for an element of market housing on the site in order to enable the scheme to be viable. In these circumstances it will be expected that a development appraisal will need to accompany any planning application. The inclusion of any element of open market housing must serve to benefit the provision of rural affordable housing and must not inflate the 'threshold land value' that being the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land.

8.12 BLP16 Affordable Housing Rural Exception Sites

Policy BLP 16

Affordable Housing Rural Exception Sites

1. Across the Borough development proposals for limited Affordable Housing within the Green Belt, to meet local needs only, will be permitted as an exception where all of the following criteria are met:
 - a. A demonstrable local community need for Affordable Housing has been established;
 - b. The number, size and tenure of the dwellings are suitable to meet the identified need;
 - c. The site and the development proposal are well related to an existing settlement and is not located in the open countryside;
 - d. The proposal is designed to respect the characteristics of the local area including the countryside setting;
 - e. Schools with capacity, health, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance;
 - f. The initial and future occupation is controlled to ensure the dwellings remain available to people in housing need, with a strong and demonstrable local connection secured through a Section 106 Legal Agreement;
 - g. An element of market housing may be permitted if it is proven to be necessary for the viability of the scheme; and
 - h. Any application including market housing must be accompanied by a development appraisal to demonstrate viability.
2. A Housing Supplementary Planning Document will further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

8.13 Gypsies and Travellers

8.13.1 Gypsies and Travellers form part of the community within the Borough with particular specialist housing needs. The Borough has determined that this need should be dealt with by way of a separate Local Plan devoted to the needs of this part of the community. There is still a need to provide guidance for consideration of applications that may come about before the Gypsy and Traveller Borough Local Plan is adopted and best practice, as per the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires a policy approach that defines what criteria will be used to judge applications in the mean time.

8.13.2 The Council has undertaken a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to help inform the development of the Gypsy and Travellers Borough Local Plan. This has been undertaken on the basis of the most recent planning definition of who comprises a Gypsy or Traveller for the purposes of the Borough Local Plan. The Council will continue to keep the GTAA under review to ensure that it provides a robust evidence base for the provision of sites across the Borough.

8.14 BLP 17 Gypsies and Travellers

Policy BLP 17

Gypsies and Travellers

1. The need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation will be addressed through the granting of planning permissions and a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan to deliver the pitch target determined and supported by evidence including an up to date Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
2. Planning permission for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People accommodation will be granted providing all of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The site is suitably connected by sustainable modes of transport to a settlement with health care, retail, and school facilities with capacity; and
 - b. The impact of development including in combination with existing pitches would not harm the landscape or rural character of the area, in particular the Green Belt;
 - c. The site can be safely accessed by pedestrians, vehicles and caravans to and from the highway; and
 - d. The site is not located in a flood zone as shown on the Policies Map.
3. In addition to the above the following criteria applies to Travelling Show People Accommodation only:
 - a. The site should be suitable for the storage and maintenance of show equipment and associated vehicles without causing harm through conflict with other policies in the Plan.

8.15 Protection of residential land and housing stock

8.15.1 Given the pressure on existing housing stock the Council wishes to offer protection to land that benefits either from a planning permission that allows for residential development or that comprises part of the extant housing stock. This will also help towards creating a balanced and mixed community in line with national guidance. Offering protection to existing housing stock will also help to reduce the need to travel by providing accommodation within the Borough and going some way to reducing the pressure on Green Belt to provide housing land. The Council would also wish to protect, as far as is possible the loss of existing accommodation through demolition and change of use.

8.15.2 The unique constraints that operate within the Borough including the very high percentage of land within the Green Belt, the quality of the historic and natural environment; the pressure for housing which arises from the proximity of the Borough to London; and the excellent transport links mean that the most efficient use of existing housing stock must be made. The policy approach in the Borough Local Plan aims to protect existing housing stock and land but also recognises that there may be some limited circumstances that mean that some housing may be lost, for example development proposals that involve the re-provision of housing at a higher density that exists on the extant site.

Housing

8.16 BLP18 Protection of residential land and housing stock

Policy BLP 18

Protection of residential land and housing stock

1. The Borough will only support development proposals that do not result in a net loss of existing dwellings or land that provides for residential uses unless such a loss is justified by specific circumstances. The Borough will only support development proposals that would result in the net loss of residential accommodation where one or more of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The retention of the residential use would be undesirable due to proven environmental constraints; and or
 - b. The development proposal would provide an essential community service or another form of residential accommodation;
2. The Borough would only support development proposals that would result in the partial loss of an existing unit of residential accommodation to non residential use where one or more of the following criteria are met:
 - a. The nature and intensity of the non residential use would not detract from the occupation of the retained residential accommodation; or
 - b. The retained residential accommodation would be of a satisfactory standard including living space and residential amenity.

8.17 Housing Layout and Design

8.17.1 Careful consideration should be given to the principles of sustainable development which suggest there is a benefit to the wider environment from general increases in density, particularly in locations which are close to services and facilities. However it is also important to ensure that those good and attractive elements of the existing environment are protected. A high standard of design should be achieved in the layout and landscaping of residential developments so that proposals complement the existing character and appearance of the area.

8.17.2 The way housing is laid out and designed can have a significant impact on potential energy consumption, for instance through passive solar designs, building siting and orientation, internal layout and landscaping. These measures can reduce energy use and provide a pleasant living environment.

8.17.3 Developments should provide an attractive and safe residential environment. The preferred policy approach below sets out considerations which are specific to residential developments. It supplements BLP3 which sets out design principles which are applicable to all proposals (including residential).

8.17.4 The Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will provide further advice on expected standards of accommodation including minimum space standards.

8.18 BLP 19 Housing layout and design

Policy BLP 19

Housing layout and design

1. The Borough will expect proposals for residential development to display high standards of design and landscaping in order to create attractive and safe residential areas. The Borough will produce a Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.
2. In addition to the requirements of BLP 3 Design, development proposals for residential development will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal aims to mitigate the impact of climate change and that the layout and design of the scheme meets the following criteria:
 - a. Be compatible with the character of the surrounding area;
 - b. Provide for the residential amenity of future occupiers and not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of nearby properties;
 - c. Respond to the need to reduce potential energy consumption through siting and orientation, internal layout, landscaping and natural lighting and ventilation;
 - d. Create visual interest through the use of views into and out of the site, and through the use of an appropriate variety in building types, materials, means of enclosure, surface treatment and landscaping;
 - e. Avoid blank areas of facade to public areas;
 - f. Provide car parking which is convenient and accessible and close to the housing being served;
 - g. Within mixed use schemes, provide a separate access to any residential accommodation;
 - h. Within retirement schemes, provide convenient and accessible storage for mobility aids and refuse; and
 - i. Avoid prejudicing the satisfactory development of the wider area.

8.19 BLP 20 Housing density

Policy BLP 20

Housing Density

1. The Borough wishes to make the most efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the environment. The Borough will support the development of higher density residential schemes in sustainable locations in and around town centres, particularly those with good access to transport nodes and interchanges. The density of development should be informed by:
 - a. The layout of the proposal compared to the prevailing character of the surrounding area;
 - b. The need to ensure satisfactory residential amenity for both the proposed accommodation and nearby residential properties; and
 - c. The accessibility of the location and the availability of existing and proposed services, facilities and infrastructure.
2. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

Housing

8.20 BLP 21 Sub-division of dwellings

Policy BLP 1

Sub division of dwellings

1. The Borough will support development proposals for the sub-division of dwellings to form additional dwellings or housing in multiple occupation in areas excluded from the Green Belt where the proposal can demonstrate it meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. No loss of small family accommodation;
 - b. Respect for the character and appearance of the original property;
 - c. Be compatible with the character and appearance of the area;
 - d. Provide satisfactory levels of residential amenity for future occupiers and would not unacceptably affect the residential amenities of nearby properties;
 - e. Provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation, including adequate living space, appropriate noise insulation, layout of rooms between units of accommodation and a quality external and internal environment;
 - f. Provide useable outdoor amenity space;
 - g. Provide suitable space for refuse and recycling storage and drying space; and
 - h. Provide satisfactory access, car parking and secure cycle parking.
2. The Borough will produce both a Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and a Parking Supplementary Planning Document to further illustrate how this policy should be implemented.

8.21 BLP 22 Development involving residential gardens

Policy BLP 22

Development involving residential gardens

The Borough will support the erection of new dwellings in residential gardens in areas excluded from the Metropolitan Green Belt where this can be achieved without compromising the quality of the environment. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they meet all of the following criteria:

- a. The proposal is compatible with the character and appearance of the area, particularly in terms of the built form and spaces around buildings and respects the Townscape Assessment (BLP 4 refers.);
- b. The layout integrates with the surrounding area with regard to site coverage of each plot, building lines, urban grain, rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas and existing pattern of openings onto the highway;
- c. The proposal provides appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries; and
- d. The proposal would not have an unacceptable affect on biodiversity in terms of fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent open space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to green corridors and networks.

In areas within the Metropolitan Green Belt disproportionate additions to buildings and the creation of outbuildings are inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In these cases development proposals would be expected to demonstrate that Very Special Circumstances exist that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm

8.22 BLP 23 Extensions and outbuildings in residential curtilages

Policy BLP 23

Extensions and outbuildings in residential curtilages

1. The Borough will support development proposals in areas excluded from the Metropolitan Green Belt that involve the extension to an existing building or the erection of an outbuilding within a residential curtilage where the proposal meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. Respect the character and appearance of the original property;
 - b. Be compatible with the character of the surrounding area;
 - c. Provide a satisfactory level of amenity for occupiers of the existing property;
 - d. Not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of nearby properties through loss of privacy, loss of light and over dominance;
 - e. Avoid large, blank areas of facade to public areas;
 - f. Not sited where it would impair highway safety or lead to inadequate parking provision
2. The Borough will bring forward a Supplementary Planning Document in the form of a Borough Design Guide to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

8.23 BLP 24 Residential amenity

Policy BLP 24

Residential Amenity

1. The Borough expects all dwellings, whether proposed or existing to have a satisfactory level of residential amenity. Development proposals for new or extended residential accommodation should:
 - a. Provide adequate and adaptable living space;
 - b. Provide a satisfactory standard of privacy for both the proposed accommodation and for nearby properties;
 - c. Allow for a satisfactory outlook for both the proposed accommodation and for nearby properties;
 - d. Allow for a satisfactory level of sunlight and daylight for both the proposed accommodation and for nearby properties;
 - e. Include suitable useable outdoor amenity space;
 - f. Include suitable space for refuse and recycling storage, and drying space;
 - g. Not be subject to unacceptable nuisance, pollution or contamination.
2. The Borough will bring forward a Borough Wide Design Guide to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

Housing

The Economy

The Economy

9.1 Context

9.1.1 The Borough is part of the prosperous Thames Valley and is one of the key drivers of economic activity in the area. We will plan pro actively to meet the changing development needs of business and support a borough economy fit for the 21st century. Planning supports sustainable economic development and policies are intended to guide and support economic development in the borough. This ensures that local residents will benefit from a thriving and healthy economy.

9.1.2 The Borough has a strong local economy, with good representation in the service sector, knowledge-based firms and other professional occupations. The banking, finance, business services and ICT sectors are well represented and with good potential for further growth. There is a smaller but important manufacturing base.

9.1.3 Significant local sources of employment comprise a variety of headquarters offices including Centrica, GlaxoSmithKline, 3, Adobe and Toys R Us, along with a range of small and medium sized companies and an important tourist sector anchored by Windsor and Legoland. The Borough has a large proportion of small firms, which is an indicator of a diverse and entrepreneurial economy.

9.1.4 Unemployment in the Borough has historically been below regional and national rates. In common with other areas, the claimant count rose in the late 2000s/early 2010s but remains healthy compared to other areas. The labour market is tight with high rates of economic activity, and the workforce is well skilled and educated.

9.1.5 The economic strengths of the Borough influence its ability to support new businesses and employment floorspace in future. These strengths include:

- Good transport accessibility
- A location within the economically buoyant M4 corridor and close to London and Heathrow
- High rates of new business formation and entrepreneurship
- A workforce with high level job skills
- High proportions of knowledge-based businesses
- Good quality of life factors
- Attractiveness to inward investment.

9.1.6 Alongside these strengths, challenges exist in the form of factors that may act to limit the local labour supply:

- A limited supply of employment sites owing to heritage and countryside designations
- High housing costs and wage levels
- Proximity of London leading to high levels of out-commuting.

9.1.7 While the local economy has restructured in recent decades to become more business- and service-oriented, a trend that is likely to continue, a healthy economy still needs a broad and diverse base with many different types of business sectors represented. A long term trend has been apparent of a restructuring of the local economy which has seen a move away from traditional industrial uses and towards higher value, office-based employment uses. This trend has persisted for a number of years. Current forecasts indicate a continuation of demand for offices accompanied by an upturn in the demand for industrial and warehousing floorspace, driven by the distribution sector. These forecasts must be treated with caution as they would indicate a further fundamental restructuring of the Borough's economy which is considered unlikely to happen. They do, however, indicate a continuing demand for industrial and warehousing uses within the Borough, and demand persists for this type of accommodation. In response the plan aims to protect existing employment floorspace, particularly that suitable for non-office uses, and allocates a new site for industrial and warehousing development.

9.1.8 This variety of uses plays a key role in the economic diversity and health of the Royal Borough. Provision of land and premises suitable for a diverse range of uses means residents can benefit from a sustainable and balanced economy. There is a projected demand for both office and industrial and warehousing floorspace during the plan period. Alongside this, a rise in smarter and more flexible forms of working is evident. This reflects both national trends and the particularly high economic activity rates of the borough, with consequent pressure for new forms of working, and is likely to become an ever more important factor in the local economy in future.

The Economy

9.1.9 Within this context, policies aim to be business-friendly and support economic development and the economic well-being of the borough. They set out a positive and flexible framework for future investment and development. Policies will flexibly manage the availability of employment land and premises and the efficient future use of sites, to encourage and enable the provision of a sufficient supply to meet identified needs. Offices will be focused in town centres and business areas. Policies will ensure that any loss of employment land or premises is properly justified by evidence.

9.1.10 In recognition of changing working practices, particular encouragement is given to home-working and other forms of flexible working, including the infrastructure necessary to support this. An economic use as referenced in these policies means a use that provides employment opportunities, generates wealth or produces an economic output or product, excluding retail use.

9.2 Economic Development

9.2.1 The Borough's continued economic success is based on smart growth, that is economic growth that does not promote additional community labour or the use of additional land. The Borough is aware of the impact of extensions to permitted development rights to allow the conversion of offices and light industrial premises to residential uses. Changes arising from these rights will be monitored during the plan period and the supply of floorspace will be managed to ensure that an appropriate supply of premises and sites continue to be made available to support the needs of the local economy. The Borough will continue to work with key stake holders and infrastructure providers to improve broadband coverage and enable the provision of new infrastructure, in particular the implementation of the Superfast Berkshire project.

9.2.2 Sustainable economic development provides local employment opportunities, attracts people to spend time and money in the borough and can enhance daytime activity. It generates wealth and can help establish town centres and employment areas as the vibrant and successful hearts of their communities.

The Economy

9.3 BLP25 Economic Development

Policy BLP 25

Economic Development

1. The Borough will promote sustainable economic growth in line with the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan. Employment space will be managed and appropriate development and redevelopment supported including the promotion of appropriate infrastructure to support home and flexible working patterns. This in turn will be supported by the Borough's Economic Development Strategy.
2. The Borough will encourage a range of different types and sizes of employment land and premises to maintain a portfolio of sites to meet the diverse needs of the local economy. Appropriate intensification, redevelopment and upgrading of existing sites and premises will be encouraged and supported to make their use more efficient and to help meet the forecast demand over the plan period and to respond to modern business needs. Office type development will be focused in town centres and existing employment areas
3. The Borough will endeavour to make improvements to the education and skills levels of borough residents and will promote initiatives to encourage the use of local labour, particularly on the development of large and strategic sites. Development proposals that would assist small and start-up businesses will also be supported.
4. The Borough will support the development of businesses both small and large in a flexible and sustainable way to encourage local employment opportunities and useful services.
5. The Borough will allocate sites for employment use as defined on the Policies Map and Site Proformas in Appendix F.

9.4 Growth

9.4.1 The general approach towards economic development is to make the best use of existing employment land and to aim for a diverse and knowledge-based economy based around higher value, lower impact activities including high-tech employment uses. Economic growth that does not require the importing of extra labour or the use of extra land is encouraged. This is often referred to as smart growth, and is seen as an essential element of the Borough's future economic success.

9.4.2 Smart growth can achieve higher prosperity without increasing the ecological or physical footprint of business. This reflects wider changes in society that are seeing a move away from traditional, rigid workplace-based working patterns and towards a more flexible and responsive way of working, including in particular much greater use of home-working.

9.4.3 Residents of the Borough are especially well represented amongst the professional occupations. As the particular skill-sets used by these professions are well suited to high-tech employment, home-working and other flexible working patterns, the Borough is committed to encouraging this. Besides allowing economic growth without a commensurate increase in employment floorspace, this type of working also facilitates a greater number of people to be economically active or increase their level of economic activity. This in turn aids the development of the Borough's economy. The principle of flexible working and the infrastructure necessary to support this forms a central part of this strategy and is strongly encouraged.

9.4.4 Businesses operated from home can sometimes reach a scale at which they cause unacceptable impacts on their local area. Case law establishes that, if activity reaches a scale at which development is deemed to have occurred, planning permission should be sought for the use in question. In cases that are located in the Green Belt they will need to be supported. There will be a presumption in favour of home working owing to its economic value to the Borough, and this will be applied within the context of determining whether its impact on the local area is acceptable. Neighbourhood plans may offer further detail and guidance on the assessment of such proposals.

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9.5 Training and skills

9.5.1 Development that brings new jobs into the Borough brings economic benefits but, where there are skills shortages in particular areas, it will require additional training for residents. Otherwise skilled people will need to be “imported” from outside the borough, which would result in unsustainable use of energy, adverse impacts on the transport network or increased pressure on housing land. To offset this, improvements to the education and skill levels of Borough residents will be supported, along with initiatives to encourage the use of local labour in new developments. This may be undertaken through working with a range of training partners and through the use of developer contributions and local employment initiatives. These will be used to facilitate training and upskilling of Borough residents, and to secure new training and job opportunities that are accessible to local people.

9.6 Range of uses

9.6.1 Industrial and warehousing uses play an important role in maintaining a diverse economy and offering a range of job opportunities for Borough residents. Despite the general upskilling of the workforce, a significant proportion of residents are likely to remain in manual occupations and there is a significant forecast demand for premises suitable for these kinds of uses. The nature of industrial and warehousing uses means that they often need to operate from lower-cost property, a feature they share with many small and start-up businesses. These uses can all come under pressure from higher-value uses that can support greater rental levels, and it is appropriate to ensure that a range of types of premises remains available to meet the future needs of all sectors of the local economy.

9.6.2 The presence of a range of types of businesses provides a number of benefits for Borough residents. These include the opportunity to sustainably access a choice of local employment opportunities and useful services. In addition, the availability of suitable business premises means that residents who wish to set up their own business will find it easier to do so.

9.6.3 National permitted development rights to convert offices and light industrial units to housing will inevitably reduce the supply of employment floorspace in the borough. Any changes arising will be monitored during the plan period and the supply of floorspace will be managed to ensure that an appropriate supply of premises continues to be made available to support the needs of the local economy.

9.7 Small businesses

9.7.1 The Borough has a high level of new business formation, and the small business sector is vital to the social and economic well-being of the borough. Enabling small businesses to develop and thrive can strengthen the local economy and increase business vibrancy, as well as leading to greater employment opportunities for local people. The Borough supports the development of small businesses in a flexible and sustainable way, through planning applications and the allocation of land.

9.7.2 Access to broadband is a high priority for many small businesses, and it is important that homes are broadband-enabled to allow for effective home-working. The Royal Borough will continue to work with key stake holders and infrastructure providers to improve broadband coverage and enable the provision of new ICT infrastructure. In particular the Superfast Berkshire project and its necessary supporting infrastructure is supported.

9.8 Defined employment sites

9.8.1 The Borough is an attractive location for employment use and demand for land and floorspace is projected to continue throughout the plan period. The arrival of Crossrail services in Maidenhead may provide a particular boost for that part of the borough.

9.8.2 The Borough’s future economic role is likely to continue in a similar pattern to that now existing, with no obvious factors that should lead to serious decline nor produce a step-change in economic activity. The likely need for new or replacement employment floorspace can be largely met through intensification and redevelopment leading to more efficient use of existing sites, alongside a small number of new allocations.

9.8.3 The Borough Local Plan responds to these pressures by enabling economic development and the intensification of economic activity in appropriate locations. These locations are mainly those where economic activity is already concentrated. This policy approach helps to reinforce the current floorspace provision and

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enable the delivery of a flexible supply of floorspace that is responsive to the needs of local businesses. Alongside this, some sites are allocated for mixed use development comprising economic and residential uses, to further support the borough's economy by helping to meet housing needs.

9.8.4 While the local economy has restructured in recent decades to become more business- and service-oriented, and this trend is likely to continue, a healthy economy still needs a broad and diverse base with many different types of business sector represented. This helps insulate the borough from structural economic changes and any future economic downturn, and ensures that residents have access to as wide a range of employment opportunities as possible.

9.9 BLP26 Defined employment sites

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Policy BLP 26

Defined employment sites

1. The Royal Borough will retain in economic use employment sites as defined on the policies map and inset maps. Development proposals for employment uses on these sites will be supported. Proposals for other uses on defined employment sites will be supported if they demonstrate a sufficient benefit for the economy of the Royal Borough or the wellbeing of the local community.
2. The following site is allocated for B1c, B2 and B8 employment uses:
 - a. Land west of Ascot Road and North of the M4 (Known as the Triangle Site) as defined on the Policies Map.
Once developed, this site will be defined as an industrial area.
3. The employment sites listed below and defined on the Policies Map will be known as business areas.
 - a. Vanwall Business Park, Maidenhead
 - b. Norreys Drive, Maidenhead
 - c. Whitebrook Park, Maidenhead
 - d. Foundation Park, Cox Green
 - e. Windsor Dials, Windsor
 - f. Centrica, Millstream Windsor
 - g. Alma Road, Windsor
 - h. Ascot Business Park, Ascot
 - i. Manor House Lane Employment Estate, Datchet
4. The employment sites listed below and defined on the Policies Map will be known as industrial areas.
 - a. Kings Grove / Boyn Valley Industrial Area, Maidenhead
 - b. Furze Platt Industrial Area, Maidenhead
 - c. Cordwallis Industrial Area, Maidenhead
 - d. Howarth Road, Stafferton Way, Maidenhead
 - e. Prior's Way Industrial Estate, Maidenhead
 - f. Vansittart Road Industrial Area, Windsor
 - g. Fairacres Industrial Area, Windsor
 - h. Queens Road Industrial Estate, Sunninghill
5. The employment sites listed below and defined on the Policies Map will be known as mixed use areas.
 - a. Reform Road, Maidenhead
 - b. Ascot Centre
6. Within industrial areas there will be a strong presumption in favour of retaining premises suitable for industrial, warehousing and similar types of uses, along with premises suitable for smaller and start-up businesses. Proposals for new premises suitable for these types of uses will be supported. Other uses will only be permitted if they are ancillary to industrial or warehousing uses, do not result in the loss of industrial or warehousing premises or demonstrate a sufficient benefit for the economy of the Borough.
7. Within business areas and mixed use areas, intensification of employment activity will be encouraged subject to the provision of appropriate infrastructure and safe access. An element of residential development may also be acceptable in mixed use areas but it must ensure that the overall quantum of employment floorspace within the mixed use area as a whole is not reduced.
8. Within industrial, business and mixed use areas, development proposals that improve and upgrade the facilities available to support businesses will be supported.

9.10 Other sites and loss of employment floorspace

9.10.1 This policy is positive towards all types of employment development. Alongside encouraging new office space and intensification of existing employment sites, it also takes a positive approach to ensuring that a suitable range of floorspace is provided to meet the needs of other businesses important to the borough economy. This includes lower cost premises suitable for small and start-up businesses, along with premises for industrial and warehousing operations.

9.10.2 Existing employment sites have been assessed and those with the greatest ability to provide a range of types of accommodation suitable for the needs of a diverse range of local businesses have been identified as industrial areas. This policy balances the need to retain this type of premises against the need to allow for a range of new development in the Royal Borough. It ensures that a sufficient portfolio of sites will remain available to serve businesses in a variety of economic sectors, in order to meet the full range of needs of the local economy.

9.10.3 The Borough will support new economic development whilst ensuring that any loss of employment land is justified. Proposals for economic development uses may come forward on sites that are not currently allocated for employment uses. Where the site is not already in employment use, an assessment will be made of the benefits arising from the proposal, and this will be compared with the benefits of retaining the existing use. Each case will need to be determined on its merits, according to local circumstances. Where the site is already in employment use, the proposals will be supported in principle

9.10.4 Marketing evidence must prove that both the land and the premises have been widely advertised and marketed for a wide range of economic uses for at least one continuous year immediately prior to submission of a relevant planning application. The exercise must demonstrate that the price and terms on which the land or premises were marketed were reasonable by comparison with similar examples in the local area. Information must be provided detailing any interest received from potential buyers or tenants since the marketing commenced. Where interest has been received for employment use of the land or premises, and that interest has not been pursued, this must be explained. The requirement for marketing evidence applies when a proposal is made that would result in the loss of an economic use or a net reduction in the quantity of employment land or premises.

9.10.5 Marketing evidence will be assessed within the context of: The overall quality of the site as an employment location; The level of occupation / vacancy of the site; Consideration of the suitability of conversion for start up and micro businesses; whether the employment use generates any adverse impacts on the adjoining area; possible benefits from relocating the economic use; possible benefits from using the site for alternative uses; and the achievement of other plan objectives.

9.10.6 This policy gives general support to new economic development while ensuring that any loss of employment land is properly justified by evidence. It is important that existing and new businesses are supported by ensuring that a suitable supply of employment land and premises continues to be available. This policy therefore takes a cautious approach towards the loss of employment land and premises, to ensure that a sufficient supply of sites continues to exist to meet the needs of the local economy.

9.10.7 The requirement for marketing evidence in this policy applies when a proposal is made that would result in the loss of an economic use or a net reduction in the quantity of employment land or premises. In such instances this policy requires justification for the change and a demonstration that it would not cause unacceptable harm to the local economy. Other relevant information such as the quality and vacancy level of the premises and the appropriateness of the location for economic use may also be submitted.

The Economy

9.11 BLP27 Other sites and loss of employment uses

Policy BLP 27

Other sites and loss of employment floorspace

1. The Borough will support development proposals for employment development on sites currently in employment use, but not defined as such on the Policies Map.
2. Development proposals for employment development on sites currently used for non-employment purposes will be considered on their merits. Where benefits arising from the proposed use would exceed the benefit of retaining the existing use, the development proposal will be supported.
3. Where a change is proposed from an economic use to another use, development proposals must provide credible and robust evidence of an appropriate period of marketing for economic use and that the proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to the local economy. A further consideration to be taken into account will be the significance to the local economy of the use to be lost

Town Centres and Retail

Town Centres and Retail

10.1 Context

10.1.1 Town centres are at the heart of their communities and it is fundamental that planning policy should support their vitality and viability. Planning can promote a competitive town centre environment and help control the management and growth of town centres.

10.1.2 Shops draw people into town centres and are central to stimulating the local economy and defining the image of a place. Shopping is widely seen as an “experience” as well as a necessary task, and is undergoing significant change as progressively more of the routine type of shopping is conducted online. It is therefore important that the Borough Local Plan provides for customer choice and a diverse retail offer within town centres, as well as other uses that encourage people to visit town centres and enhance their experience of visiting. Securing a town centre as a desirable place to shop and spend time is fundamental to its future success and the improvement of local image and character.

10.1.3 The Borough Local Plan strategy is to promote and maintain a range of uses within town centres, including a strong, central core of retail and allied uses, so as to support their vitality and viability and promote customer choice. The strategy allows for a more diverse mix of uses in peripheral areas of town centres, to encourage the continued success of those areas.

10.1.4 The Borough Local Plan sets out a positive approach towards main town centre uses and defines a hierarchy of centres. It sets out the operation of the sequential test and impact assessment and provides a context within which to assess the appropriateness of development proposals.

10.2 Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan

10.2.1 The adopted Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan continues to form part of the development plan for the Borough. It sets out policies relating to Maidenhead town centre and allocates development sites to meet future needs for town centre activities. The Borough Local Plan complements this policy base and puts in place a positive and flexible approach to drive the success of other centres within the borough. These policies provide a mechanism to protect and support town centres so that they can serve residents’ needs. They support development that is appropriate in terms of its scale, design and impact, and set out the types of development that are appropriate in various locations. Certain policies within the Maidenhead Town Centre Action Plan will be superseded by Policies in this Borough Local Plan. The superseded policies are set out in Appendix H.

10.3 Hierarchy of centres

10.3.1 The hierarchy of centres within the Borough is shown in this policy. It is important to note that centres do not operate in isolation. The Thames Valley has a complex network and hierarchy of town centres, with each fulfilling different but complementary roles. Residents will use centres both within and outside the borough to fulfil their diverse retail and leisure needs, with centres fulfilling a different function for different people. This pattern is replicated by residents across the region.

10.3.2 Many shopping parades and individual stores of purely neighbourhood significance are not classed as centres for the purposes of policy. Similarly, large free-standing stores or retail parks in out of centre locations are also not classed as centres.

10.3.3 Figure to illustrate the hierarchy of centres

Town Centres and Retail

10.4 BLP28 Hierarchy of centres

Policy BLP 28

Hierarchy of centres

1. The Borough will support development proposals for main town centre uses including retail development; leisure; entertainment facilities; offices; and arts, culture and tourism development in town centre locations in accordance with the hierarchy shown below, provided they are appropriate in terms of their scale and design, and are well-related to the centre. Centres within the hierarchy will be defined on the Policies Map.

2. Main town centre uses must be located within the centres defined in this Policy where sites are suitable, viable and available. Subject to operation of this sequential test and as set out elsewhere in policy, offices may also be located in defined business areas. The Magnet Leisure Centre and associated uses will be relocated to Braywick Park (BLP55 refers_

3. Unless a development proposal is intended to meet a particular local need that occurs only in a specific location or catchment area, development proposals must assess in-centre sites in the following order of preference:

- a. Sites in town centres (Maidenhead, Windsor)
- b. Sites in district centres (Ascot, Sunningdale)
- c. Sites in local centres.

4. Where suitable and viable in-centre sites are not available, edge of centre locations must be considered. If suitable and viable edges of centre sites are not available, out of centre sites should be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference will be given to accessible sites that are well-connected to the town centre. Flexibility should be demonstrated on issues such as the format and scale of development. All centres within each individual level of the hierarchy are of equal status for the purposes of this sequential test.

5. Outside defined centres, retail development including subdivision of existing retail units or widening the range of goods allowed to be sold will be resisted unless the proposal passes the sequential test outlined above, or is intended to meet a particular local need that occurs only in a specific location.

6. Development proposals for retail, leisure and office development larger than the thresholds set out below, located outside of defined centres must be accompanied by an assessment of their impact on the vitality and viability of and investment in defined centres within their catchment:

- a. Retail development: 1,000 m² within Maidenhead and Windsor urban areas, 500 m² elsewhere
- b. Leisure development: 2,500 m²
- c. Office development: 2,500 m²

7. Neighbourhood plans may set different thresholds where local considerations, supported by evidence, indicate this is appropriate.

10.5 Boundaries

10.5.1 Boundaries for centres in the Borough are defined on the Policies Map. The Policies Map Inset Maps also show the extent of the primary shopping area and the primary and secondary frontages of Maidenhead and Windsor town centres. These areas and frontages have been defined following an assessment of the centres' current and likely future roles. In the case of Windsor in particular, the boundaries acknowledge the important role that tourism plays in the town and the part that retailing plays in servicing the needs of visitors. Neighbourhood plans may set different boundaries for centres in their areas where local considerations suggest a different approach is appropriate.

Town Centres and Retail

10.6 Retail capacity

10.6.1 The scale of retail development that is appropriate within the Borough will be determined with reference to retail capacity work. (RBWM Retail and Town Centre Study 2015 and any subsequent updates.) Applications for retail development will be considered against the policies in this section and the retail capacity identified for each centre. Where retail capacity work specifies a maximum floorspace figure for a particular centre in a particular period, permission will only be granted for retail development in excess of that figure if its impact on other centres within the development's catchment has been assessed and judged to not cause undue harm to those centres.

10.6.2 Retail capacity guidance and policy indicates that any new floorspace should be located in accordance with the sequential approach. It should also be noted that it is possible to sell all types of goods from a town centre location. The sequential test will be operated in such a manner as to ensure that development is located in the centre to which it is most appropriate, with preference being given to those centres higher up the hierarchy.

10.7 Impact

10.7.1 National policy allows local authorities to set a proportionate threshold at a local level, above which proposals for retail, leisure and office development must be accompanied by an impact assessment. The national threshold of 2,500 square metres (Gross external area) is considered appropriate for leisure and office use within the Royal Borough.

10.7.2 For retail uses, a threshold of 1,000 square metres (Gross external area) is considered appropriate within the urban areas of Maidenhead and Windsor. This figure approximates to the size of a small retail warehouse and marks a perceptual cut off point between town centre type and out of centre type retail units. While larger units than this would normally be acceptable in central locations such as within Maidenhead and Windsor town centres, their location out of centre would indicate that a different form of retailing was likely to occur from the unit in question. Such different store formats can generate different shopping patterns and have significantly different effects on town centres.

10.7.3 A threshold of 500 square metres (Gross external area) is considered appropriate for retail uses elsewhere. This approximates to a large convenience store / small supermarket, the establishment of which in an out of centre location has the potential to have a significant effect on the functioning of smaller centres in the locality. In the case of both thresholds as set out in policy, there is no bar to development occurring but it is appropriate to fully assess the impact of a proposed development so as to properly inform the decision made on any such planning application.

10.8 Conditions

10.8.1 Conditions will be used to ensure that the impacts of retail development are acceptable and will remain so in the future in line with good development management practice. Such conditions could include restricting the subdivision or amalgamation of units, the maximum gross floorspace and net sales area or the range of goods that may be sold. Flexible unit sizes are preferred to cope with flexible future trends. The conditions that it is appropriate to use will vary for individual proposals. In general, fewer restrictions will be appropriate in town centres, while it will be appropriate to exercise a greater element of control over any retail developments in other locations.

10.9 Windsor and Maidenhead Town Centres

10.10 BLP29 Windsor and Maidenhead Town Centres

Town Centres and Retail

Policy BLP 29

Windsor and Maidenhead town centres

1. Town centre frontages are defined as primary and secondary. Primary frontages are those which include a high proportion of retail uses. Secondary frontages are those where there is greater opportunity for diversity of uses. Retail uses will be appropriate in both locations.

2. While non-retail uses that support the town centre function such as restaurants, pubs and cinemas will be appropriate across a centre, there will be greater concentrations of these uses in secondary frontages. In Windsor, retail and service uses aimed at visitors will be appropriate in defined locations. Primary and secondary frontages will be defined on the Policies Map. Where a non-retail use is proposed in a frontage, the make-up of units in that area of frontage will be assessed in order to determine the likely impact of the proposed use and its acceptability.

3. The Borough will encourage residential use of upper floors within Maidenhead and Windsor town centres.

Maidenhead Town Centre

4. The Royal Borough will support development proposals that promote and enhance the role of Maidenhead town centre. Development proposals should enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

5. The Royal Borough will continue to maintain and enhance the retail role of Maidenhead town centre through the promotion of retail activity within the primary shopping area. Development proposals for the regeneration of sites and those that protect and enhance retail activity, particularly within the primary shopping area will be supported.

6. Primary frontages, defined on the Policies Map, should include a high proportion of retail uses. Proposals for non-retail uses within primary frontages will be permitted where they would enhance vitality and viability and would:

- a. Be appropriate to the character and function of the area; and
- b. Not result in unacceptable harm to existing uses within the frontage; and
- c. Not result in the loss of a prominent shop unit within the primary frontage.

7. Proposals in secondary frontages will be supported where they do not cause unacceptable harm to the existing character, function and vitality of the street or surrounding environment. In particular, proposals to expand the cultural and entertainment offer of Maidenhead will be encouraged.

8. Proposals that make more efficient use of sites through intensification, higher densities or innovative design will be encouraged, provided that transport and environmental impacts are appropriately addressed. Proposals for residential use on upper floors throughout Maidenhead town centre, and proposals that would enhance the town's waterways, will be encouraged.

Windsor Town Centre

9. The Borough will support development proposals that promote and enhance the role of Windsor town centre will be supported. Development proposals should enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

10. The Borough will continue to maintain and enhance the retail role of Windsor town centre through the promotion of retail activity within the primary shopping area. New development proposals should broaden the range of shopping opportunities and improve the image of the town as a sustainable and high quality shopping destination. Proposals that protect and enhance retail activity within the primary shopping area and primary frontages, and in particular proposals to support and extend department store provision, will be supported.

11. The Borough will support development proposals for retail and service provision aimed particularly at visitors in the following areas, provided that it would be appropriate to the character and function of the area:

Town Centres and Retail

- a. Windsor Castle
- b. Royal Windsor Shopping Centre
- c. High Street
- d. The lanes between High Street and St Alban's Street
- e. Thames Street

12. Primary frontages, defined on the Policies Map should include a high proportion of retail uses. Development proposals for non-retail uses within primary frontages will be permitted where they would enhance vitality and viability and would:

- a. Be appropriate to the character and function of the area; and
- b. Not result in unacceptable harm to existing uses within the frontage; and
- c. Not result in the loss of a prominent shop unit within the primary frontage.

13. The Borough will support development proposals in secondary frontages where they do not cause unacceptable harm to the existing character, function and vitality of the street or surrounding environment. Development proposals for residential use on upper floors throughout Windsor town centre will be encouraged.

10.11 Function of centres

10.11.1 The retail function of any town centre is defined by its Class A1 shops. Other uses also play a valuable role in creating a balanced town centre and an attractive experience for visitors. Maidenhead town centre caters for a catchment area including the town's urban area and a rural hinterland extending to the west and south and, to a more limited extent, the north and east. It provides a range of shops, services, entertainment and employment and contains a diversity of uses including offices, hotels, cinema, restaurants, shops and residential. Windsor plays a similar role in its catchment, which covers the town itself and the more rural areas to the west, south and east. Alongside a range of uses providing for the needs of local residents there is a strong tourist economy. An area of specialist shopping provision exists north of Peascod Street and east of High Street, recognising the important role played there by businesses that serve the tourist market.

10.12 Frontages and diversity of use

10.12.1 The primary shopping areas of each centre contain the main shopping streets and include most of the major retail multiples and variety stores. They are the focus for retail activity. The strategy is to concentrate shopping development in the primary shopping areas and maintain a strong, central core of retail and allied uses while promoting and maintaining a wider range of uses across the town centres. In Maidenhead, retail and supporting services including an expansion of the cultural and entertainment offer are particularly encouraged. In Windsor, the focus is on the town centre's dual role catering for both residents and visitors, with service provision and the need to expand the town's department store provision particularly highlighted.

10.12.2 Town centre frontages are defined as primary and secondary. Primary frontages are those which include a high proportion of retail uses. Secondary frontages are those where there is greater opportunity for diversity of uses. Retail uses will be appropriate in both locations. While non-retail uses that support the town centre function such as restaurants, pubs and cinemas will be appropriate across a centre, there will be greater concentrations of these uses in secondary frontages. In Windsor, retail and service uses aimed at visitors will be appropriate in defined locations.

10.12.3 It is important that the vitality and viability of centres is maintained and enhanced. An appropriate amount of supporting uses in primary shopping areas and primary frontages, for example food and drink outlets, is necessary to complement the shops and function of the area.

Town Centres and Retail

10.12.4 Secondary frontages comprise areas where a greater variety of uses is apparent. Here there is opportunity for a greater diversity of retail and non-retail uses, and the promotion of entertainment and a street café culture. The strategy, which complements the desire to maintain a strong, central core of retail and allied uses, is to permit the flexibility to allow secondary frontages to contain a good mix of different uses. An appropriate mix of uses that would not cause unacceptable harm to the existing character, function, and vitality of the street or surrounding environment will be supported. The Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Project is a key driver for the rejuvenation of the town, and thus support is offered for proposals that would enhance the town's waterways in line with the Waterways Development Brief.

10.12.5 The Borough Local Plan is not prescriptive about the proportion of retail and non-retail uses that would be appropriate in any given area as the role played by frontages varies across the town centres. Where a non-retail use is proposed in a frontage, the make-up of units in that area of frontage will be assessed in order to determine the likely impact of the proposed use and its acceptability.

10.12.6 Residential use is particularly helpful within town centres as it increases vitality, provides custom for town centre businesses and increases natural surveillance. Residential use at ground floor level would not be appropriate within retail frontages as it can create a dead space without visual interest or appeal. However, the residential use of upper floors forms a valuable part of the mix of uses that supports a successful town centre. The Borough will encourage residential use of upper floors within Maidenhead and Windsor town centres.

10.13 District and Local Centres

10.13.1 Ascot is a district centre serving the surrounding residential areas and providing a range of shops and services. Visitors are attracted to Ascot because of the racecourse and their spend helps to support a number of upmarket retail outlets and the many cafés in the High Street. A number of bars and pubs thrive from the patronage of race goers and uses such as the evening economy support racecourse activities. However, issues such as parking and the lack of a focus to Ascot prevent the High Street from meeting its full potential.

10.13.2 Sunningdale is a district centre whose main function is to provide a range of shops and services to the surrounding area. Both local and specialist functions are catered for. A Waitrose superstore draws trade from further afield.

10.13.3 Both district centres serve their immediate settlement and its hinterland. They comprise groups of shops containing at least one supermarket or superstore and a range of non-retail services including banks, pubs and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as libraries. The Borough's strategy is to maintain a broad mix of uses and the current function of these centres, so as to ensure the centres can continue to play a full role in the life of the area. A diverse range of appropriate uses including retailing will be appropriate. Analysis of retail capacity Retail and Town Centre Study 2015 shows limited scope for new retail floorspace in either district centre. The Neighbourhood Plan for the area Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 supports the provision of small retail units on sites in both centres and this is consistent with the capacity analysis.

10.13.4 Local centres perform a more limited role, acting as the focus for convenience and service uses that serve their immediate community. The Borough's local centres are all different in terms of their size and the precise role they play in the life of their community, but in general they include a range of small shops serving a localised catchment. Typically they may include a convenience store, newsagent, sub-post office, pharmacy, hot-food takeaway or launderette, as well as various local services. The local centres identified in Policy BLP28 exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

10.13.5 Borough's strategy is to ensure that local centres continue to provide a broad range of services for their local community, mainly serving specialist local needs or the immediate day to day needs of their local area.

Town Centres and Retail

10.14 BLP30 District and Local Centres

Policy BLP 30

District and local centres

1. The Borough will support development proposals for retail use within district centres, particularly within the primary shopping areas as defined on the Policies Map. Non-retail uses and services will also be supported provided the overall function of the centre and opportunities for customer choice are maintained. The scale of development that will be appropriate in district centres will be smaller than that in Maidenhead and Windsor town centres, and will be determined by reference to the scale and function of the centre in question.
2. The scale of development that will be appropriate in local centres will be smaller than that in district centres, and will be determined by reference to the scale and function of the centre in question. Development proposals should not be of such a scale that they would elevate the centre to a higher level in the retail hierarchy.
3. The Borough will support development proposals for residential use on upper floors in district and local centres. Where there is a considerable proportion of vacant property in a centre, residential or other uses at ground floor level will also be considered by the Borough provided that they would not adversely affect the function of the centre within the retail hierarchy.
4. The Borough will apply special considerations in situations of sustained high levels of vacancy, for example where more than 30% of the units in a centre have been vacant for more than a year. Where there is a sustained high level of vacancy, the Borough Council will consider active town centre uses as a first resort with residential or other uses at ground floor level as a last resort.

District centres

5. Ascot and Sunningdale are district centres, defined on the Policies Map, whose main functions are to provide a range of shops and services to the surrounding areas. The Borough will continue to maintain a broad mix of uses within the centres to support their current functions and to help them meet their full potential. A diverse range of appropriate uses including retailing will be appropriate. According to the Retail and Town Centre Study 2015 there is limited scope for new retail floorspace in either district centre. The neighbourhood plan for the area Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 supports the provision of small retail units on sites in both centres and this is consistent with the capacity analysis.

Local centres

6. The Royal Borough will continue to support local centres defined on the Policies Map to provide a broad range of services for their local community, mainly serving specialist local needs or the immediate day to day needs of their local area. The Royal Borough will support development proposals that reinforce the vitality and viability of the centre. The local centres identified in Policy BLP28 exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

10.15 Vacancy

10.15.1 Where a centre is suffering from a significant proportion of vacant property, it is appropriate to plan flexibly and positively for the future of the area and facilitate alternative uses. With this in mind, special considerations will apply in situations of sustained high levels of vacancy, for example where more than 30% of the units in a centre have been vacant for more than a year. Where there is a sustained high level of vacancy, the Borough Council will consider residential or other uses at ground floor level.

Town Centres and Retail

10.16 Shops and Parades outside defined centres

10.16.1 Individual shops and small parades, located outside of centres, can often play a vital role in their local community. They can provide convenient access to day to day requirements and are often a lifeline for less mobile residents. It is therefore important that the community function of shops is supported. The policy takes a cautious approach towards the loss of small parades and individual shops, to ensure that the needs of communities can continue to be met in the future, but allows for change of use when shops are no longer needed by their local community.

10.17 BLP31 Shops and Parades outside of defined centres

Policy BLP 31

Shops and Parades outside of defined centres

1. The Borough will support development proposals that enhance the community function of a shop located outside centres defined on the Policies Map.
2. Where it is proposed to change the use of a shop outside a centre, an assessment will be made of its value to the local community. If the shop fulfils a function of benefit to the local community, development proposals must provide credible and robust evidence of an appropriate period of marketing for retail use. Where evidence suggests that a shop does not fulfil a function of benefit for the local community, or where a community benefit exists to changing to another use, this marketing evidence will not be required. Tests relating to the provision of marketing evidence are contained in Appendix C.

10.18 Markets

10.18.1 Markets are part of the overall retail economy. In addition to providing consumers with a more varied shopping experience, they also have the benefit of supporting local producers and can enhance the overall experience of visiting a town centre. Markets and similar community events can add distinctiveness and diversity to a town centre's overall shopping experience. They attract people into a town centre, helping to make it more lively, and can significantly enhance a town centre's overall image and identity.

10.19 BLP32 Markets

Policy BLP 32

Markets

1. The Borough will continue to support existing and proposed markets within town, district and local centres. Development proposals that support the operation of events and markets within town, district and local centres and that incorporate suitable spaces and appropriate infrastructure for events and markets, such as electricity points and lighting, will be supported.
2. The Borough will expect development proposals to show how they are not creating an adverse impact on the residential amenity of nearby properties, especially with regards to noise. (BLP Policy 49 refers)

Visitors and Tourism

Visitors and Tourism

11.0.1 Visitors and tourism can contribute to enhancing quality of life through delivering rewarding experiences for visitors, and a greater variety of jobs and training opportunities. It can support urban renaissance and rejuvenation, and diversify and develop the rural economy. The Borough's economy is supported by a vibrant visitor and tourism market. This is particularly important to Windsor and Eton, Ascot and Thames-side settlements. One of the objectives of the Borough Local Plan is to enable the continued success and evolution of the Borough's distinct visitor economy. Key objectives include:

- a. Supporting and promoting the key heritage attractions of Windsor, Ascot and the River Thames
- b. Providing sufficient visitor accommodation and facilities
- c. Promoting opportunities for visitor related development

11.0.2 To work towards these objectives the Borough will work with partner organisations through the Visitor Management Forum to support the tourist economy. An integrated approach will be taken to ensure that these objectives are reflected in local activities such as town centre management and regeneration, open space strategies, heritage enhancement initiatives, countryside management and environmental stewardship. The Visitor and Tourism policies encourage development which supports the sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

11.0.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes tourism under a category with arts and culture, as a main town centre use. This definition can include theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities. The NPPF also identifies the need for local and neighbourhood plans to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, while respecting the character of the countryside.

11.1 Tourism in the Borough

11.1.1 Windsor is one of the major tourist attractions of the South East of England, experiencing very high levels of tourism and day visitor activity which make a major contribution to the local economy. Windsor Castle is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world and is an international tourist destination. The effects of high visitor numbers on traffic congestion and pressures on local services and residents do however require careful management.

11.1.2 The River Thames is also a major tourist attraction and of considerable importance to tourism and the visitor economy in the Borough. The river provides high quality landscapes along its length and is widely used for a range of informal leisure activities, bringing direct economic benefits to its surrounding area.

11.1.3 Legoland Windsor is Britain's third most popular paid for tourist attraction, with around 1.9 million visitors per year, rising from 1.1 million when it first opened in 1996. In addition, of the many events that take place in the Borough each year, the Royal Ascot race meeting attracts the most visitors, with around 300,000 people travelling to the racecourse each year over the five days of racing.

11.1.4 There are very many other visitor attractions in the Borough. Attractions and events include Windsor Race Course, the Royal Windsor Horse Show, Eton College, Cookham's Stanley Spencer Gallery, Windsor Great Park, golf in Sunningdale, Thames Valley Athletics Centre, Hurley Lock, Bisham Abbey and Windsor Festival. In many cases, tourism and visitors are important in helping to maintain key heritage assets, and is supported for this reason.

11.2 Key challenges and issues

Key challenges and issues

11.2.1 The number of visitors received by the Borough is increasing annually, both from overseas and domestically. Between 2006 and 2014, visitor numbers increased from 6.7 million to just under 7.7 million trips per year. The number of day visitors currently represents almost 91% of the total number of visitors received. Overall, an estimated 716,000 staying trips were spent in Borough in 2014, of which around 523,000 were made by domestic visitors (73%) and 193,000 by overseas visitors (27%) – both figures representing an increase over 2013. Staying trips in 2014 resulted in an estimated 1,930,000 visitor nights in the Royal Borough, a growth of 3.8% compared to 2013. Total expenditure from overnight visitors in 2014 was £208 million, of which almost £93.3 million came from overseas and £114.7 million from domestic visitors. Approximately 6,971,000 visitor day trips were made to the Borough in 2014 generating an additional £276.4 million in visitor trip expenditure. Compared to 2013, the volume of day trips increased by 1.6%, and trip expenditure also increased by 1.9%.

Visitors and Tourism

11.2.2 Direct expenditure generated by visitors and tourism in the Borough in 2014 was £465 million. Adding additional indirect and induced effects (which generate a further £158.2 million) translates to £623.2 million worth of income for local businesses. Compared to 2013, this represents an increase of 2.5% in total tourism value. This visitor-related expenditure is estimated to have supported 7,149 full time equivalent jobs in Windsor & Maidenhead. Many of these jobs are part-time or seasonal in nature and translate into an estimated 9,704 Actual Jobs. These jobs are spread across a wide range of service sectors from catering and retail to public service jobs such as in local government, and not just tourism. Total tourism related expenditure supported 11% of all jobs in the Borough in 2014.

11.2.3 It is considered that there is currently a sufficient level of appropriate accommodation to manage the level of growth in this area. However throughout the plan period this situation will be monitored by the Visitor Management Forum, which is made up of local businesses, representatives from the tourism industry and Councillors.

11.2.4 The Borough's Local Transport Plan highlights the burden placed on local transport infrastructure by the fact that 51% of visitors arrive by car, with parking capacity and traffic congestion being particular issues for Windsor and Eton. The £5 million Windsor Transport and Parking Package is helping to address these issues in the short to medium term, aiming to provide a ring of small park and ride sites, together with improvements to local car parks, bus and cycle facilities and variable message signing.

11.2.5 The Borough Local Plan sets out a positive approach towards development which aims to boost the tourism economy in the Borough and provides criteria for assessing the suitability of development proposals related to tourism.

Visitors and Tourism

11.3 BLP33 Visitor Development

Policy BLP 33

Visitor Development

1. Maidenhead and Windsor town centres will be the main focus for major visitor related development. Development will be acceptable in other settlement locations provided that the type and scale of activity and the number of trips generated are appropriate to the accessibility of the location by walkers, cyclists and users of public transport. Proposals for hotel development at Windsor and Ascot racecourses will be supported if a case of Very Special Circumstances is made in each case.
2. Development proposals for visitor development will be expected to:
 - a. Be consistent with the sequential approach to site selection within that settlement or as an exception show evidence that the proposed development is locationally specific and consistent in terms of scale, impact and function with their location;
 - b. Contribute positively to the character of the area, the amenity of surrounding land uses and the retention and enhancement of heritage assets;
 - c. Contribute, where appropriate, towards town centre rejuvenation and environmental enhancement and a sustainable, safe, attractive and accessible environment
3. Development required to meet the changing needs of visitors at existing visitor attractions will be supported if the proposal does not have an adverse impact on local environment, amenity or traffic.
4. Development proposals for visitor development in rural locations will be supported where the proposals promote the rural economy and contribute positively towards the ongoing protection and enhancement of the countryside.
5. Development proposals located in the Green Belt will be expected to demonstrate that they maintain the character of the Green Belt in that location, that they protect historic and heritage assets, that they are in conformity with current Green Belt guidance, policy and legislation and that they are supported by a case of Very Special Circumstances.
6. Development proposals for park and ride facilities located in the Green Belt will need to demonstrate a case of Very Special Circumstances.
6. A Visitor Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented

11.4 BLP34 Visitor Accommodation

Policy BLP 34

Visitor Accommodation

1. Development proposals for additional visitor accommodation including new bed spaces through either new accommodation or extensions to existing accommodation will be supported in principle where they would improve the quality of accommodation or diversify the range of accommodation available such as providing specifically for business visitors and tourists. Development proposals will be expected to provide evidence that that are:

- a. Consistent with the sequential approach to site selection within the particular settlement or on an exception basis that the proposed development is locationally specific;
- b. Providing for additional accommodation that is required to improve the overall quality of accommodation in a location through raising current standards or providing a type of accommodation or supporting facilities not currently available in that location eg accommodation for people with mobility or visual disabilities; and
- c. Accessible by a variety of forms of transport including but not limited to public transport.

2. Development proposals for bed and breakfast accommodation will be supported in principle where evidence can be provided that the proposal:

- a. Is in addition to the main use of the dwelling as a domestic residence;
- b. Will not result in the proliferation or over concentration of such uses within an area so as to cause material harm to the amenity of that area; and
- c. Will not result in a substantial increase in traffic.

3. Development proposals in rural areas such as campsites and holiday caravan parks will be supported where they are appropriate to the character of the area, do not impact adversely on the amenity or environment of an area and are supported by a case of Very Special Circumstances if located in the Green Belt.

4. A Visitor Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

Visitors and Tourism

Historic Environment

Historic Environment

12.1 Context

12.1.1 The Borough enjoys a wide diversity of built character. Many of the oldest settlements in the Borough are located close to the River Thames, which has played an important role in its economic and cultural development. For example, both the villages of Hurley and Datchet pre-date Roman occupation and continue to be thriving communities due in part to the advantages of a riverside location. The Borough is steeped in history; the area has evolved around old settlement patterns, and receives its royal title from strong connections with the Crown. Windsor Castle is a prominent medieval building of international importance located in the wider floodplain of the River Thames built on an outcrop of chalk, and influenced the development of the town for trade and more recently tourism.

12.1.2 The character and diversity of its urban and rural areas, and its high quality historic built environment make the Borough very distinctive. This character can vary settlement to settlement. The scale and extent of the Borough's Conservation Areas vary from small hamlets (such as White Waltham), villages (such as Cookham Dean) and towns like Windsor, all of which have unique historic and architectural interest.

12.1.3 Within the Borough there are many examples of sustainable development being achieved through the re-use of the historic building stock. For example, Bisham Abbey, a Grade I Listed Building, has evolved and expanded to become a national sports centre, whilst still retaining its high degree of significance and interest. This demonstrates how the historic environment can be retained but adapted to meet present-day requirements.

12.1.4 The objective of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Borough's built and natural environment can be achieved through ensuring that development proposals respect both individual identity and the sense of place. The historic environment is by its very nature irreplaceable. Therefore, meeting this objective is essential to ensure that residents, visitors and future generations can enjoy the historic environment of the Borough in the future.

12.1.5 The evidence base comprises the Historic Environment Record maintained by Berkshire Archaeology and the Heritage at Risk Register maintained by Historic England. The Borough also has a Townscape Assessment that provides useful descriptions and information about those urban and suburban areas not lying within the Green Belt. The character of villages and hamlets in the countryside are defined in the Landscape Character Assessment. A Historic Landscape Character Assessment is currently being undertaken for East Berkshire, including the Royal Borough, and this will Assessment will form a key evidence document to support the development of the Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

12.1.6 The Borough has also undertaken Conservation Area Appraisals for many of the Conservation Areas. These appraisals will be used to guide the design of development proposals, and to help determine the appropriateness of development involving or in proximity to heritage assets. They have influenced the Borough Local Plan's spatial strategy and relevant site allocations with regard to potential impact on heritage assets. Further details of how the Historic Environment policies will be implemented will be set out in the Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

12.1.7 In accordance with national planning guidance, the Borough considers its heritage assets to be "an irreplaceable resource" and in line with the NPPF it will protect all heritage assets in line with their significance. All development proposals will be expected to have regard to both the national and local historic contexts. For the purposes of the Borough Local Plan the term heritage assets refer to buildings, parks and gardens; standing, buried and submerged remains; and areas, sites and landscapes, whether designated or not, and whether or not capable of designation.

Historic Environment

12.2 BLP 35 Historic Environment

Policy BLP 35

Historic Environment

1. The Borough will require development proposals to conserve and to enhance the character, appearance and function of heritage assets and their settings. The Borough will seek to ensure that development proposals respect the significance of the historic environment.
2. When determining applications for development the Borough will seek to protect, conserve and enhance the architectural features, structures, settings, historic character and significance of heritage assets and designations. The proposed use of heritage assets should be appropriate.
3. Heritage assets are defined as:
 - a. Listed Buildings
 - b. Conservation Areas
 - c. Registered Parks and Gardens
 - d. Ancient Monuments
 - e. Significant archaeological remains
 - f. Settings of heritage assets
 - h. Locally significant buildings, structures, areas or landscapes of architectural or historic interest including non designated locally significant assets identified in the local lists compiled by the Borough.
4. The Borough will maintain a local register of heritage assets at risk, and will address associated issues through a Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document. Conservation Areas will be subject to a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals. A list of all the Conservation Areas in the Borough can be found in Appendix E.
5. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

12.3 Listed Buildings

12.3.1 The main aim of listing a building is to prevent alterations that harm the special character of the building or structure – this includes the interior. Although the decision to list a heritage asset may be made on the basis of the historic or architectural interest of one element, the listing protection applies to the whole asset. Buildings are listed by the Secretary of State in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest, and any works which affect the character of a listed building require permission.

12.3.2 There are approximately 1700 Listed Buildings in the Borough, of which 23 are Grade I, and 74 are Grade II*. The Borough has a rich built heritage which is signified by the wide variety of Listed Buildings, in terms of grade, character and use. Some Listed Buildings hold international importance, such as Windsor Castle and Jesus Hospital in Bray, whilst others include significant examples of rural vernacular and agricultural architecture⁽¹⁾.

12.3.3 National guidance states that when considering the impact of proposed development on a significant heritage asset, great weight should be given to that asset's conservation. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II Listed Building should be exceptional. Grade I and II* Listed Buildings are considered to be heritage assets of the highest significance, and harm to or loss of these should be wholly exceptional⁽¹⁾.

Historic Environment

12.3.4 High quality of design is an important consideration where development proposals include Listed Buildings. Proposals which fail to respect the historic context or setting will be refused. Any development within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building should maintain its character. Applicants should use appropriate materials in schemes, which includes but is not limited to their use for windows, doors, shopfronts, canopies, fascias, roofing materials and rainwater systems. These will often be traditional materials which either match the original or are noticeably different, but may exceptionally be strikingly distinct from but sympathetic to the character of the original.

12.3.5 Development proposals that conserve and enhance the structure, character, appearance and setting of a Listed Building, and secure an active, long-term economically viable use should be considered favourably where the applicant can justify and demonstrate the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset is appropriate. Detailed assessments or surveys should include the following information, ensuring that the impact at each stage has been demonstrated as appropriate:

1. Justification for the development proposal;
2. Assessment of the heritage asset's significance;
3. A structural assessment where appropriate;
4. Impact on the significance of the heritage asset;
5. Full details of the proposed alterations and/or extensions.

12.3.6 Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings must respect the host building in terms of the scale, style and materials, allowing the original building to remain a distinct element.

Change of use

12.3.7 The most suitable use for an historic building is usually the one for which it was originally designed. It is acknowledged that the originally intended use of historic buildings may no longer be viable or compatible with the long term conservation of the building. The most suitable new use will usually be the economically viable use which requires least change to the historic building. This may not be the same as the option which generates the greatest return. When considering the viability of proposals, the Borough Council will take into account the previous management of the heritage asset and any neglect of the asset resulting in its deterioration. This will prevent permission being given for schemes where inappropriate changes to the heritage asset are claimed to be justified in order to secure future viability. Development proposals for the change of use of a Listed Building that would contribute to the building's conservation and enhance its architectural and historical significance will be supported where the applicant can justify and demonstrate the impact on the asset's significance. If Listed Buildings or other assets form part of group, e.g. agricultural buildings, it is important to ensure that the proposed new use can form part of a sustainable scheme for the future. Proposals which fail to incorporate heritage assets into overall schemes, thereby risking the isolation and deterioration of the assets, will not be permitted.

12.3.8 Evidence of marketing exercises for the property and their results may be required to support an application for an alternative use (see appendix F).

Loss or demolition (including features)

12.3.9 The Borough Council will seek to protect, preserve and retain Listed Buildings across the Borough. Listed Buildings can be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance through the retention of features which contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of the building. Specific features may include, but are not limited to: joinery, ornamental mouldings, windows and doors, internal decorative features, floors, ceilings, chimney breasts and fireplaces.

12.3.10 In line with national planning guidance⁰, development proposals resulting in substantial harm to or total loss of significance of, a designated heritage asset will not be supported. This includes designated assets inherently not capable of generating an income (e.g. mileposts and walls). To justify substantial loss or harm, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that substantial public benefits outweigh the harm or loss. In other instances, all of the following tests will be applied in order to justify substantial harm or total loss:

1. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 2. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
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3. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
4. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

12.3.11 In the exceptional circumstance where demolition is permitted, the Council will require an appropriate archive to be made of the features and fabric that would be lost, conducted by a heritage specialist. In such circumstances, a condition would be attached that would require no works to commence until a record of the existing building, to an appropriate level as set out in 'Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Practice' (English Heritage, 2006), has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Historic Environment

12.4 BLP 36 Listed Buildings

Policy BLP 2

Listed Buildings

1. Development proposals should seek to enhance and conserve heritage assets (Policy BLP 35 refers). The Borough will only support development proposals that respect the significance of a Listed Building and its setting.
2. The Borough will expect all development proposals that affect Listed Buildings or their settings to be accompanied by a relevant and detailed assessment or survey. Detailed surveys or assessments should include the following information to ensure that impacts of development proposals are considered appropriate:
 - a. Justification for the development proposal;
 - b. Assessment of the heritage asset's significance;
 - c. Structural assessment where appropriate;
 - d. Impact on the significance of the heritage asset; and
 - e. Full details of the proposed alterations and or extensions
3. Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings should take account of scale, design, use of materials, retention of the structure and any features of historic or architectural importance. Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings should also respect the host building in terms of the scale, style and materials, allowing the original building to remain a distinct element. When considering development proposals the Borough will take account of the previous management of the heritage asset and any neglect of the asset resulting in its deterioration. The Borough will only support development proposals where appropriate changes to the heritage asset are claimed to be justified in order to secure future viability.
4. The Borough will support development proposals where the applicant can provide justification for and demonstrate that:
 - a. Internal and external alterations or extensions to a Listed Building will not adversely affect the character of the building or its setting;
 - b. They protect the integrity of buildings, spaces, landscape, layout and plan form, access, archaeological remains, aspects of social significance and other features of historic or architectural interest;
 - c. There is a high quality of design, being sympathetic to siting, existing settlement patterns, proportions, scale, height, form and materials used both on the building itself and to be in keeping with the character of the area in general; and
 - d. The use of appropriate materials.
5. The Borough will support development proposals for an appropriate change of use for a Listed Building which conserves and enhances its special interest and physical fabric, both internally and externally, and its setting.
6. The Borough will only support development proposals if they do not result in the loss or demolition of Listed Buildings or their settings. In exceptional circumstances where the Borough is prepared to allow demolition an appropriate archive will be required to be made of the features and fabric that would be lost, conducted by a Heritage Specialist.
7. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented

Historic Environment

12.5 Ancient Monuments and archaeology

12.5.1 The archaeological heritage of the Borough is rich and varied, having seen many settlements growing organically over time. In Prehistoric times, the river valley with its fertile soils and opportunities for transport meant the area was favoured for settlement and agriculture, and archaeological remains reflecting these activities and others are prolific. The traces of previous development are still evident in many settlements, for example ribbon development along roads and narrow streets that are not suitable for modern transport, but nevertheless have a unique and enchanting character. Others have disappeared from the surface but still survive below ground. Accordingly, it is important to take all opportunities to discover historical remains that could be found and provide further information about the past.

12.5.2 Nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by designation i.e. inclusion on the National Heritage List as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Consent for works to a Scheduled Ancient Monument is issued by Historic England. There are 22 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Royal Borough – these are not always ancient or visible above ground. The Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) notes over 2000 archaeological assets in the Borough, ranging in date from the Stone Age through to the modern period.

12.5.3 National planning guidance states that Scheduled Ancient Monuments and areas of presumed archaeological importance can be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance by the undertaking of a thorough desk based assessment of the heritage asset, field investigation where appropriate and sympathetic design to secure preservation in-situ .

12.5.4 Archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource, providing irreplaceable information about our past. Policies BLP37 and BLP38 seek to ensure that Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological remains are not destroyed, and to retain their heritage value. There is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation and their settings. New development must avoid damage to archaeological deposits and put in place appropriate mitigation measures where damage is unavoidable. Development proposals which affect archaeological sites and monuments of unknown importance and areas of potential will need to demonstrate that the full implications of the development on matters of archaeological interest have been assessed and taken into account. The impact of development on all types of remains should be minimised.

12.5.5 As most archaeological remains are yet to be discovered it is crucial that sites of potential interest are appropriately assessed. All works will be guided by national planning policy, government advice and that issued by Historic England. The Council will also set up a local heritage asset register as part of its Heritage Strategy and will provide further guidance on assessments of local archaeology potential through the development plan process.

12.6 BLP 37 Ancient Monuments

Policy BLP 37

Ancient Monuments

1. The Royal Borough will protect scheduled and nationally important Ancient Monuments and their settings. Development proposals must show how proposal conserves the monument and presumed archaeological importance in a manner appropriate to their significance by the undertaking of a desk based assessment of the heritage asset, field investigation where appropriate and sympathetic design to secure preservation in situ. The assessment must:
 - a. Demonstrate an understanding of the historic context of the monument;
 - b. State the impact the proposal would have on the monument and its setting; and
 - c. Show how the development proposal would, where possible, enhance the monument and its setting.
2. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

Historic Environment

12.7 BLP 38 Archaeology

Policy BLP 3

Archaeology

1. The Borough will only support development proposals affecting national and local sites, or known or potential sites of archaeological interest where the Historic Environment Record has been consulted to ensure that the significance of such assets is fully understood. The Borough will require the applicants for a development proposal to show how they have met the following criteria:
 - a. To submit an appropriate desk based assessment by a suitably qualified person; and
 - b. To undertake a field evaluation to clarify the findings of the assessment and the anticipated impact of the proposals; and
 - c. To design and layout development proposals to secure archaeological preservation in situ where warranted, or by record (i.e. through archaeological excavation and recording and conservation.)
2. Where development proposals are in areas of potential archaeological interest a programme of archaeological works may be required to mitigate the impact.
3. The Borough will expect all development proposals to have regard to their impacts upon the historic environment, protecting and where possible enhancing designated and undesignated archaeological remains and their settings.
4. Where the Borough grants planning permission for development at sites of archaeological interest in situ preservation of archaeological remains is preferred and appropriate management must be undertaken during construction to ensure this.
5. The Borough will set up a Local Heritage Asset Register (BLP 41 Refers) as part of the Heritage Strategy which will also provide further guidance on assessments of local archaeological potential.
6. A Heritage Strategy SPD will be produced to further illustrate how this policy should be implemented

12.8 Registered Parks and Gardens

12.8.1 Registered parks and gardens are registered because of their special historic interest as designed landscapes. The emphasis of the 'Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England' is on gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as cemeteries and urban parks, and applies to 'designed' landscapes. Parks or gardens found to be of sufficient historic interest to merit protection are added to the Register. The register is managed by Historic England.

12.8.2 The Royal Borough has 10 registered parks and gardens which vary from the extent of Windsor Great Park to the ex Sunningdale Civil Service College. Two registered parks and gardens also extend over the boundary lines of the Borough to some degree.

12.8.3 Proposals which affect registered or locally significant parks and gardens must have careful regard to the important landscape architecture of the site and its special character, as well as the setting (which may include any historic buildings or features). Development proposals are required to provide appropriate information with any application that affects a registered park or garden to demonstrate the effects of the proposal. A locally significant park or garden is defined as a park or garden significant for their historic and landscape value in the local vicinity.

12.8.4 Some of the registered parks and gardens in the Borough are under pressure for development or from commercial activities. For example, Windsor Great Park is a regional visitor attraction. It is a key heritage asset for the Borough and it is clear that there are competing demands on it in relation to heritage and tourism, and

Historic Environment

also to meet a need for improved staff accommodation. Both Hall Place in Burchetts Green and Sunningdale Park are also proposed to be designated as 'Important Previously Developed Sites within the Green Belt' as well as registered parks and gardens.

12.8.5 The setting of a registered or locally significant park and garden includes the wider character and views into and from the park and garden beyond the boundary, all of which may be affected by development proposals. Examples of the fabric of a park or garden could be buried walls or a significant feature that adds to its character.

12.8.6 Trees are an integral part of the character of registered or locally significant parks and gardens, and therefore the preservation of trees in relation to the setting and fabric of the park and garden is a key consideration. Landscape features including trees, such as historic avenues for example, will also be considered.

12.9 BLP 39 Registered Parks and Gardens

Policy BLP 4

Registered Parks and Gardens

1. The Borough will only support development proposals, including changes of use in or within the setting of locally significant or registered parks or gardens where the proposal conserves or enhances the setting, appearance, historic nature, fabric and significance of the park or garden and does not cause harm to the appearance or setting of a registered or locally significant park or garden.
2. The Borough will expect development proposals to provide appropriate information regarding the impact of the proposal and to show how they have had regard to the important landscape architecture of a site and its setting and special character through the submission of a Heritage Management Plan.

12.10 Conservation Areas

12.10.1 Conservation Areas are designated for their particular architectural or historic interest, taking account of the overall quality of the area, mix and style of buildings, quality of open spaces, and other features which contribute to the overall character. The character and appearance of each Conservation Area is unique and is derived from the composition of building form, materials, style and placement with open spaces.

12.10.2 The Borough Council has designated these Conservation Areas for their unique character and appearance, following an in depth assessment of their architectural quality and built form, historic development, archaeological remains, surviving or former uses, any historic associations and open spaces, parks, trees and gardens. The Royal Borough's Conservation Areas are valued by local communities and visitors alike, and each has a unique character and appearance which creates a high degree of local identity. Further assessment of the individual Conservation Areas is available in the Conservation Area Appraisals. These are listed in Appendix E and the boundaries are shown on the Policies Map. The Heritage Strategy will identify any other parts of the Borough which may be suitable for future designation as a Conservation Area.

12.10.3 National planning guidance states that opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas should be considered favourably where they help to enhance or better reveal their significance. The loss of a significant building or feature that positively contributes to the character or significance of the wider Conservation Area should be treated as causing harm and be resisted. The Borough Council will use Article 4 Directions within Conservation Areas where permitted development is eroding the special character and interest of that Conservation Area.

12.10.4 Conservation Areas can be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance through the retention of physical structures such as buildings, walls, fences, hedges, trees or other features, and also by maintaining the relationship between buildings, including the pattern of the street scene, and the spacing between buildings that contributes to the distinctive character of many Conservation Areas. An applicant will need to provide strong justification as to why any such feature cannot be retained. The loss of significant features will generally be resisted as it is likely they will have a historic character that cannot be replicated by new development. Where appropriate, the Council may impose a condition to control the timing of demolition. The Council will not support demolition until an appropriate redevelopment scheme has been approved.

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12.10.5 The Council will encourage the use of appropriate materials (the key is the quality of the materials as opposed to whether these are traditional or modern, including renewables) to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. This may include, but is not limited to windows, doors, shopfronts, canopies, fascias, roofing materials and rainwater systems. Some areas are characterised by the harmonised use of patterned brickwork, for example, and would be affected by external painting. Therefore some permitted development rights have already been removed from sensitive areas through the application of Article 4 Directions .

12.10.6 The use of buildings and the pattern of spaces can be fundamental to the character of a Conservation Area. Sensitive changes of use can enhance that character.

12.10.7 An issue often faced in Conservation Areas is the parking of vehicles. The visual intrusion of cars on the streets or parking in front gardens can harm the appearance and character of the area. In Conservation Areas, particularly those covered by Article 4 Directions, the Council will encourage opportunities to minimise vehicle impact through appropriate hard and soft landscaping, improvements to existing arrangements through revised layouts, and discourage the conversion of front garden areas to car parking.

12.10.8 Many of the Borough's Conservation Areas have written Conservation Area Appraisals which detail their character and provide key focuses for improvement. Conservation Area Appraisals can be viewed on the website. These documents should be used to guide the design of development proposals and to help determine the appropriateness of development involving or near to heritage assets.

12.10.9 Proposals should consider whether an important view will be affected by development, (for example the traditional public views of Windsor Castle and the River Thames), and should also consider views out of Conservation Areas, which can be very important to their character.

12.11 BLP 40 Conservation Areas

Policy BLP 5

Conservation Areas

1. The Borough will require development proposals to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas within which they are proposed and to positively contribute to the character, local distinctiveness and significance of the historic environment. The Royal Borough will require development proposals:

a. For new development or alterations to existing buildings structures to be of high quality design, sympathetic to the siting, proportions, scale, height, form, materials and detailing used on both the building itself and adjacent buildings, and to be in keeping with the character of the area in general; and

b. To use appropriate materials and finishes; and

c. For changes of use to demonstrate that the proposed use will not result in an undesirable intensification of activities in the area, being sympathetic to the building and appropriate to the overall character of the Conservation Area; and

d. Not to include sites which form important open spaces within the Conservation Area or sites which by way of their openness form part of the essential character of the Conservation Area; and

e. To retain any buildings and protect views that contribute to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area.

2. The Borough will resist development proposals that involve the loss of buildings, structures (including walls and fences) or trees that make a positive contribution to or help conserve the character of a Conservation Area. Conservation Areas will be subject to a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and a list of Conservation Areas is contained in Appendix E.

Historic Environment

12.12 Windsor Castle

12.12.1 Windsor Castle, home to Queen Elizabeth II, is one of the most recognisable heritage assets in the United Kingdom. Dating from 1165 the Castle and most of the buildings within the walls are Grade 1 Listed Buildings, therefore in the top 2.5% of all Listed Buildings in the country. Windsor Castle is both the largest inhabited castle in the world and the longest occupied Royal Palace in Europe whilst also being a Royal home. Windsor Great Park is also Grade 1 Listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Windsor Castle is of extreme importance to the Borough, not only because of its historical and cultural significance but also the role that it has as a major visitor attraction. Visitors to Windsor and the surrounding areas make a substantial contribution to the ongoing success of the local economy. The Castle and its setting within The Great Park are visible to and from a large area, and these views provide the background setting for the buildings and its immediate surrounds.

12.12.2 The Palace of Windsor Castle is owned by the Occupied Royal Palaces Estate on behalf of the nation and Windsor Great Park is managed by the Crown Estate. Both Windsor Castle and the Great Park are considered to be 'Crown Land' which is defined in Section 293 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land in which there is a Crown interest or a Duchy interest. From 2006 Crown land no longer enjoys immunity from planning control although there are some exceptions to this. There are provisions and arrangements in place to help facilitate development and restrict access to sensitive information in the interests of national security and defence including additional permitted development rights. These rights which are set out in Part 19 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 make provision for the Crown and other Crown bodies to carry out certain types of development without a planning application needing to be made and this includes emergency development and development for national security purposes.

12.13 BLP41 Windsor Castle

Policy BLP 41

Windsor Castle

1. Development proposals that affect Windsor Castle, Windsor Great Park and their immediate surrounds should be accompanied by a statement showing how the development proposal:
 - a. Seeks to enhance the architectural and historical significance, authenticity and integrity of Windsor Castle and its local setting within the Great Park; and
 - b. Safeguards the Castle and its setting within the Great Park allowing appropriate adaptation and new uses that do not adversely affect the Castle, The Great Park and their settings; and
 - c. Protects and enhances public views of the Castle including those from further afield as detailed in the Windsor View Cone Study
2. When not impacted on by Crown Permitted Development Rights, and where appropriate all other policies in the Borough Local Plan apply to Windsor Castle and the Great Park.
3. The Council will, subject to the other policies in the Plan, support development proposals that aim meet the needs of visitors to the Castle and the Great Park.

12.14 Local Heritage Assets

12.14.1 Local heritage assets in the Borough form an important part of the historical and cultural fabric of the Borough. The Borough Local Plan illustrates the significance of the local historic environment and although local heritage assets do not qualify for statutory listing they are nevertheless important to the Borough because of their cultural, architectural and historical contribution. A local list that details local heritage assets will be included in the Heritage Strategy and updated via the Annual Monitoring Report.

Historic Environment

12.14.2 Retention and beneficial reuse of local heritage assets can be achieved through adaptation of existing fabric. There is a greater degree of flexibility when it comes to the alteration, re use and adaptation of local heritage assets.

12.15 BLP42 Local Heritage Assets

Policy BLP 42

Local Heritage Assets

1. Development proposals that affect local heritage assets detailed on the Local List (BLP35 refers) will be expected to demonstrate how they retain the significance, appearance, character and setting of the local heritage asset.
2. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining local listed heritage assets and where this is not possible, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals.

Natural Resources

Natural Resources

13.0.1 Maximising energy efficiency and reducing resource consumption in new development, or retro-fitting existing buildings, can help to reduce CO2 emissions and associated climate change effects. The Royal Borough wants new developments to be as sustainable as possible, and seek to move towards a low-carbon economy. Ways that development proposals can achieve this include reducing energy demand, and adopting sustainable methods of design and construction.

13.1 Sustainable Design and Construction

13.1.1 The recent Housing Standards Review concluded that government regulations and standards relating to sustainable design and construction should be simplified through Building Regulations. The Deregulation Act 2015 withdrew the ability of local planning authorities to add local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings at higher levels than Building Regulations. This included the removal of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which set out the government owned standard for sustainable house building. A Written Ministerial Statement confirmed that Local Planning Authorities could not require the Code for Sustainable Homes as a planning condition.

13.1.2 The Code for Sustainable Homes will be retained for legacy cases where residential developments are legally contracted to apply a code policy (e.g. affordable housing funded through the National Affordable Housing Programme 2015 to 2018, or earlier programme).

13.1.3 These amendments form part of a wider package of changes that aim to remove or reduce the impact of policies that were considered to be overly onerous on developers. In 2015 the Government announced it would not be continuing with the zero carbon Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme, or the proposed 2016 increase in on-site energy efficiency standards. Following these changes the Royal Borough will not set building policy standards for the Code for Sustainable Homes or Allowable Solutions. Should national energy efficiency standards change the Borough would then expect all new development to comply with the updated standards in full.

13.1.4 Non residential development is not affected by the changes to government guidance. BREEAM therefore remains a suitable accredited assessment scheme where appropriate. Energy demand will be calculated against the final design of the building.

Natural Resources

13.2 BLP43 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy BLP 43

Sustainable design and construction

1. The Borough will support development proposals that improve the sustainability of the built environment and that support sustainable ways of living and working. The Royal Borough will also encourage new developments to be as sustainable as possible and to work towards a low carbon economy and will expect applications to be accompanied by an Energy Demand Statement. The Borough will continue to work with applicants over the most appropriate solutions for Heritage Assets and buildings in Conservation Areas.
2. Development proposals will be expected to show how practicable measures have been taken to minimise energy demand, maximise energy efficiency and develop renewable energy technologies.
3. The Borough will expect development proposals to show how they have addressed, as far as possible the following measures:
 - a. Planting, shading and advanced glazing systems to reduce solar heat gain during the summer;
 - b. Use of materials to prevent the penetration of heat, including the use of cool building materials and green roofs and walls, and flood resilient materials;
 - c. Increasing natural ventilation and removing heat by using fresh air;
 - d. Orientating windows of habitable rooms within 30 degrees of south and utilising southern slopes;
 - e. Locating windows at heights that maximise heating from lower sun angles during the winter; and
 - f. Incorporating flood resilient measures such as raising floor levels, electrical fittings and rain-proofing and overhangs to prevent infiltration of heavy rain around doors and windows.
4. The Borough will support development proposals to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings.
5. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

13.3 Renewable Energy

13.3.1 Planning can make a significant contribution to both mitigating and adapting to climate change, through decision-making on the location, scale, mix and character of development. The 2008 Planning Act introduced a duty on local development plans to include policies which ensure that they make a contribution to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Reflecting this, one of the plan's objectives is to minimise the impact the borough has on climate change.

13.3.2 National policy states that local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, that planning should provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. It also states that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourage the use of renewable resources, for example by the development of renewable energy.

13.3.3 Applications for renewable energy may include solar farms, wind turbines, weir hydro-power, biomass, district heating, combined heat and power (CHP) from renewable resources etc. The visual impact of solar farms on the landscape and other sensitive areas will be a key consideration in determining applications. Applications for biomass infrastructure should consider the transportation and the feasibility of combined heat and power. The Borough Council will generally be supportive of hydro-electric turbines along the River Thames.

Natural Resources

Wind Energy

13.3.4 A Written Statement by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government set out new considerations to be applied to proposed wind energy developments. It stated that when determining applications for wind energy development involving one or more turbines, LPAs should only grant permission if:

- the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and
- following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

13.3.5 The Statement set out that maps showing the wind resource as favourable to wind turbines will not be sufficient and that suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been clearly allocated in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan. The Royal Borough commissioned a survey to assess potentially suitable and unsuitable sites for wind energy development across the borough. Wind development suitability was assessed using mapping software to screen the borough based on three key planning constraints:

- Wind speed
- Environmental and landscape designations; and
- Proximity to residential properties

13.3.6 In accordance with DECC guidance designated landscapes (National Parks, AONBs) and international and national nature conservation areas (SPA, SACs, SSSIs etc) should not be excluded as potential wind energy development sites. However, it is recognised that such designations are a constraint to wind energy development and wind energy developments will not normally be permitted in these areas. Any wind energy proposals located within these designations will be assessed through the decision making process on planning applications and have not been used to determine areas classified as suitable or unsuitable for the purposes of the mapping exercise. Designations which have been identified as areas which are unsuitable for wind energy development include Ancient Woodland, Semi Natural Ancient Woodland, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens.

13.3.7 Maps have been produced to illustrate the potential suitability for wind energy development across the borough including one for small scale wind development (<50m in turbine height) and medium/large scale wind development (≥50 m in turbine tip height) and these can be found in Appendix I.

13.3.8 Wind energy proposals of more than 50 megawatts are currently decided by the Secretary of State for Energy with the Local Authority a statutory consultee. National guidance has indicated that the government intends to amend legislation to allow all onshore wind energy proposals to be determined by local authorities.

Policy BLP 6

Renewable Energy

1. The Borough will support development proposals for the production of renewable energy and associated infrastructure. The Borough will expect renewable energy development to be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife, heritage assets and amenity. The Royal Borough will give priority to development in less sensitive areas including major transport areas or on previously developed urban land.
2. The Borough will expect development proposals to illustrate how the location and design of renewable energy generation proposals are appropriate to the chosen location, do not cause adverse harm to the area and in the case of more sensitive areas are small scale.
3. The Borough will have regard to the following matters when considering the determination of renewable energy generation proposals:
 - a. The potential to integrate the proposal with existing or new development;
 - b. The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) which should include an evaluation of the potential benefits to the community and opportunities for environmental enhancement;
 - c. The proximity to adequate transport networks;
 - d. The availability of suitable connections to the electricity distribution network.
3. The Borough will only support development proposals for wind energy development where proposals are located in areas identified as being suitable for small or medium/large turbines on the Wind Mapping Exercise Maps found in Appendix 8, and on sites allocated for wind energy development in Neighbourhood Plans.

Natural Resources

13.4 BLP44 Renewable energy

Policy BLP 44

Renewable energy

1. The Borough will support development proposals for the production of renewable energy and associated infrastructure. The Borough will expect renewable energy development to be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife, heritage assets and amenity. The Royal Borough will give priority to development in less sensitive areas including major transport areas or on previously developed urban land.

2. The Borough will expect development proposals to illustrate how the location and design of renewable energy generation proposals are appropriate to the chosen location, do not cause adverse harm to the area and in the case of more sensitive areas are small scale.

3. The Borough will have regard to the following matters when considering the determination of renewable energy generation proposals:

- a. The potential to integrate the proposal with existing or new development;
- b. The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) which should include an evaluation of the potential benefits to the community and opportunities for environmental enhancement;
- c. The proximity to adequate transport networks;
- d. The availability of suitable connections to the electricity distribution network.

3. The Borough will only support development proposals for wind energy development where proposals are located in areas identified as being suitable for small or medium/large turbines on the Wind Mapping Exercise Maps found in Appendix I, and on sites allocated for wind energy development in Neighbourhood Plans.

13.5 Managing flood risk and waterways

13.5.1 The River Thames and its tributaries is a dominant feature in the Borough. The Thames forms much of the northern boundary of the borough and is a feature of 8 parishes and an additional 5 wards. Fluvial flooding and flooding from local sources (e.g. from groundwater, surface water and sewers) are constraints to development in parts of the borough. The Borough has been affected by serious flooding from the River Thames on a number of occasions in the last 100 years with the risk of flooding predicted to increase as a result of climate change.

13.5.2 The Borough Local Plan seeks to minimise the impact of climate change on the Borough. One of the key ways to achieving this is by adapting to climate change through the careful management of flood risk. This mirrors the that requires local planning authorities to develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies, such as lead local flood authorities.

13.5.3 Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding is set out in para 93-108 of the NPPF. Technical Guidance also advises on the effective implementation of the NPPF on development within areas of flood risk. The NPPF considers that whilst flood risk does not remove the presumption in favour of sustainable development, development itself is not presumed to be sustainable.

13.5.4 The main source of flood risk in the Borough is fluvial flooding. Although the Thames is the largest river in the Borough, there are a number of other watercourses e.g. the Bourne Ditch, the Battle Bourne, Wraysbury and Horton Drains, that can contribute to potential flooding problems in local areas. The Royal Borough is also at risk of flooding from the Colne Brook, the Colne, the Cut, Strand Water and White Brook as well as a number of streams and ditches. However, flooding may also occur directly from rainfall, rising

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groundwater, the overwhelming of sewers and drainage systems or potentially from the failing of man made features such as bunds, reservoirs and reservoir aqueducts, water supply tunnels, man made lakes, and flood alleviation channels.

13.5.5 To help reduce flood risk to some urban areas in the Borough, the Jubilee River relief channel was developed, which provides an overflow storage channel for flood water (effectively a very large Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUDS)). The Jubilee River extends from Maidenhead to Eton (11.6 km in length), leaving the River Thames at Boulters weir and re-joining immediately upstream of Datchet, and has reduced the area of Maidenhead at risk from severe flooding. However the SFRA states that there is always a “residual risk... that these defences may be overtopped in more extreme flood events or fail in some way”.

13.5.6 To help reduce flood risk to some urban areas in the Royal Borough, the Jubilee River relief channel was developed, which provides an overflow storage channel for flood water (effectively a very large Sustainable Drainage Scheme (SUDS)). The Jubilee River extends from Maidenhead to Eton (11.6 km in length), leaving the River Thames at Boulters weir and re-joining immediately upstream of Datchet, and this has reduced the area of Maidenhead at risk from severe flooding. It was built as part of the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation scheme, reducing the frequency and severity of flooding to properties within the Borough. The channel was designed to look and function as a natural living river, containing water all year round, and was sensitively landscaped to enhance the environment and create new habitats for wildlife in addition to reducing fluvial flood risk. . There are also a number of formal raised flood defences that affect flooding within the Borough. These include the Cookham Bund; North Maidenhead Bund; Datchet Golf Course; Battle Bourne; Windsor Bourne Flood Storage area embankment and Myrke Embankments.

13.5.7 The Borough has experienced major floods in 1894, 1947 and 2014. Other floods of lesser severity have occurred in 1954, 1959, 1974, 1981, 1990, 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2012. If not effectively managed, new development will affect the severity of flooding due to the resulting physical loss of floodwater storage capacity on a site and by impeding the flow of floodwaters across a site. As a consequence, the Borough has operated a policy of constraining new development in areas with a high risk from flooding since 1978 -. This has been supported in an overwhelming number of cases at appeal. Locating inappropriate or poorly designed development in areas at risk of flooding will increase the impact of flooding in the future, putting more people at risk and increase the cost of damages to property

13.5.8 The Borough’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the EA flood maps show that in the Royal Borough, it is predominantly locations along the River Thames that are at highest risk of flooding e.g. Wraysbury, Old Windsor, Cookham, Windsor. However some other areas including around Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham/Paley Street and up to Holyport, have flood risk owing to Twyford Brook and The Cut, which are both tributaries of the River Thames. Fluvial flood risk is therefore a constraint to development in several areas of the borough which is not necessarily restricted to locations along the River Thames.

13.5.9 In addition some areas are more prone to experiencing surface water flooding. DEFRA have introduced the concept of a ‘Surface Water Management Plan’ (SWMP) “which outlines the preferred surface water management strategy in a given location. In this context surface water flooding describes flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater, and runoff from land, small water courses and ditches that occurs as a result of heavy rainfall. The SFRA outlines that the Borough is also susceptible in places to incidents of localised flooding from sewers and other sources. These areas include, but are not exclusive to: Bray, Fifield, Holyport, Maidenhead, Cookham, Windsor and Oakley Green.

Regulations and guidance

13.5.10 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 place a duty upon the Borough as a Lead Local Flood Authority to prepare a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment is a high level screening exercise that includes the collection of information on historic flood events, and potential, future, flood events. The Borough’s PFRA was published in 2009. The Flood Water Management Act 2010 requires the local authority to provide a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which will need to include information on how local flood risk is to be managed and the actions that might be taken to manage flood risk. The Borough adopted its strategy in December 2014.

13.5.11 The Government also expects the Council to adopt a sequential risk-based approach to development and flood risk. At all levels of the planning process whether allocating land or when considering planning applications, new development should be steered towards areas at the lowest probability of flooding. The Borough’s SFRA refines information on the probability of flooding, taking other sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change into account. In making decisions, the vulnerability and locational need of the proposed

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use should be taken into account. If, following the application of the sequential test, it is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for a proposed development to be located in zones of lower probability of flooding, the 'Exceptions Test' can be applied where relevant to do so.

13.5.12 Climate change projections for the UK indicate more frequent short-duration, high-intensity rainfall or more frequent periods of long-duration rainfall. This is likely to mean milder, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. These changes will have implications for fluvial flooding and local flash flooding; subsequently the Government recognises that this will lead to increased and new risks of flooding within the lifetime of planned developments. In the Royal Borough, an assessment of the impact that climate change may have on the flood zones has been undertaken through a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). This indicates that the flood zones are expected to change and increase the number of properties at risk of flooding.

13.5.13 The Environment Agency provides all local authorities with flood maps showing the areas that could be affected by fluvial flooding. These maps are regularly updated and represent the best available information on fluvial flood risk. Outside these areas, localised flooding can still occur from other sources. In line with Government policy, the Borough has prepared a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to identify areas at risk from all sources of flooding and to allow the flood risk to be fully considered at all levels of decision making.

13.5.14 Fundamental to the Borough Local Plan's strategy is the avoidance of inappropriate development in areas liable to flooding through the adoption of a risk based approach. This approach is translated into Policy BLP43. The policy also provides an opportunity to support and safeguard the Maidenhead Waterways.

13.5.15 The Borough will continue to work with the Environment Agency, water companies and other partners and individuals to manage water and flooding matters in the borough, and to promote development away from areas at risk of flooding. The Borough will work with applicants to ensure that development is appropriately located and does not result in unacceptable flood risk or drainage problems, in the locality or elsewhere. This will involve exploring mitigation measures to ensure that they are suitable, appropriate and economically viable.

13.6 BLP 45 Managing flood risk and waterways

Policy BLP 45

Managing flood risk and waterways

1 The Borough will guide development to areas of lowest flood risk from all source of flooding by adapting to climate change through the careful management of flood risk and the application of a sequential test approach. The Borough will only support development proposals where an appropriate flood risk assessment has been carried out and it has been demonstrated that development is located and designed to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is acceptable in planning terms.

2 In applying this test the Borough will expect development proposals to show how they have had regard to:

- a. The availability of suitable alternative sites in areas of lower flood risk (The Sequential Test);
- b. The vulnerability of the proposed use;
- c. The present and future flood risk; and
- d. The scale of potential consequences.
- e. Site evacuation plan in the event of potential flooding.

3 In all cases the Borough expects that development must not itself, or cumulatively with other development materially:

- a. Impede the flow of flood water;
- b. Reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store water;
- c. Increase the number of people, property or infrastructure at risk of flooding;
- d. Cause new or exacerbate existing flooding problems, either on the proposal site or elsewhere;
- e. Reduce the waterway's viability as an ecological network or habitat for notable species of flora or fauna

4. Only water compatible uses and essential infrastructure development will be supported by the Royal Borough in the area defined as functional floodplain.

5. The Royal Borough will expect development proposals to:

- a. Increase the storage capacity of the floodplain where possible;
- b. Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems in order to restrict or reduce surface water run-off;
- c. To reduce flood risk both within and beyond sites wherever practical;
- d. To be constructed with adequate flood resilience and resistance measures suitable for the lifetime of the development; and
- e. To incorporate flood evacuation plans where appropriate

6. The Borough will support in principle, appropriate comprehensive flood risk management measures within or affecting the Borough which are agreed by the Environment Agency and or the Borough as Local Lead Flood Authority

7. The Borough will support and safeguard from further development land associated with strategic flood relief measures, including the proposed flood relief channel from Datchet to Wraysbury, as shown on the Policies Map. The Borough will support development that facilitates the improvement and integration of waterways in Maidenhead, including the completion of the Maidenhead Waterway Project.

Natural Resources

Environmental Protection

Environmental Protection

14.1 Context

14.1.1 Most of the Royal Borough has high environmental quality which needs protecting, and some areas that would benefit from improvements. Therefore protection of the environment through maintaining or enhancing air quality, minimising or reducing nuisance which affects human senses (such as noise and odour), can protect health and safeguard residential amenity.

14.1.2 Whilst there is legislation to control emissions from polluting activities, the planning system has a complementary role in directing the location of development that may give rise to environmental protection problems. This can manifest itself either directly from the development or indirectly e.g. through the impact of potential traffic it generates. As such there are two strands to all environmental policy: to ensure new development proposals do not generate issues which unduly impact on the surrounding environment, and to ensure they are not the recipients of existing issues. Similarly it is important that existing lawful uses do not become compromised to go about their operation by virtue of subsequent new development.

14.2 Environmental Protection

14.2.1 Environmental protection policies are linked with Borough Local Plan objectives to minimise impact of development in the Borough on climate change and the environment, and requiring new development to provide environmental improvements.

14.3 BLP 46 Environmental Protection

Policy BLP 7

Environmental Protection

1. The cumulative impact of developments will be a key consideration for development proposals.
2. Development proposals should not significantly and adversely impact the local environment.
3. Development proposals will only be supported where it can be shown that either individually or cumulatively in combination with other schemes, they do not have an unacceptable effect on environmental quality or landscape, both during the construction phase or when completed. Development proposals should also avoid locating sensitive uses such as residential units, schools or hospitals in areas with existing or likely future nuisance, pollution or contamination.
4. Where appropriate, the Borough will require applicants to submit details of remedial or preventative measures (for example: construction management plans) and any supporting environmental assessments. Planning conditions may be imposed to ensure implementation of any measures that make development proposals acceptable.
5. The Borough is committed to protecting existing environmental quality and where possible reducing adverse effects on the local and natural environment as a result of changes in activities or from new development. Development proposals should seek to maintain existing environmental quality in the locality, and improve quality where possible, both during construction and upon completion. Opportunities for such improvements should be incorporated at the design stage or through operation.
6. Residential amenity may be harmed by reason of noise, smell or other nuisance. Accordingly, care should be taken when siting particular commercial or agricultural proposals such as livestock units, silage storage or slurry pits which should be sited well away from the curtilage of any residential property.

14.4 Air pollution

14.4.1 Air pollution in the Royal Borough relates mainly to pollutants emitted from road transport sources, together with other pollutants as specified within the UK Air Quality Strategy. Local Authorities have a duty to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and work towards achieving national air quality objectives in areas where residents are exposed to pollutants in excess of the objectives. It is therefore important to ensure

Environmental Protection

that new development proposals, either individually or cumulatively, do not significantly affect residents within existing AQMAs by generating unacceptable levels of pollution. Maps showing the AQMAs are included in Appendix K.

14.5 BLP 47 Air Pollution

Policy BLP 47

Air Pollution

1. Development proposals will need to demonstrate that they do not significantly affect residents within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or to residents being introduced by the development itself.
2. The Borough will support development proposals where significant increases in air pollution can be mitigated, thus reducing the likelihood of health problems for residents.
3. Development proposals should aim to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment, by avoiding putting new or existing occupiers at risk of harm from unacceptable levels of air quality. Development proposals should show how they have had regard to the UK Air Quality Strategy or any successive strategies or guidance, ensuring that pollutant levels do not exceed or come close to exceeding national limit values.
4. The Borough requires development proposals to show how they have considered air quality impacts at the earliest stage possible; where appropriate through an air quality impact assessment which should include the cumulative impacts. Where relevant, air quality and transport assessments should be linked to health impact assessments, including any transport related mitigation measures that prove necessary.

14.6 Light Pollution

14.6.1 Many forms of artificial lighting can be beneficial. However, sometimes the installation of lighting can be intrusive and result in light pollution. BLP46 sets out a development management approach to dealing with light pollution. National planning guidance states that through good design and planning policies, the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation can be limited. Light pollution is caused by a number of factors including:

- a. Sky glow – the orange glow seen around urban areas at night;
- b. Glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background; and
- c. Light trespass – the spill of light beyond the boundary of property on which the light source is located.

14.6.2 The Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) specify environmental zones and corresponding thresholds for exterior lighting control with E2 being rural, small village or relatively dark urban locations; E3 being small town centres or urban locations; and E4 being towns and areas with night-time activity. The impact of artificial light pollution in all environments can have a significant effect on the character of the area, particularly in rural areas, making an area seem more urbanised, for example sporting facilities with floodlighting such as equestrian activities or driving ranges at golf courses. It can also intrude on the amenity of local residents or adversely affect the biodiversity of an area. Applicants should address the environmental zone in which the application is proposed and suggest mitigation measures and methodology accordingly.

14.6.3 Reducing light pollution can also be beneficial in making developments more sustainable by using less energy. Light pollution can be substantially reduced, without adversely affecting the purpose of the equipment being installed, through ensuring that light is directed properly through effective shielding, switching off lights when not in use and avoiding 'over-lighting'.

Environmental Protection

14.7 BLP 48 Artificial Light Pollution

Policy BLP 48

Artificial Light Pollution

1. Development proposals should seek to avoid generating artificial light pollution where possible. The Borough requires that development proposals for new outdoor lighting schemes that are likely to have a detrimental impact on neighbouring residents, the rural character of an area or biodiversity, should provide effective mitigation measures and that development proposals which involve outdoor lighting must be accompanied by a lighting scheme prepared according to the latest national design guidance and relevant British Standards publications.
2. The Borough will favourably consider development proposals that seek to replace any existing light installations in order to mitigate or reduce existing light pollution.
3. The Borough will seek to maintain the distinction between urban areas and the countryside. To determine whether development proposals involving artificial lighting have a detrimental impact, they should be assessed in accordance with the zone in which they are located (E2, E3 or E4) on whether they have the potential to cause harm to the health or quality of life, or to affect biodiversity. Zones will be shown on the Policies Map.
4. The Borough will require development proposals to show how they have addressed the environmental zone in which the application is proposed and suggest mitigation measures and methodology accordingly and will also require where appropriate development proposals include landscaping measures to effectively screen lighting installations. The use of overly sensitive 'movement triggered' lighting will be resisted where it would impact on the amenity of the area.
5. With particular reference to floodlighting schemes, the Borough will seek to ensure that development proposals do not have an adverse effect on adjacent areas by using suitable methods such as the provision of data in an isolux diagram for example.

14.8 Noise

14.8.1 Noise can affect the local and natural environment and people's health and quality of life. It is therefore important to ensure that development proposals do not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the existing environment by generating unacceptable levels of noise, either individually or cumulatively and are not the recipients of unacceptable existing levels of noise. There are two different types of noise: neighbourhood noise and an environmental noise.

14.8.2 Neighbourhood noise is defined as noise generated within the community, such as construction noise, noise from licensed premises including cooking facilities, industrial noise, air conditioning plants and street noise. Neighbourhood noise is controlled by specific legislation. Environmental noise is defined as transport noise from aircraft, road and rail.

14.9 BLP 49 Noise

Environmental Protection

Policy BLP 8

Noise

1. The Borough will require that development proposals consider the noise and quality of life impact on recipients in existing nearby properties and also the intended new occupiers ensuring they will not be subject to unacceptable harm.
2. The Borough will only support development proposals that will generate unacceptable levels of noise and affect quality of life where the applicant can demonstrate effective mitigation measures can be successfully implemented.
3. The Borough will support development proposals which may generate significant levels of noise (for example from plant & equipment) and may cause or have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents, the rural character of an area or biodiversity if it can be demonstrated via a noise impact assessment that effective mitigation measures can be successfully implemented and monitored.
4. The Borough will support development proposals in areas significantly affected by aircraft, road or rail noise if the applicant can demonstrate via a noise impact assessment effective mitigation measures.
5. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they have met the following internal noise standards for noise sensitive developments:
 - a. Internal noise levels within all habitable rooms shall not exceed an average noise level (LAeq) of 35 dB(A) during the daytime measured between 07.00 am to 11.00pm
 - b. Internal noise levels within all habitable rooms shall not exceed an average noise level (LAeq) of 30 dB(A) during the night – time measured between 11.00pm and 07.00am
 - c. Internal noise levels shall not exceed a maximum noise level (L_{max}) of 45 dB(A) at night within the bedroom environment
 - d. Where feasible measures shall be taken to ensure the external noise levels as part of the development do not exceed an average noise level (LAeq) of 55 dB(A) during the daytime measured between 07.00am and 11.00pm
6. The Borough will require noise impact assessments to be submitted in circumstances where development proposals will generate or be affected by unacceptable levels of neighbourhood or environmental noise.

Neighbourhood Noise

7. Where neighbourhood noise associated with a particular development is likely to cause unacceptable harm to existing or future occupiers, the Royal Borough will require applicants to submit a noise assessment.
8. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how exposure to neighbourhood noise will be minimised by the use of sound insulation, silencers, noise limiters, screening from undue noise by natural barriers, man made barriers or other buildings and by restricting certain activities on site

Environmental noise

9. The Borough has mapped its areas where environmental noise is considered to be or is likely to be significant. In effect all developments within 50m of railway lines, within 100m of all A-roads and motorways and (owing to Heathrow Airport operations) within all the wards of Windsor, Datchet, Old Windsor, Horton & Wraysbury, Eton Wick and within 500m of White Waltham airfield will be affected by high levels of environmental noise.
10. Development proposals will need to carry out a noise impact assessment in compliance with BS7445-1: 2003 for development proposals affected by environmental noise, to determine the noise levels that affect the development, and will also need to submit noise insulation and ventilation measures in compliance with BS8233. In addition noise mitigation measures will also need to be adopted to provide some protection of outdoor amenities from excessive noise levels from road and rail noise.

Environmental Protection

14.10 Contaminated land and or water

14.10.1 The objective of utilising previously developed land (PDL) often enables development in the most sustainable locations, however if the land is contaminated, it is important that the health and quality of life of existing or future occupiers are not put at risk.

14.10.2 Human activities can put groundwater resources at risk, both in terms of quality and quantity. Such activities include landfill sites, chemical works, petrol stations, effluent from farming practices etc. Groundwater plays a vital role in the environment, providing drinking water and maintaining river flows

14.10.3 Surface water and groundwater can be seriously affected by development and uses occurring within sites, therefore the Borough requires adequate measures to protect the quality of water. This is particularly important in groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZ), which are areas identified by the Environment Agency as at risk from potentially polluting activities, often found around wells, boreholes and springs. Source Protection Zones are designated for all groundwater supplies intended for human consumption. There are several areas across the Royal Borough covered by SPZs; those deemed to be at greatest risk are classified as Zone 1. Areas in the Borough with this classification include but are not limited to: Cookham Rise, Hurley, Maidenhead, Bray and north Datchet. Links to the Environment Agency's SPZ and Groundwater maps can be found in Appendix J.

14.11 BLP 50 Contaminated land and or water

Policy BLP 50

Contaminated land and or water

1. The Borough will support development proposals where it can be demonstrated that proposals will not cause unacceptable harm to the quality of groundwater, including Source Protection Zones, and do not have a detrimental effect on the quality of surface water. The Borough will require, where appropriate, development proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve remedial or preventative measures and submit any supporting assessments.
2. The Borough will support development proposals on, or near to land which is, or is suspected to be contaminated where the applicant can demonstrate that there will be no harm arising from the contamination to the health of future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land, and that the proposals will not cause unacceptable harm to the environment.
3. The Borough will review development proposals under pollutant linkage (source-pathway-receptor) risk assessments. The pollutant linkage should be represented by a conceptual model for the proposed use. The Borough will liaise with the Environment Agency and water companies where appropriate, in relation to measures that affect surface and groundwater.
4. The Borough will support development proposals where it can be demonstrated that adequate and effective remedial measures to remove the potential harm to human health and the environment be successfully mitigated.

Environmental Protection

Natural Environment

Natural Environment

15.1 Context

15.1.1 The high quality of the environment is a key feature of the Borough. Significant areas are recognised to be of importance in terms of nature conservation and landscape value. Environmental quality is also a major economic asset, with a healthy environment contributing to a strong local economy. Residents benefit from the high quality of the Borough's environment, which is also of importance to both tourism and local businesses.

15.1.2 The Borough's ecological value is reflected in a number of international, national and local designations. International designations afford the highest level of protection. Those that apply to the borough are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance). National designations that apply in the borough comprise Sites of Special Scientific Interest, while Local Wildlife Sites, formerly known as Wildlife Heritage Sites are designated at a local level.

15.1.3 These sites are designated independently from the Local Plan process. International designations often overlap in that more than one designation applies to a particular site. Sites in the area that currently have SPA and SAC designations are shown on the Policies Map and all international designations within the borough are shown in below. Other, national designations also apply to many of these sites.

International designation	Area wholly or partially within the Borough
Chiltern Beechwoods SAC	Bisham Woods
South West London Water Bodies SPA and Ramsar	Wraysbury and Hythe End gravel Pits and Wraysbury No. 1 Gravel Pit
Thames Basin Heaths SPA	Chobham Common
Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC	Chobham Common
Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC	Windsor Forest and Great Park

Table 6 International designations in the Borough

15.2 Nature Conservation

15.2.1 Planning has an important and positive role to play in protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity, including the conservation of protected species, and helping natural systems to adapt to climate change impacts. This includes ensuring that opportunities for biodiversity improvement are sought and realised as part of development schemes. Green networks and corridors provide opportunities for physical activity and increase accessibility within settlements and to the surrounding countryside. At the same time they enhance biodiversity and the quality of the external environment, and aid the movement of wildlife across its natural habitat. Green networks and corridors can encompass many types of feature including grass verges, hedgerows, woodland, parks and many other elements. Planning has an important role to play to ensure that, where possible, development proposals contribute to the creation and enhancement of green corridors and networks.

15.3 BLP 51 Nature Conservation

Policy BLP 9

Nature Conservation

1. The Borough is committed to maintaining, protecting and enhancing the nature conservation resource in the Royal Borough. Designated sites of international, national and local importance will be maintained, protected and enhanced. Protected species will be safeguarded from harm or loss.

2. The Borough will expect development proposals to demonstrate how they maintain, protect and enhance the ecological richness of application sites including features of conservation value such as ancient woodland, hedgerows, trees, river corridors and other water bodies and the presence of protected species. Development proposals must avoid damage to designated sites and where unavoidable adverse impacts arise they should be appropriately mitigated. Compensatory measures will only be used as a last resort.

3. Development proposals should ensure appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance and identify areas where there is opportunity for biodiversity to be improved. Development proposals should also avoid the loss of biodiversity and the fragmentation of existing habitats. Where opportunities exist to enhance designated sites or improve the nature conservation value of habitats they should be designed into development proposals. Development proposals should aim to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and to enhance green corridors and networks.

4. Where the impacts of development are significant development proposals should be accompanied by ecological reports to aid assessment of the proposal. Such reports should include details of any alternative sites considered and any mitigation measures considered necessary to make the development acceptable.

5. Biodiversity of application sites should be protected and enhanced by measures to:

- a. Conserve and enhance the extent and quality of designated sites;
- b. Conserve and enhance the diversity and distribution of habitats
- c. Restore and recreate habitats lost as a result of development;
- d. Recognise the importance of green corridors, networks and open space including water bodies, green verges, woodland and hedges;
- e. Avoid the fragmentation of existing habitats;
- f. Where appropriate recognise the importance of urban wildlife;
- g. Conserve soil resources to protect below ground biodiversity which in turn helps retain and enhance above ground biodiversity

15.4 Habitats and Designations

15.4.1 A wide variety of valuable wildlife habitats exist in the borough, including wetlands, ancient woodland and unimproved grasslands. Such a diverse range of habitats aids the survival of numerous species of flora and fauna, as well as enhancing the character and appearance of the rural environment. There are also areas which provide a nature conservation resource in urban areas, which can be of particular local value and amenity. This diversity of habitat is recognised by a number of official conservation designations in the Borough. These site designations are put in place independently of the Local Plan process, often by external bodies.

15.4.2 15.11 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated by Natural England as the very best wildlife and geological sites in the country. They support plants and animals that find it more difficult to survive in the wider countryside. 11 such sites have been designated in the Royal Borough, as follows:

Natural Environment

Box 1

- a. Bisham Woods
- b. Bray Meadows
- c. Bray Pennyroyal Field
- d. Cannoncourt Farm Pit, Furze Platt
- e. Chobham Common, Sunningdale (a small part of the site is in the borough)
- f. Cock Marsh, near Cookham
- g. Englemere Pond, Ascot (a small part of the site is in the borough)
- h. Great Thrift Wood, Woodlands Park
- i. Windsor Forest & Great Park
- j. Wraysbury & Hythe End Gravel Pits
- k. Wraysbury No.1 Gravel Pit

15.4.3 Some SSSIs have further designations as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites. These are areas that have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. SACs provide increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to conserve the world's biodiversity. SPAs are areas that have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds, while Ramsar sites are those that are of international importance as wetlands. Conserving habitats is a positive measure to aid the protected species and others that use them.

15.4.4 15.13 Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory sites of significant value for the conservation of wildlife. They are identified by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, with formal designation being made by the Royal Borough. Local Wildlife Sites protect threatened habitats, which in turn protects the species making use of them. These habitats can act as buffers, stepping stones and corridors between nationally-designated wildlife sites. River corridors are an important part of green corridors and networks along with their buffer zones. The list of Local Wildlife Sites can be found in Appendix L.

15.5 Conservation and Improvement

15.5.1 The Borough is committed to maintaining, protecting and enhancing the nature conservation resource in the borough. It is important to ensure appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance and identify areas where there is the opportunity for biodiversity to be improved. Such opportunities including restoring and creating links between sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation should be pursued through development proposals. BLP50 reflects the unique legal and ecological issues arising from the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the potential for development to have an adverse impact on its integrity. It expands on the protection offered by BLP 49 and implements a solution to enable the potential adverse effects of development to be mitigated.

15.5.2 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is designated under European Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC because it offers breeding and feeding sites to populations of three heathland species of birds ; the Dartford warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark. It is a fragmented area extending across several local authority areas, and a small part of the Chobham Common section lies within the borough at Sunningdale. The 5 km zone of influence of the SPA extends across 11 local authority areas. It covers much of the southern part of the borough, including the settlements of Sunninghill, Sunningdale, Cheapside and most of Ascot.

15.5.3 The designation has a major impact on the potential for residential development both within the SPA and the areas adjoining it. New development which, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA, requires an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations. Judgements of whether the integrity of the site is likely to be adversely and significantly affected should be made in relation to the features for which the European site was designated and their conservation objectives. The process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.. The general presumption in favour of sustainable does not apply where an Appropriate Assessment is required.

Natural Environment

15.5.4 Natural England has identified Visitor Access Patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths (ENRR682), 2005 that net additional housing development up to 5 km from the SPA, and large-scale housing development up to 7 km from the SPA, is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the integrity of the SPA. Within this zone of influence, mitigation measures are required. Similarly, Natural England has identified that an exclusion zone for new housing of 400 m linear distance from the SPA is appropriate, as mitigation measures are unlikely to be effective so close to the SPA. To enable residential development within the zone of influence but outside the exclusion zone to come forward in a timely and efficient manner, this policy sets out the extent of mitigation measures required.

15.5.5 The Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (made up of elected representatives from the local authorities affected by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA) has endorsed a Delivery Framework Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework, 2009, which sets out a strategy for mitigating the impacts of development on the SPA. This framework explains that effective mitigation measures should comprise a combination of providing suitable areas for recreational use by residents (to draw recreational visits away from the SPA) and actions to monitor and manage access to the SPA itself. Such measures must be operational prior to occupation of new residential development, so as to ensure the integrity of the SPA is not damaged.

15.6 Mitigation and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)

15.6.1 An alternative area for residents to use for recreation, in the form of a SANG, has been provided in the borough at Allen's Field, south of Ascot. This 9.5 ha site has been assessed as having the capacity to mitigate the impact of 462 new dwellings. The council monitors permissions issued and developments commenced, and will use this work to ensure that no permissions are issued in excess of the mitigation capacity of Allen's Field. Provided that capacity remains, the Allen's Field SANG can be used to mitigate the impact of any residential development proposal within 2 km of its boundary, and also proposals for a net increase of fewer than 10 dwellings within 5 km of the SPA anywhere in the borough. The following diagram indicates the location of the SPA's 5 km zone of influence and 400 m exclusion zone, the Allen's Field SANG and its 2 km catchment area.

- Figure to show the SPA Zone of Influence

15.6.2 Future levels of housing development expected in the area of influence of the SPA will require appropriate mitigation and it is likely that new SANG land will need to be identified in the future. The Council will work with partner organisations to deliver an appropriate level of SANG mitigation to mitigate the impact of new development. Land identified on the Policies Map is allocated as an extension to Allen's Field. This will increase its mitigation capacity and catchment area. Where large developments are proposed, bespoke SANG mitigation may be necessary. Applicants should engage positively with Natural England to discuss appropriate mitigation, in light of the particular location and characteristics of the development proposed. Measures proposed will be assessed on their own merits through the Habitats Regulations process. The mitigation measures adopted should be agreed with both the council and Natural England, and secured by legal agreement.

15.7 Mitigation and SAMM

15.7.1 Access management is delivered in the form of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring project (SAMM). This project is provided at a strategic level, to ensure a consistent approach is used across the SPA and that improvements to one site do not have an adverse impact on others. It delivers a suite of measures to monitor use of the SPA and manage access through a combination of education, surveys and physical works. To ensure appropriate provision for SAMM, contributions from development proposals across all authorities affected by the SPA are collected and pooled. Natural England is currently responsible for delivering the project across all relevant areas.

15.7.2 The Borough has produced a Supplementary Planning dDocument on the application of mitigation measures within the borough. This guidance will be revised and updated after adoption of the Borough Local Plan.

15.8 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

15.8.1 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area is a European designated site which is accorded priority protection and conservation by the Borough Council.

Natural Environment

15.9 BLP 52 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Policy BLP 10

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

1. New residential development which is likely to have significant effects on its purpose and integrity will be required to demonstrate that adequate mitigation measures are put in place to avoid any potential adverse effects. The measures will have to be agreed with Natural England who will help take a strategic approach to the management of the SPA.

3. The Borough will take a precautionary approach to the protection and conservation of the SPA and development will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that this will not give rise to significant adverse effects upon the integrity of the SPA.

4. The Borough will ensure that no sites are allocated or granted planning permission for a net increase in residential development within the 400 metres exclusion zone of the Thames Basin Heath SPA because the impacts of such development on the SPA cannot be fully mitigated. New residential development beyond 400m threshold but within 5 kilometres linear distance of the SPA boundary will be required to make an appropriate contribution towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

6. Development proposals between 5 – 7 km linear distance from the SPA boundary, for 50 or more residential units, will be assessed on an individual basis to ascertain whether the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the SPA. This assessment will involve a screening of the likely significant effects of the development and, where the screening suggests it is necessary, an Appropriate Assessment. Where a significant adverse impact is identified then mitigation measures will be required to be delivered prior to occupation and implemented in perpetuity.

7. Future levels of housing development expected in the area of influence of the SPA will require appropriate mitigation and it is likely that new SANG land will need to be identified in the future. The Borough will work with partner organisations to deliver an appropriate level of SANG mitigation to mitigate the impact of new development.

8. The following sites are defined on the Policies Map and allocated as SANG:

- a. Land South of Allen's Field
- b. Land east of Allen's Field
- c. Land at Heatherwood Hospital and Sunningdale Park

9. An applicant may wish to provide SANG as part of development. Where that is the case, all relevant standards including standards recommended by Natural England should be met and a contribution will have to be made towards SAMM. Access management measures will be provided strategically through cooperation between local authorities.

10. A minimum of 8 hectares of SANG land (after discounting to account for current access and capacity) should be provided per 1,000 new occupants.

11. A site, as defined on the Policies Map, is allocated at Allen's Field as an extension to existing SANG provision.

15.10 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

15.10.1 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are an essential component of the Borough's natural and built environment and make a major contribution to its green character. They bring considerable environmental, social and economic benefits, providing amenity value and benefits beyond contributing to the character and

Natural Environment

identity of varied landscapes. They can help mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve air quality, reduce wind speeds, enhance biodiversity and help prevent flash floods. They play a major role in shaping the Borough's environment and people's appreciation of it.

15.10.2 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows have an important contribution to make towards protecting and enhancing the quality of the townscape, and achieving the highest quality of urban design. Similarly, trees and hedgerows in the urban fringe contribute significantly to landscape, historic, biodiversity and recreational values. They are an integral feature of landscapes and rural settings across the borough, helping to achieve the objective of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the Borough's built and natural environment. Their loss either individually or cumulatively can have a significant impact on the character and amenity of an area.

15.10.3 A number of trees and woodlands in the Borough are designated for their amenity or landscape value, and have 'Tree Preservation Orders' or are afforded protection if within Conservation Areas. Similarly, countryside hedgerows considered important for their landscape, historical or wildlife value may be protected against removal within the scope of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The retention of existing trees on a development site can help to soften the impact of new buildings and structures, as well as provide enhanced amenity and reduce the impact of vehicles in terms of noise and pollution. Trees and hedgerows, both new and existing, make an important contribution to the townscape of the Borough.

Natural Environment

15.11 BLP 53 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Policy BLP 11

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

1. Development proposals should seek to maximise opportunities for creation, restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats as an integral part of proposals in accordance with the Tree and Woodland Strategy for the Borough.
2. Development proposals should carefully consider the individual and cumulative impact of proposed development on existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, including those that make a particular contribution to local character, appearance of the streetscape and distinctiveness. This may include but is not limited to aged or veteran trees and landmark trees and, in particular, Ancient Woodland.
3. Development proposals should:
 - a. Protect and retain trees, woodlands and hedgerows;
 - b. Where harm to trees, woodland or hedgerows and their habitat is unavoidable, provide appropriate mitigation measures that will enhance or recreate habitats and new features; and
 - c. Plant new trees, woodlands and hedgerows or extend existing coverage where possible.
4. Where trees, hedgerows or woodland are present on site or within influencing distance of the site, or where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species, applications will need to be accompanied by an appropriate survey, constraints plan, impact or ecological assessment by professional consultants. Proposals will need to assess and demonstrate how they are sensitive to, and make provision for the needs of protected species. Tree surveys and tree constraint plans should be compliant with British Standard 5837 or successive standards
5. Development proposals should include detailed planting proposals. Applicants should provide indicative planting schemes at the point of submitting a planning application and should allow adequate space for existing and new trees to grow so as to avoid future nuisance.
6. Since unsuitable species, such as Leyland Cypress, may have an anti-social effect in the future, it is expected that planting schemes will carefully consider the selection of species, planting native species where possible.

15.12 Open Space

15.12.1 Open space is an important feature of the Borough. In addition to public open space there are large areas of privately owned open space that residents and visitors can enjoy, including National Trust land around Pinkneys Green and Crown Land in Windsor Great Park. Both public and private open spaces underpin people's quality of life and well-being, providing green 'lungs' in urban areas and forming an essential part of creating sustainable and healthy communities. It is important that local residents have access to open spaces, including outdoor sports and leisure facilities, near to their homes. The NPPF protects existing open space through Paragraph 74.

15.12.2 National planning guidance states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The NPPF defines as all open space of public value which offers important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity (NPPF, annex 2).

15.12.3 The Borough Council's Open Space Study states that there is a need to provide a balance of different types of open space in order to meet local needs, and that the provision of open spaces and recreation (including outdoor sports facilities) is key to a sustainable and thriving community. The Royal Borough has an extensive green network, with open space forming an intrinsic feature and characteristic of urban areas. Overall the Royal

Natural Environment

Borough has an under provision of open space against recommended local standards. It is therefore important to protect and where appropriate increase provision in the future, particularly to meet the future needs associated with new development.

Natural Environment

15.13 BLP 54 Open Space

Policy BLP 54

Open Space

1. The Borough considers the retention of existing areas of open space to be of great importance and attaches a high priority to protecting them from development
2. The Borough will seek to protect, maintain, and where possible enhance existing open space in the borough to increase capacity and make open space more usable, attractive and accessible. Improvements to the quality of open space will be encouraged. The Borough will support development proposals that create new open space.
5. The Borough will require new open space, provided through CIL as infrastructure to meet the recommended local standards for the relevant type of open space proposed in line with the most up-to-date requirements, which are contained within the Open Space Strategy.
3. The Borough will encourage communities to identify other important local open spaces by designating them as Local Green Space in their neighbourhood plans. The Poundfield, Cookham, as defined on the Policies Map is designated as Local Green Space.
4. The Borough will only support proposals that result in the loss of open space or harm to its use, function or enjoyment by the public where it can be demonstrated that
 - a. There is no longer a need for open space in the vicinity of the site; or
 - b. Alternative open space of equal or better standard in terms of function, quantity and quality will be provided in an accessible location in accordance with accessibility standards; or
 - c. New or improved indoor/ outdoor recreation or sporting facilities are being provided that outweigh the harm resulting from the loss; or
 - d. Where only a partial loss is proposed, the character, quality and function of the open space will be maintained.
9. Development proposals to increase access to natural open space should be subject to evaluation of the impact of visitor numbers.
7. Provision of new or additional outdoor sports facilities should be in conformity with the Borough's Playing Pitch Strategy.
10. The Borough will support proposals to improve the capacity and multi-functionality of open space to provide activity spaces, e.g. teenscene facilities, or playing pitches. Improvements in the quality and quantity of playing pitch provision will be sought where they are identified as necessary in the Playing Pitch Strategy.
11. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that where provision of an alternative open space is deemed appropriate as part of development proposals, it is provided in a close by suitable location which is flexible in meeting the needs of community and lends itself to a greater range of functional uses required in that area. Open space will be required to be delivered in perpetuity. A "close by" location is defined in accordance with the accessibility criteria in Appendix D.
12. There may be occasions where a small scale development is proposed which is complementary or ancillary to the function of existing open space, and which would not prejudice the function of the open space. Possible examples of such ancillary or complementary structures could include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation. Such development proposals will be supported by the Royal Borough

15.14 Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

15.14.1 The Borough has a network of over 300km of public rights of way, which currently provides for recreational use as well as routes for journeys to work and school. The Borough supports Safer Routes to School which promotes walking and cycling to school. Access to the public rights of way and cycle networks in the borough make a significant contribution's to people's health and well being and sense of place. Access to these networks also contributes to the Plan's objective of helping to ensure a high quality of life for residents of all ages. Access - for all - to a network of public rights of way and opportunities for recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities as recognised in the NPPF.

15.14.2 The Borough Council's "Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2026" (ROWMIP) identifies ways to improve access on public rights of way for all, especially those with visual and mobility impairments, walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with pushchairs.

Natural Environment

15.15 BLP 55 Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

Policy BLP 55

Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

1. Development proposals will be supported provided that they protect and safeguard the existing rights of way network and do not adversely affect the recreational/amenity value of the existing rights of way network. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they:
 - a. Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways; and
 - b. Promote the integration of the development with any adjoining public open space or countryside.
 - c. Promote accessible and attractive cycle routes through the site and connecting the site to local schools, shops, stations and other community facilities, and
 - d. Are consistent with the Royal Boroughs' Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016 – 2026
2. Development proposals should, wherever possible, aim to realign the route of the Green Way to follow watercourses. Development proposals should also, wherever feasible, take the opportunity to realign the Thames National Trail to ensure it follows the river.
3. The Borough will continue to explore opportunities to add to and enhance the existing National Cycle Network and to improve connections to it from local communities. Working with Sustrans and neighbouring local authorities, the Borough will continue to develop a new route linking Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell, Ascot and Windsor to be designated as NCN422.
4. The Borough wishes to protect, maintain, improve and enhance existing paths. New links are encouraged where they are needed as set out in the ROWMIP 2016-26 and the annual Milestones Statements (RBWM Milestones Statement and Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan Annual Reviews).
5. The Borough Council will assess the potential for improving public access and recreation in individual situations against any detrimental impact which may be caused. Any initiatives to improve public access to the countryside identified in neighbourhood plans will specifically be encouraged
6. Where appropriate the Borough will encourage the following initiatives:
 - a. Improvements to the existing public rights of way network including improving accessibility for disabled or elderly people and families with pushchairs;
 - b. Creation of new rights of way and cycle routes;
 - c. Access agreements with local landowners to enable public access to suitable areas for informal recreation like woodland, meadows or riverside areas;
 - d. Management of existing facilities; and
 - e. Improvement of public transport links to the countryside.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure

16.1 Context

16.1.1 The timely provision of suitable and appropriate infrastructure is crucial to the well being of the Borough's resident population, those who visit the Borough, those who provide services and those who invest and work in the Royal Borough. Infrastructure has not always historically kept pace with development and there are some parts of the Royal Borough where infrastructure demands are currently near to or at full capacity.

16.1.2 Infrastructure is a very broad term. For the purposes of the Borough Local Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy, (CIL) infrastructure specifically includes transport schemes, schools, health and social care facilities, parks, green spaces and leisure facilities that are required to ensure that the Borough grows sustainably.

16.2 Infrastructure Delivery Plan

16.2.1 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that supports the Borough Local Plan defines critical, essential and desirable social and community; health; community and public services; highways and transportation; utilities; and open space and environmental improvements infrastructure that is required.

16.3 Community Facilities

16.3.1 Community facilities contribute to sustainable development by providing venues and services for a wide range of activities. Such facilities make a significant contribution to the well being of residents and they enhance the sustainability of communities ensuring a high quality of life for all residents. In the Royal Borough community facilities include local shops, meeting places, indoor sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses, places of worship, health care facilities, leisure centres, libraries, day care centres and post offices.

16.3.2 Community facilities can now be registered as an Asset of Community Value which affords additional protection particularly in respect of the retention of such facilities.

16.4 BLP 56 Community Facilities

Policy BLP 56

Community Facilities

1. Proposals for new or improved community facilities which meet the needs or aspirations of local residents and visitors will be supported. Where an assessment identifies specific needs in the local area, proposals to meet that local need will be supported when they are located in areas that are accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.

2. The Borough wishes to see existing community facilities retained, improved and enhanced. They must be able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable in order to make it possible for them to remain in use. Some facilities, such as local shops and public houses are also commercial concerns. The Borough strongly supports retaining these facilities where they can raise the quality of community life and help promote thriving, inclusive and sustainable communities. Applications for change of use or redevelopment will therefore be resisted, unless evidence can be provided to show that the facility is not needed, not economically viable and is no longer required to meet the needs of the local community.

3. Where a new community facility is proposed (including stand-alone new facilities, facilities provided as part of a mixed-use development or conversions), it should be in an accessible location and designed to maximise use by local communities. Proposals for new community facilities should demonstrate that there is a specific need for the facility in the local area. An assessment should be provided, and use may be made of existing evidence provided by the Borough such as the Indoor Sports Facility Strategy.

4. Planning permission for development leading to the loss of an existing community facility will be granted, where it can be demonstrated that

a. There is no longer a demand for the facility within the area and that the premises have been marketed for a reasonable period of time;

b. The proposed development would provide a beneficial facility to the local community; and

c. There is provision for new or replacement facilities to meet an identified need in locations which are well related and easily accessible to the settlement or local community.

5. The Borough has a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. Any loss of school facilities will only be acceptable where the loss would not result in any constraints on school place provision over the plan period from 2013 to 2032.

6. When a proposal will involve the loss of social and community facilities which are not being replaced, applicants will be required to provide evidence that they have consulted with an appropriate range of service providers and the community, to prove that there is no need for or requirement for the facility from any other service provider for an alternative social or community facility that could be met through change of use or redevelopment. In addition applicants are expected to provide evidence that:

a. There is no significant local support for its retention;

b. There are alternative premises within easy walking distance;

c. Any such alternative premises offer similar facilities and a similar community environment to the facility which is the subject of the application.

7. Loss of an indoor or outdoor sports facility would only be acceptable where an assessment of current and future needs has demonstrated that there is an excess of provision in the catchment, and the site has no special significance to the interests of sport.

8. Continuous marketing evidence will be required, for a period of at least 12 months, demonstrating lack of demand for the community facility. Appendix 2 sets out the evidence to be provided in relation to marketing and viability for community facilities.

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16.5 New sports and leisure development at Braywick Park

16.5.1 The Magnet Leisure Centre on St Cloud Way in Maidenhead Town Centre was opened in 1975, and is therefore over 40 years old. It currently provides indoor swimming and other leisure facilities but due to its age, general condition and inability to meet current accessibility requirements, it is no longer considered to meet current standards or to be capable of being made fit for purpose in its current format. Current research has also indicated that, given the growth in population expected over the plan period and the associated step change in the pace of development, there is a need for a replacement facility to provide for the needs of the Borough.

16.5.2 A number of development options were considered by the Borough's consultants. It is anticipated that at least 2 hectares will be required for a new built leisure facility and associated car parking. The first location that was considered was redevelopment of the existing site, but even with the addition of the adjacent ten pin bowling site this site was considered to be too small to accommodate a new leisure centre that met current standards and was also considered to be too constrained by neighbouring uses. It is therefore necessary for the Borough Local Plan to allocate a new site capable of accommodating development in a sustainable location.

16.5.3 A sequential site assessment was undertaken by the Borough's consultants. This sequential test was based on a policy approach that was compliant with the requirements of the NPPF. The sequential assessment considered strategic issues such as other planned development prescribed as part of the overarching Spatial Strategy of the Borough Local Plan. The sequential assessment also drew on other parts of the evidence base that supports the Borough Local Plan such as the Edge of Settlement Study.

16.5.4 The sequential assessment concluded that a site at Braywick Park currently occupied by the Golf Driving Range was the most sequentially preferable site which is available, suitable and deliverable for the provision of a new leisure centre and associated indoor and outdoor sporting facilities.

16.5.5 The existing preferable site at Braywick Park is in the Green Belt and forms part of the open space provision in the Borough. The NPPF would consider the provision of a new leisure centre in this location 'Inappropriate development.' In order to remove this site from the Green Belt and allocate it for development Paragraph 83 the NPPF requires a case of 'Exceptional Circumstances' to be established.

16.5.6 There are a number of issues that are considered to comprise such 'Exceptional Circumstances' to allow for the de-designation of the site at Braywick Park:

Statement 1**Exceptional Circumstances to support allocation at Braywick Park**

- a. There is an evidence base of objectively assessed needs (OAN) for a new leisure centre to meet Maidenhead's current and future needs;
- b. A sequential site assessment demonstrates that there are no sequentially preferable sites which are appropriate, suitable or viable alternatives;
- c. Braywick Park golf driving range is within the Borough Council's ownership, and subject to planning, capable of delivery well within five years and before the existing centre is decommissioned ;
- d. Relocation of the Magnet would free up the existing site on Saint-Cloud Way. This would deliver in the order of 500 new homes within the first five years of the BLP, which would make a significant contribution to the Borough's housing targets and five year housing land supply;
- e. Housing development at Saint-Cloud Way would be a sustainable pattern of development, in accord with the BLP strategy to deliver additional new homes within Maidenhead town centre;
- f. Location of a new indoor leisure facility at Braywick golf driving range would generate significant synergies with the range of outdoor sports facilities at Braywick Park, creating a sports and leisure hub with centres of excellence for able and disabled users;
- g. Braywick Park is a short walking distance from Maidenhead town centre, is accessible by public transport, and a highly prominent and accessible location;
- h. The sports and leisure hub would be immediately opposite the proposed Strategic Location for Growth for up to 2000 new homes on the site of the current Maidenhead Golf club and land to the south of the Golf Club.
- i. The Edge of Settlement Analysis demonstrates that the green belt at this point makes only a moderate contribution to preventing settlements from merging and a limited contribution to other green belt aims;
- j. The Council as owner and funder of the new leisure centre would ensure a high quality design response; and
- k. Loss of existing open space would be justified in accord with NPPF Paragraph 74, namely that the open space would be replaced by development for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

16.6 BLP57 New sports and Leisure Development at Braywick Park**Policy BLP 57****New sports and leisure development at Braywick Park**

1. The site of the former Golf Driving Range at Braywick Park, as defined on the Policies Map is allocated for the provision of a new leisure centre and associated indoor and outdoor sports facilities to include parking and associated infrastructure. The prescribed mix of uses is set out on the Site Proforma in Appendix F. The new facilities will be operational before the current Magnet Leisure Centre is decommissioned.

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16.7 Sustainable Transport

16.7.1 One of the key principles of sustainable development is to reduce the need to travel in the 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. The interface between the location of new development and the provision of sustainable modes of transport is therefore the key to achieving this. Accordingly, the Borough Local Plan seeks to locate new development close to offices, shops and local services and facilities and provide access to safe, convenient and sustainable modes of transport. This ties in with national guidance on transport which is contained within the NPPF. One of the core planning principles is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are most sustainable.

16.7.2 Transport networks in the Borough are under pressure, giving rise to a number of issues affecting local residents and businesses, including:

- Congestion on strategic road and rail networks during peak travel times; at peak hour on local roads, particularly in urban areas; and associated with tourist attractions and major events;
- Poor air quality linked to traffic emissions, with Air Quality Management Areas declared for parts of Maidenhead, Windsor, and Holyport;
- Traffic noise issues, with around 30 areas identified from initial modelling as potentially having actionable noise levels;
- Perceived road safety risks, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- A higher than average level of car ownership and per capita contribution to carbon emissions.

16.7.3 16.20 The Borough enjoys enviable levels of connectivity to London and to key regional and national destinations via the strategic road and rail networks. The M4 runs east-west through the middle of the Borough, serving Windsor (via Junction 6) and Maidenhead (via Junctions 8/9), while the M3, M25 and M40 are all within easy reach. The Borough also benefits from having 10 rail stations, served by a combination of main line and branch lines services. Maidenhead is on the Great Western Main Line, which connects London Paddington with South West England and Wales, incorporating branch lines to Marlow and to Windsor and Eton Central. Windsor and Eton Riverside is the western terminus for services from London Waterloo, while Ascot lies on the junction of the Waterloo to Reading and the Ascot to Guildford lines. The Borough is also in close proximity to Heathrow Airport, the UK's primary international airport, providing connections to 180 destinations in 90 countries.

- Insert figure to show Transport Links

16.7.4 Excellent connectivity coupled with the Borough's pleasant natural and historic setting makes the Thames Valley an attractive place to live, work and visit, and has helped to fuel historically high economic, population and visitor growth across the sub-region. It has also helped to create a highly mobile population.

16.7.5 Transport issues by their nature do not respect local authority boundaries. The Thames Valley is a relatively densely populated area with numerous towns and villages, leading to high numbers of inter-urban trips for a wide range of journey purposes. The strategic road and rail corridors running through the Borough carry large numbers of through movements as well as catering for more local trips. The Borough is working with neighbouring local authorities, through the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Transport Body, to study and address sub-regional issues. The Borough recognises the need to improve rail access to Heathrow Airport from the west and south to encourage more sustainable travel patterns to and from this hub airport and relieve pressure on local and strategic road networks. The Borough endorses the proposed Western Rail Access to Heathrow rail link, which will reduce journey time from Windsor to the Airport by 30 minutes.

16.7.6 Crossrail is a new east-west railway providing direct links to and through Central London, which will serve to reduce journey times from Maidenhead. . With the planned electrification to the Great Western Main Line and the arrival of Crossrail, Maidenhead station will see significant investment in the future facilitated through the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Railway Station Opportunity Area. Crossrail is due to be delivered by 2019.

16.8 BLP58 Sustainable Transport

Policy BLP 12

Sustainable Transport

1. The Borough will work in partnership with service providers, developers, public transport operators and neighbouring local transport authorities to improve access for residents, businesses and visitors to key services and facilities within and around the Borough.
2. The Borough will support development proposals that are consistent with the objectives of this policy and the objectives of the Transport Strategy as set out in the Local Transport Plan.
3. The Borough will develop and implement revised parking standards. Transport and parking proposals including any varied parking standards set out in Neighbourhood Plans that have been made will also be supported.
3. The Borough will seek to locate new development close to offices and employment, shops and local services and facilities and provide safe, convenient and sustainable modes of transport. The Borough will support development proposals that help to create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists and improve access by public transport.
4. The Borough will expect development proposals to show how they have met the following criteria where appropriate:
 - a. Be located to minimise the distance people travel and the number of vehicle trips generated;
 - b. Secure measures that minimise and manage demand for travel and parking;
 - c. Be designed to improve accessibility by public transport;
 - d. Be designed to improve pedestrian and cyclist access to and through the Borough's centres, suburbs and rural hinterland;
 - e. Facilitate better integration and interchange between transport modes particularly for Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot town centres and railway stations;
 - f. Optimise traffic flows and circulation to minimise negative environmental impacts of travel including congestion, air pollution and noise;
 - g. Provide car and cycle parking in accordance with the current Parking Strategy, including disabled parking spaces, motorcycle parking and cycle parking as well as provision of electric vehicle charging points where appropriate.
5. The Borough will require Transport Assessments/Statements and Travel Plans to be prepared and submitted alongside development proposals, including residential schemes, in accordance with Department for Transport guidance and local authority requirements. Appropriate provision for public transport services and infrastructure will also be required to be provided. Any development proposals for new or additional school provision should be accompanied by a Travel Plan.
6. A Parking Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this Policy should be implemented.

16.9 The Local Economic Partnership

16.9.1 M4 corridor capacity improvements have been identified by the Local Economic Partnership and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Transport Body as a priority for sub-regional transport investment. Planned economic and housing growth across the Thames Valley will place an additional burden on local infrastructure and on transport networks in particular. This will bring new challenges in the planning, management and

Infrastructure

maintenance of local transport networks. The Borough will respond to these challenges, providing a framework within which transport improvements will take place to minimise the negative economic, social and environmental impacts of travel.

16.10 Local Transport Plan

16.10.1 The Council's transport policy is currently set out in the Local Transport Plan – a long term strategy covering all forms of transport in the borough. It has five overarching aims, which reflect both local priorities and Central Government's over-arching principles which are reflected in BLP56 above:

- a. To improve access to everyday services and facilities for everyone
- b. To improve road safety and personal security for all transport users
- c. To support sustainable economic growth
- d. To improve quality of life and minimise the social, health and environmental impacts of transport
- e. To mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change

16.10.2 BLP56 seeks to optimise accessibility, particularly to and within the Royal Borough's centres by ensuring that all transport infrastructure is well designed, safe and accessible; and promoting better integration of public transport facilities with a particular focus on improving public transport connections. The Borough will assess development proposals in accordance with the Borough's Highway Design Guide. The Borough is seeking to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts by establishing a clear and legible hierarchy of movement and access across the borough's centres; prioritising pedestrian and cyclist accessibility; eliminating unnecessary vehicular movements through multi-trips; strengthening existing links to and within the Borough's centres with the rural hinterland and creating new links where necessary.

16.10.3 In terms of car parking, development proposals should incorporate appropriate and effective parking provision and vehicle servicing arrangements consistent with the Borough's Parking Strategy. This, and any subsequent update, will be used to negotiate the number of parking spaces which are provided. This should be read in conjunction with any locally specific parking standards included in Neighbourhood Plans. A Parking Supplementary Planning Document will be produced, which will include parking standards to aid the implementation of BLP56.

16.11 Developer Contributions

16.11.1 In order to provide new and improved infrastructure to support planned growth, it will be necessary for the Borough to coordinate funding and delivery from individual developments. Development proposals should mitigate their own impact on the Borough's infrastructure. Infrastructure may be secured via a number of mechanisms as appropriate to the circumstances. These may include Planning Obligations, Community Infrastructure Levy, or conditions attached to the grant of planning permission. The Borough will update the Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions SPD to provide further illustration of how this policy should be implemented.

16.12 BLP 59 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Policy BLP 59

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

1. The Borough will work in partnership with infrastructure service providers and developers to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support development is delivered in a timely manner to meet the needs of the community arising from the development. In some cases it may be necessary for the infrastructure to be provided in advance of the development commencing. Development may be phased to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure that has been identified as necessary to serve the development. The Royal Borough will consider individual cases on their merits.
2. The Borough will support development proposals that deliver infrastructure to support the overall spatial strategy of the Borough.(Policy BLP1 refers.)
3. The Borough will:
 - a. Continue to work through the Infrastructure Reference Group to monitor and coordinate the provision of infrastructure;
 - b. Annually review and report to Cabinet on the infrastructure schedule that forms part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
 - c. Collect financial contributions from developers through CIL to support improvements to infrastructure provision arising from new development;
 - d. Ensure that new developments provide the necessary infrastructure on site required to make the development acceptable;
 - e. Ensure that new development contributes towards the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) in accordance with the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy as updated.
4. The Borough is intending to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the collection of developer contributions. Alongside CIL, developer contributions will continue to be gathered in accordance with the regulations governing Section 106 contributions. Planning Obligations will continue, where appropriate, to be the basis to secure developer contributions or specific physical works to mitigate the impact of new development.
5. The Borough will consider cases made by applicants subject to a requirement for a financial viability appraisal if it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing being sought will threaten the viability of the development proposal.
6. The Borough will resist the loss of existing infrastructure unless a suitable alternative can be provided or it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure is no longer required to meet the needs of the community. The Royal Borough will expect development proposals to demonstrate that consultation with an appropriate range of service providers and the community has taken place.
6. The Borough will produce a CIL/Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document to provide detailed guidance on securing appropriate contributions towards elements of infrastructure.

16.13 Telecommunications

16.13.1 Convenient access to modern technology plays a central part in borough residents' lives. Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential to support sustainable economic growth and enables many aspects of modern life including flexible working patterns and home working. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also play a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services, particularly in rural areas. Rural communities and small businesses benefit particularly from enhanced broadband coverage. This has a number of benefits including support for the local economy, greater social inclusion, and reduced pressure on the environment by reducing the need to travel.

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16.13.2 The Superfast Berkshire project aims to improve broadband speeds and coverage across Berkshire in those areas not covered by commercial broadband rollout. The project's intention is to implement sustainable, future-proof improvements in broadband infrastructure. It was scheduled to deliver superfast broadband coverage (greater than 24Mbps) to 92.3% of the county by the end of 2015, and has signed contracts to extend superfast coverage to 95.6% by the end of 2017. The project aims to ensure all remaining Berkshire premises can access basic broadband at speeds of at least 2Mbps.

16.14 BLP 60 Telecommunications

Policy BLP 60

Telecommunications

1. The Borough supports the expansion of electronic communications networks and the provision of suitable infrastructure to achieve this, subject to appropriate safeguards relating to the impact of the infrastructure. Development proposals that would result in improvements to telecommunications networks will be supported, provided environmental impacts are minimised.
2. Development proposals for telecommunications equipment that require planning permission will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:
 - a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures should seek to minimise harm to the visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - b. Proposed apparatus and associated structures on buildings should be sited and designed in order to seek to minimise harm to the external appearance of the host building;
 - c. Proposals for new masts should demonstrate that the applicant has explored the possibility of erecting apparatus in existing locations in the following sequence: (i) sharing existing masts and other structures, (ii) on existing buildings, (iii) on sites currently used for telecommunications infrastructure. Such evidence should accompany any planning application for new masts and should show clearly why sequentially preferable options have been discounted; and
 - d. Development proposals should not cause unacceptable harm to areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historical interest.

16.15 Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

16.15.1 Sustainable management of natural resources is important in the borough. Located in the south east of England, the borough is in one of the driest parts of the country. Alongside this it experiences a high level of demand for water. In some areas the demand is close to exceeding the available supply and the balance between the two can be very sensitive. The provision of water and waste water / sewerage infrastructure is an essential element of any new development. The Borough has worked with partners to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that examines current infrastructure provision in the Borough and the changes made necessary by planned developments. Climate change is leading to more unpredictable weather patterns and this in turn affects the availability of water, so care must be taken to ensure that sufficient supplies and infrastructure are available to service any new developments.

16.15.2 There is a demonstrable need for new water resource schemes in parts of south east England, and increased demand management to cater for water supply needs of current and future development and the protection of the environment. Should the water or sewerage undertakers or the Environment Agency identify sites that are required to deliver necessary water or sewerage infrastructure, these should be safeguarded through the planning process. Thames Water is currently the statutory sewerage undertaker for the whole borough and also the statutory water undertaker for part of the borough. Remaining parts of the borough are currently supplied with water by Affinity Water (formerly Veolia) and South East Water.

16.16 BLP 61 Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

Policy BLP 61

Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

1. The Borough will only support development proposals that demonstrate that adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure capacity exists both on and off site to serve the development and that the development would not lead to problems for existing users. Where such evidence is not available or the potential impacts are unclear the Borough will expect developers to carry out appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development would lead to overloading of existing water and sewerage infrastructure.
2. Specific development proposals may require further study into their particular impacts and if the study identifies that the water or sewerage network would be unable to support demand arising from a development proposal and if no improvements are programmed by the water or sewerage company, the developer will need to contact the company to agree what improvements are needed and how they will be funded prior to occupation of the development.
3. The Borough will expect that where works that are required to secure water supply and sewerage provision to a development proposal, such works will be secured either by a planning condition or other mechanism as appropriate.
4. The Borough will support new water resource schemes, improvements to the water supply network, demand management measures needed to meet current and future water supply needs and those needed to meet the challenges of climate change and environmental protection. Sites that are identified by water or sewerage undertakers or the Environment Agency as being required to deliver necessary water or sewerage infrastructure will be allocated or safeguarded as appropriate.
5. The Borough will expect all development proposals to include water efficiency measures aimed at reducing overall water consumption to reduce the pressure that a proposal will have on existing infrastructure.
6. The Borough will work with the Environment Agency and other partners that provide water and sewerage services across the Borough over the plan period to identify infrastructure needs and to ensure that adequate water supply and sewerage capacity is provided in a timely manner to meet planned demand.

16.17 Impact of Development

16.17.1 To ensure that sufficient water supplies and sewerage infrastructure are available to service any new developments, it will be necessary to examine existing provision and the impact that a development proposal is likely to have on capacity and water pressure. The major statutory undertaker in the borough has provided information on the capacity of existing sewerage and water infrastructure to accommodate new development, and this has informed preparation of the plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

16.17.2 Water companies' investment programmes are based on a 5 year cycle known as the Asset Management Plan (AMP) process, which in turn is informed on a strategic level by Water Resources Management Plans. In these plans, water companies forecast the available supply for water and likely supply over a 25 year period. If the forecast shows a deficit, then the plan sets out a range of demand management and new water supply options to meet that shortfall.

Infrastructure

Monitoring and implementation

Monitoring and implementation

17.0.1 Policies in the Borough Local Plan have been designed to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth and development across the Borough over the plan period. The Borough Local Plan aims to protect the environment and heritage assets of the Borough and at the same time make appropriate provision for the identified level of need.

17.0.2 A robust monitoring framework is essential in order to ensure that the Borough Local Plan delivers the right quantum of development, in the right location, at the right time and accompanied by the right infrastructure whilst also protecting the historic and natural environment. The Borough Council has sought to mitigate any risks to delivery of the overall spatial strategy and the policies that aim to deliver that strategy and provide for sustainable development. The Council will use the results of monitoring to understand how well the Borough Local Plan is performing in terms of delivery sustainable development and protecting and enhancing the environment and assets within it, and also to indicate whether a review of the Borough Local Plan is necessary.

17.0.3 The delivery of necessary infrastructure to support the level of growth and development prescribed by the Borough Local Plan is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It is extremely important to ensure that the identified infrastructure requirements are delivered. This will be robustly monitored to ensure that the Borough Local Plan is able to support the delivery of development to meet identified needs. Given that the Spatial Strategy of the Borough Local Plan and the supporting policies indicate a step change in the pace of growth and development, careful review of monitoring and implementation indicators will be published in the Monitoring Report and updated on an annual basis.

Monitoring Indicator 1: Housing Delivery

Indicator: Actual housing delivery (dwellings completed) compared to the housing trajectory.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP8, BLP9, BLP12, BLP13, BLP14, BLP15, BLP16, BLP18, BLP19, BLP20, BLP21, BLP22, BLP23, BLP24, and Appendix F

Targets:

Number of dwellings completed			
2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2032
tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Retain a 5 year housing land supply through the plan period			
Production of a Housing SPD in accordance with May 2016 Local Development Scheme			

Table 7

Monitoring Indicator 2: Community Led Development

Indicator: Amount of development delivered by made Neighbourhood Plans

Related Policies: BLP2, BLP3, BLP12, BLP13, BLP14, BLP15, BLP16, BLP17, BLP18, BLP19, BLP20, BLP26, BLP33, BLP35, BLP54

Targets:

Number of development proposals determined arising from Neighbourhood Plans as a % of all applications
Amount of floor space delivered arising from development proposals in Neighbourhood Plans
Number of Planning Applications determined using Neighbourhood Plan policies as reasons for refusal

Monitoring and implementation

Number of development proposals determined arising from Neighbourhood Plans as a % of all applications

Number of Appeals determined and or dismissed on basis of Neighbourhood Plan policies and allocations

Table 8

Monitoring Indicator 3: Green Belt

Indicator: Amount of development allowed on Green Belt sites.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP6, BLP7, BLP8, BLP9, BLP10, BLP11, BLP26

Targets:

Development Proposals on Green Belt sites

Number of dwellings and amount of other development allowed on Green Belt sites contrary to the development plan

Number of Applications determined on Green Belt sites as a % of all applications

Number of Appeals dismissed on Green Belt reasons as a % of all appeals on Green Belt Sites

Table 9

Monitoring Indicator 4: Affordable Housing Delivery

Indicator: Affordable housing delivered as a percentage of total dwellings delivered; affordable housing permitted as a percentage of total dwellings permitted, rural exception site affordable housing delivered as a percentage of total dwellings delivered, number of Gypsy and Traveller Pitches delivered as affordable housing

Related Policies: BLP12, BLP13, BLP14, BLP15, BLP16, and BLP17.

Targets:

Number of affordable dwellings delivered as a % of total dwellings delivered

2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2032
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Number of affordable dwellings delivered as a % of total dwellings delivered

2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2032
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Number of rural exception site affordable dwellings delivered as a % of total dwellings delivered

2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2032
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Number of units in different tenures delivered in accordance with identified housing mix in the SHMA

Production of Housing SPD in accordance with May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Table 10

Monitoring Indicator 5: Housing Density

Indicator: Densities achieved on allocated sites compared with densities prescribed on site proformas.

Related Policies: BLP12, BLP13, BLP19, BLP20, BLP24, Appendix F Site Proformas.

Targets:

Monitoring and implementation

Housing densities achieved
Delivery of number of units on allocated sites at levels indicated on site proformas Appendix F
Production of Housing SPD in accordance with May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Table 11

Monitoring Indicator 6: Quality of Place and Design

Indicator: Delivery of development in accordance with principles of sustainable design, construction and development; number of major schemes taking part in the formal pre-application advice service as a % of all major schemes determined; number of major schemes undergoing review by Design Panels as % of all major schemes determined

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP3, BLP4, BLP5, BLP13, BLP26, BLP55

Targets:

Principles of sustainable design, construction and development
Delivery of allocated sites in accordance with principles
Major schemes taking part in formal pre-application advice service as % of all major schemes determined
Major schemes undergoing Design Panel Review as % of all major schemes determined
Production of Borough Wide Design Guide in accordance with the May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Table 12

Monitoring Indicator 7: Economic Development

Indicator: Delivery of sustainable economic and provision of floor space in accordance with the Borough Local Plan; amount of employment floor space lost to economic uses.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP25, BLP26, BLP27, and BLP26.

Targets:

Provision for sustainable economic development
Amount of employment floor space delivered in accordance with BLP26
Amount of employment floor space lost to economic uses

Table 13

Monitoring Indicator 8: Retail and Town Centre Development

Indicator: Delivery of sustainable economic and provision of floor space in accordance with the Borough Local Plan; amount of employment floor space lost to economic uses

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP25, BLP26, BLP27, and BLP26.

Targets:

Provision for sustainable economic development
Amount of employment floor space delivered in accordance with BLP26

Monitoring and implementation

Provision for sustainable economic development
Amount of employment floor space lost to economic uses

Table 14

Monitoring Indicator 9: Tourism and Visitors

Indicator: Amount and number of new tourist attractions, amount of new visitor bed spaces.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP11, BLP33, BLP34

Targets:

Provision of retail development
Amount of retail floor space delivered in town centre locations
Amount of retail floor space delivered in out of centre locations
Number of new dwellings provided in town centre locations
Amount of retail floor space lost to other uses

Table 15

Monitoring Indicator 10: Historic Environment

Indicator: Entries on Local List; Listed Buildings; Scheduled Monuments; Parks and Gardens.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP3, BLP4, BLP35, BLP36, BLP37, BLP38, BLP39, BLP40, BLP41

Targets:

Protection of the historic environment
Number of entries on the Local Heritage List
Number of applications relating to Listed Buildings; Scheduled Monuments; Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens.
Number of appeals dismissed relating to Listed Buildings; Scheduled Monuments; Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens.
Production of Heritage Strategy in line with May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Table 16

Monitoring Indicator 11: Environmental Protection

Indicator: Entries on Local List; Listed Buildings; Scheduled Monuments; Parks and Gardens.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP3, BLP4, BLP35, BLP36, BLP37, BLP38, BLP39, BLP40, BLP41

Targets:

Monitoring and implementation

Protection of the Environment
Amount of applications and floor space delivered in conformity with BLP41
Amount of renewable energy delivered
Number of new Air Quality Management Areas declared
Number of planning applications and or appeals refused or dismissed on air pollution grounds.
Number of planning applications and or appeals refused or dismissed on light pollution grounds.
Number of planning applications and or appeals refused or dismissed on noise pollution grounds.
Number of planning applications and or appeals refused or dismissed on contaminated land or water grounds.

Table 17

Monitoring Indicator 12: Nature Conservation

Indicator: Provision of SANG; protected Trees, Hedges and Woodlands; loss of and provision of open space; rights of way.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP12, BLP13, BLP49, BLP50, BLP51, BLP52, BLP53

Targets:

Protection and conservation of the natural environment
Number of dwellings permitted requiring the provision of SANG
Amount of SANG delivered
Number of applications and appeals determined and dismissed on TPO grounds or tree grounds
Amount of open space lost to other development
Amount of new open space provided to support development

Table 18

Monitoring Indicator 13: Infrastructure

Indicator: Community facilities; new leisure and sports facilities; delivery of sustainable transport schemes and facilities; amount received under planning obligations and developer contributions; telecommunications; water and sewerage infrastructure.

Related Policies: BLP1, BLP2, BLP54, BLP55, BLP56, BLP57, BLP58, BLP59

Targets:

Provision of infrastructure
Number of and amount applications and floor space refused on Local Transport Plan grounds

Monitoring and implementation

Provision of infrastructure
Creation of new pedestrian facilities such as way marking and signposts
Creation of new cyclist facilities including number of length of new cycle paths
Increase in the amount of the Borough provided with Superfast Broadband
Number of new car parking spaces provided
Number of new electric car charging points provided
Number of applications accompanied by Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
Number of applications and amount of floor space refused on transport grounds
Amount of new floor space created for indoor sports to meet identified needs
Production of the Parking SPD in accordance with the May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Table 19

Monitoring and implementation