Borough Local Plan 2013-2032

Regulation 18 - December 2016

The Royal Borough

Windsor & Maidenhead

Contents

Contents

Contents

Contents

Contents

Appendices

Foreword

Foreword by Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Planning

We are delighted to introduce this further consultation draft 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 and enhance those elements that make our Borough special in the eyes of not only our residents but all those who choose to visit, work and invest in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The Borough Local Plan is based on a substantial and robust evidence base and on the results of the consultation exercises we have carried out in the past, as guided by national policy and legislation. Representations you make at this stage will inform the next stage of the Borough Local Plan which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public by a Planning Inspector. We urge you to submit any comments you may have relating on the content of this draft Local Plan.

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

Introduction

1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1   The Borough Local Plan (BLP) is the key document that provides the framework to guide the future development of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It sets out a proposed strategy and policies for managing development and infrastructure to meet the environmental, social and economic challenges facing the area up to 2032, sets out the scale and distribution of development, and explains how the Council and its partners will deliver the plan.

1.1.2   Adopted policies will implement the strategy, essentially setting out what development will be needed and where it should occur and key areas that should be protected. Development will be guided by allocations for specific sites and by policies to be applied to planning applications. This includes approaches to delivering housing, employment, retail, leisure and community uses and activities and infrastructure. In terms of protection, areas will be designated on the Policies Map where development will be inappropriate or where particular matters need to be considered, such as the Green Belt, Crown Land, Special Protection Areas or the setting of the River Thames.

1.1.3   Ultimately, the BLP will be used to make decisions on planning applications. It will also form the strategic framework for Neighbourhood Plans and more detailed guidance will be provided in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents, according to the adopted Local Development Scheme (LDS).

1.1.4   The purpose of this draft consultation version of the BLP is to seek further comments on the content of the plan prior to its publication for Examination in Public. Representations will be processed by the Council, and appropriate issues raised will be reviewed and, where appropriate, will inform the Borough Local Plan Publication which will be submitted for further consultation according to Regulation 19 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.2 Preparation of the Borough Local Plan

1.2.1   Planning legislation requires that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be seen as a golden thread running through both the Borough Local Plan (BLP) and decision making processes. In particular the BLP should be seeking positively to meet the development needs of the Borough, encourage sustainable growth and development, and maintain and enhance the natural and built environments.

1.2.2   In preparing the BLP a clear direction is indicated for growth and development in the Borough from 2013 to 2032 and specific policies relate to the magnitude and distribution of development in line with recent changes in Government legislation regarding the preparation of Local Plans (Local Planning Regulations 2012) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). This final draft follows a process of plan-making which commenced with the preparation of Issues and Options in 2009, 'Planning for the Future' in 2012, the publication of Preferred Options in 2014 and a series of public consultations which are described in the Consultation Statement.

1.2.3   The Consultation Statement sets out:

    a. which bodies and persons were invited to make representations under Regulation 18

    b. how those bodies and persons were invited to make such representations

    c. a summary of the main issues raised by those representations

    d. how the main issues have been addressed in the Local Plan.

1.3 Evidence base

1.3.1   Local plans are required to be based on adequate, up to date and relevant evidence about the social, economic and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. A comprehensive evidence base has been developed alongside the Borough Local Plan to support the policies within it, but evidence base documents are not subject to the same process as the BLP and are not subject to public consultation. The evidence base for the BLP is available for reference on the Council website.

Introduction

1.3.2   The BLP must be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) that considers the impact of the policies on the community, the economy and the environment. The Council has also undertaken a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) which assesses the likely impacts of BLP policies on the integrity of internationally designated nature sites.

1.4 Policy context

1.4.1   The Borough Local Plan (BLP) must take account of relevant national guidance, policy and legislation. The wider policy context is formed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced in March 2012 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, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was first published in 2014 and is constantly updated, providing further clarity about the operation of the planning system: the BLP does not repeat national policy but aims to explain how the policy has been applied in the local context.

1.4.2   As required by the NPPF, the main theme running through the BLP is one of sustainable development. The Council's Development Management Service as part of the wider Planning Service has sought to engage pro-actively with applicants through a formal paid-for 'Pre-Application Process' 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.

1.4.3   NPPG, which supports the NPPF, is web based guidance provided by Communities and Local Government (CLG) on the wide range of topics concerned with the preparation of local plans. It is constantly updated to reflect the latest Government policy and ministerial statements.

1.4.4   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. The existing 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.

1.4.5   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 Council in April 2014 and therefore forms a constituent part of the statutory development plan for the appropriate area within the Borough.

1.5 Neighbourhood Plans

1.5.1   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.

1.5.2   Neighbourhood Plans should support the strategic development needs set out in the BLP and should also plan positively to support local development in accordance with Paragraph 16 of the NPPF. The policies in this BLP are clearly marked in the list in Section 2 if they are considered to be 'strategic policies' to guide the production of Neighbourhood Plans across the Borough.

1.5.3   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 BLP is prescribing. Other policies in the BLP are not considered to be strategic, but it is expected that Neighbourhood Plans would also have general regard to non-strategic policies in helping to formulate their plans.

1.6 Duty to Cooperate

1.6.1   Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the 'Duty to Cooperate' which is a legal duty under a new Section 33A in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014 requiring local planning authorities to cooperate on strategic cross boundary matters. The Duty applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England and informs the plan making process

1.6.2   The 'Duty' relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas and requires:

1

Introduction

- that councils set out planning policies to address such issues
- that councils and public bodies 'engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis' to develop strategic policies
- councils to consider joint approaches to plan making.

1.6.3   The NPPF sets out the strategic issues where cooperation 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 NPPG provides further guidance on how the Duty to Cooperate should be applied in local planning.

1.6.4   The Duty to Cooperate is an on going and evolving process for strategic policy areas and will involve several iterative steps. A key aspect of cooperation concerns the provision of houses and jobs to ensure that objectively assessed needs in these areas are met in full. Local planning authorities should talk collaboratively with other bodies to ensure coordination of strategic issues, and can undertake joint working on areas of common interest.

1.6.5   The Borough is actively engaged in contributing to the process, through initiatives such as joint working on the Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) for Berkshire, Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMA), retail study work, the Thames Basin Heaths 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 Crossrail. This process has helped steer and inform policy development and to help develop an appropriate evidence base for the emerging BLP.

1.6.6   A Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement will accompany the BLP at the stage of its submission to the Secretary of State under Regulation 19. The Statement will comprise the list of bodies to be engaged under the Duty during the preparation of the BLP, the strategic issues that have been given consideration, and the outcomes that affect policy preparation. Activities have included extensive meetings with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders to discuss strategic cross-boundary issues with further meetings being held to discuss more specific technical issues and the preparation of memoranda of understanding between local authorities with regard to strategic and specific issues.

1.6.7   A Consultation Statement will also accompany the BLP at submission, which will explain how it has evolved through its various states of consultation, who was invited to make representations, how they were invited to do so, a summary of the main issues raised by representations and how these have been addressed in the plan. The Statement describes five stages of publication consultation since 2007 culminating in consultation on the draft BLP in December 2016 and January 2017.

1.6.8   It is important to recognise that the Duty to Cooperate is a continuous process of reviewing policy and accompanying justification and the potential impacts of policy on neighbouring authorities and agencies. The Duty continues throughout each stage of the plan making process and entails the active engagement of both officers and Members to ensure that implications are clear and that appropriate actions are taken collaboratively and for mutual benefit whenever possible.

1.7 How can I express my views?

1.7.1   The purpose of this consultation is to enable people to make representations on issues of content and policies prepared following previous public and stakeholder consultation and consideration by the Council. Representations will be reviewed and assessed, and where appropriate incorporated into the Borough Local Plan Publication which will be submitted to the Secretary of State

1.7.2   The Borough Local Plan Publication will then be examined by an independent Inspector whose role is to assess whether it 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 NPPF. The tests of soundness that the BLP 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

Introduction

- Effective – being deliverable over the plan period based on effective joint working
- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

1.7.3   Views are sought on the content of this draft BLP. Representations should be supported by evidence if possible, and when making representations, please clearly indicate which policy, paragraph or page number you are referring to.

1.7.4   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.

1.7.5   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.

Representations can be made online at:

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

Alternatively completed representation forms can be emailed to: planning.policy@rbwm.gov.uk

Or hard copies can be sent to: FREEPOST RBWM PLANNING POLICY

List of Policies

2

List of Policies

Policy	Strategic?
SP1 Spatial Strategy	Yes
SP2 Community Led Development	No
SP3 Design	Yes
SP4 Townscape and Landscape	Yes
SP5 River Thames Corridor	Yes
SP6 Development in the Green Belt	Yes
SP7 Countryside Character	Yes
HO1 Housing Development Sites	Yes
HO2 Meeting Housing Need	Yes
HO3 Affordable Housing	Yes
HO4 Gypsies and Travellers	Yes
HO5 Housing Layout and Design	Yes
HO6 Density and Amenity	No
HO7 Subdivision of Dwellings	No
HO8 Development Involving Residential Gardens	No
HO9 Extensions and Outbuildings in Residential Curtilages	No
ED1 Economic Development	Yes
ED2 Defined Employment Sites	Yes
ED3 Other Sites and Loss of Employment Floorspace	Yes
TR1 Hierarchy of Centres	Yes
TR2 Maidenhead and Windsor Town Centres	Yes
TR3 District and Local Centres	No
TR4 Shops and Parades outside Defined Centres	No
TR5 Markets	No
VT1 Visitor Development	No
VT 2 Visitor Accommodation	No
HE1 Historic Environment	No
HE2 Listed Buildings	No
HE3 Ancient Monuments	No
HE4 Archaeology	No
HE5 Registered Parks and Gardens	No

2

List of Policies

Policy	Strategic?
HE6 Conservation Areas	No
HE7 Windsor Castle	No
HE8 Local Heritage Assets	No
NR1 Sustainable Design and Construction	Yes
NR2 Renewable Energy	Yes
NR3 Managing Flood Risk and Waterways	Yes
EP1 Environmental Protection	Yes
EP2 Air Pollution	No
EP3 Artificial Light Pollution	No
EP4 Noise	No
EP5 Contaminated Land and Water	No
NE1 Nature Conservation	No
NE2 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	Yes
NE3 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands	No
NE4 Open Space	Yes
NE5 Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside	No
IF1 Community facilities	Yes
IF2 New Sports and Leisure Development at Braywick Park	No
IF3 Sustainable Transport	Yes
IF4 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions	Yes
IF5 Telecommunications	Yes
IF6 Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure	Yes

List of Policies

Spatial Portrait

3

3

Spatial Portrait

3.1 Context

3.1.1   The Borough lies to the west of London providing a predominantly countryside setting for the three main settlements of Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot, and a number of neighbouring villages. 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.

3.1.2   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, provides a dynamic setting for future development. The population of the Borough is continuing to change with an ever increasing and ageing population and this shift in the demographic profile will bring with it particular challenges especially with regard to making appropriate provision for sustainable development to meet those needs.

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, the Borough borders several other administrative local authorities and has important inter-connections with employment and housing catchments, plus strategic transport links. The Borough benefits from having ten railway stations, served by a combination of main line and branch line services.

3.2.2   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 a significant stop for Crossrail, linking it to London and beyond.

3.2.3   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 Borough actively engages in discussions at a strategic level with neighbouring local authorities to identify its impacts.

3.2.4   The Borough contributes to the workforce of nearby towns in the Thames Valley region, with residents commuting to Slough, Reading and London for employment. More than one in ten of East Berkshire's jobs are located in the Slough Trading Estate. Reading is another major town that provides jobs as well as a major shopping attraction. 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.

3.2.5   The River Thames forms much of the northern boundary of the Borough, which continues to work with the Environment Agency and other bodies 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.

3.2.6   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, and its settlements will need to focus on their unique distinctiveness to maintain their vibrancy and vitality.

3.3 Natural and built environments

3.3.1   Approximately 83% of the Borough's area is Metropolitan Green Belt. There are 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 area as a 'Green Borough.'

3.3.2   A number of areas in the Borough are internationally designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar Sites designated under the Natura 2000 Convention. The Borough also has a number of nationally designated sites including Sites of

Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that cover 1,663 hectares or 8.41% of the Borough's area and one National Nature Reserve (NNR) at Chobham Common. These designations may, in isolation and in combination, serve to act as constraints on development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.3.3   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 a 'Green Borough', helping to shape the environment for residents and tourists that appreciate the unique characteristics of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

3.3.4   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 provide distinctive features.

3.3.5   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.

3.4 Community

Population

3.4.1   The 2011 Census indicated that the Borough has 144,560 residents, an 8.2% increase in the last ten years since 2001 Census, when the population was 133,626. 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   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. 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 and employment opportunities in the area.

Housing

3.4.3   The 2011 Census counted 58,349 households in the Borough. In 2008, 1.4% of the Borough's dwelling stock comprised second homes; nationally 0.9%. 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 82% and 10% respectively. The 2011 Census counted 3,495 people living in communal establishments (for example, care homes, boarding schools) in the Borough.

3.4.4   In the last ten years, the dwelling stock of the Borough has remained relatively unchanged, seeing only a slight shift to smaller dwellings. For example, 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, down to 15.0% in 2011.

3.4.5   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 and makes the Borough one of the most expensive places to live in the country outside London.

Health

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

3.4.7   Modelling undertaken in October 2011 suggests that 87% of households are within fifteen minutes of a GP surgery using public transport and walking (99% are within 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).

3

Spatial Portrait

Education

3.4.8   There are 62 state schools in the Borough; three nurseries, 45 primary schools, thirteen secondary schools and one special school and of these, nine 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 and 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.

3.4.9   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 educate approximately 15% of the Borough's children and young people.

Recreation

3.4.10   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 also several indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including leisure centres and sports pitches.

Arts and culture

3.4.11   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.

3.5 Economic prosperity

3.5.1   The Borough has a highly qualified workforce with 96% holding qualifications, and 48% qualified to degree level or higher. The majority of employee jobs are in the service sector (88%) followed by construction (7%) and manufacturing (5%). The number of people who are self employed has increased in the last decade to 11.5% in 2012 from 10.5% in 2001 (nationally 8.3% in 2001, and 9.4% in 2012). The rise in the self-employed workforce has resulted in an increase in demand for better access to broadband services, particularly in rural areas.

3.5.2   The East Berkshire Local Economic Assessment (August 2011) indicates that the Borough could see an employment base growth of 19% by 2030 and the same study shows a decrease in manufacturing employment and an increase in banking, finance and insurance employment. The Employment Land Review (2009)(ELR) suggests that there will be an increase in demand for offices whilst demand for industrial and warehousing space will decline, owing to the restructuring of the economy; at the same time, as a trend for office downsizing.

3.5.3   The ELR identified a number of sites suitable for development, principally in Maidenhead and Windsor town centres which are attractive office locations. If demand could not all be met within the two town centres, the study deemed there was scope to redevelop some existing industrial areas to provide new office premises.

3.5.4   The economically active workforce, aged between 16 and 64 years, is 81% which is higher than the national average (76.9%). The unemployment rate is low compared to the national average (1.8% in May 2013 compared with 3.6% nationally).

Retail

3.5.5   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 the main urban settlements. Overall, the larger centres provide predominantly comparison and services retail functions, with local centres providing more convenience and service shops. A similar trend is seen with regard 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

3.5.6   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. The Borough is also home to one of the oldest and best known airfields in the country; White Waltham Airfield, reputedly the largest grass airfield in Britain.

3.5.7   An estimated 716,000 staying trips were spent in the Borough in 2010, of which around 73% were made by domestic visitors and 27% by overseas visitors. It is estimated that 51% of overseas trips to Windsor and 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.

3.5.8   Whilst not offering the same variety of visitor 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, that is, 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 (Economic Impact Study, 2010).

3.6 Climate change

Flooding

3.6.1   The most pressing implication of climate change is likely to be flooding as a result of increased rainfall in the future. Just over 27% of the Borough is located within Environment Agency Floodzone 2 (1:100 – 1:1000 year risk of flooding), and 20.3 % within Floodzone 3 (1:100 year risk of flooding) and managing new development not to put new and existing residents at increased exposure to flooding is essential. 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.

3.6.2   Research in other areas suggests that the future 1:100 year floodzone could extend to the current 1:1000 year floodzone and 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 which may 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. Many schools, householders and businesses are retrofitting solar panels to their properties to become more energy efficient.

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 (SPZ), but the most significant are in SPZ1 where development could have greatest risk to groundwater supplies. These include 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

Spatial Portrait

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

3.7 Key spatial issues

3.7.1   Considering the nature of the Borough as described above leads to the identification of a series of key issues for the BLP to address. The challenge for the BLP is to manage the potential impacts of future growth to ensure that development takes place in a sustainable manner that supports the local economy, whilst safeguarding and enhancing where possible the valuable natural and built assets of the Borough.

Key spatial issues

- How can the Borough promote the development it needs without adversely impacting on the existing built character and natural environment which makes the Borough the successful place it is?

- How can the Borough provide the necessary amount of decent and affordable housing for all its communities in the right locations, given land values and property prices in the area?

- How can Borough respond to the needs of an ageing population?

- How and where could the Borough enable provision of the services and facilities needed for existing and future residents, including necessary infrastructure?

- How can the Borough improve and maintain the natural environment and countryside which makes the area an attractive place to live, work and visit?

- How can the Borough plan to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century, whilst maintaining the balance between residential and commercial development needs in both urban and rural locations?

- How can the Borough support and improve the tourism and visitor economy, particularly around the towns of Windsor and Maidenhead?

- How should the Borough contribute to national climate change targets, and ensure the community are not put at risk of the effects of climate change?

- How can the Borough preserve and enhance its unique heritage and built environment for current and future residents and visitors to enjoy?

- How can the Borough best accommodate the needs of people to use their car for some journeys and also encourage more use of alternatives?

- How can the Borough support rural areas to improve their sustainability, whilst maintaining the factors that make the countryside a desirable place to live, work and play?

Spatial Vision and Objectives

4

4   Spatial Vision and Objectives

4.0 Context

4.0.1   The corporate vision for the Borough is set out in the Borough's Strategic Plan (RBWM 2016) which had its roots in the Sustainable Community Strategy (RBWM 2010) and seeks a prosperous and vibrant future for both urban and rural communities whilst retaining and enhancing the Borough's distinctive heritage, landscape and character. The Borough Local Plan (BLP) is the spatial expression of the Council's vision for the future of the Borough and therefore built on the main themes of the Strategic Plan as follows:

- Residents First - with the strategic priorities of more choice in education; healthy lifestyles and support into old age; vibrant town centres that benefit from Crossrail and other major infrastructure investments; and satisfaction with the Borough's roads. This will be achieved by supporting children and young people; encouraging healthy people and lifestyles; improving the environment, economy and transport; and working for safer and stronger communities.

- Value for Money - with low Council Tax being the norm; with more residents having the opportunity to own their own home; seeking to avoid over-inflationary increases in fees and charges; and services delivered for residents on a cost effective basis. This will be achieved by enhancing customer services; delivering effective services; and strengthening partnerships. This will be achieved by delivering economic services; improving use of technology, systems and structures; increasing non -Council Tax revenue; and investing in the future.

- Delivering together - with Council services be available for longer and in more locations; residents accessing services in the most convenient way for them and first time issue resolution; sharing more services and work with staff to deliver more effective and integrated services; and working more closely with parish councils and other key partners. This will be achieved by enhancing customer services; delivering effective services; and strengthening partnerships.

- Equip Ourselves for the Future - with mobile technology that will enable the delivery of services where and when residents need and want them; and investing in staff and encouraging joined up working to deliver seamless front line services. This will be achieved by equipping our workforce; developing our systems and structures; and changing our culture.

4.1 Spatial vision

4.1.1   The spatial vision for the BLP sets out what the Borough will look like following the implementation of the plan. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will remain a place where everyone can thrive in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.

4.1.2   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 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.

4.1.3   Development will be expected to promote sustainability and 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.

4.1.4   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.

4.1.5   Development will be located sustainably 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 other centres that already provide services.

4.1.6   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.

4.1.7   The Borough will continue to prosper and provide a good range of jobs and homes for all of our residents close to where people choose 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.

4.1.8   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

4.2 Objectives

Objective 1 - Special qualities

To conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Borough's built and natural environments:

i. Protect the openness of the Green Belt.

ii. Retain the character of existing settlements through guiding development to appropriate locations and ensuring high quality design of new development.

iii. Protect the special qualities of the built environment including heritage assets.

iv. Protect and enhance biodiversity within the Borough.

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

Objective 2 - Meeting housing needs

To meet the varied housing needs of residents in an appropriate way whilst steering development to the most sustainable locations:

i. Provide sufficient new housing to meet the Borough's needs.

ii. Make the most of previously developed land.

iii. Provide housing that meets the needs of all sections of community including a sufficient level of affordable housing.

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

4   Spatial Vision and Objectives

Objective 3 - Visitor economy

To enable the continued success and evolution of the Borough's distinct visitor economy:

i. Reinforce the role of key tourism centres such as Windsor, Ascot and the River Thames.

ii. Provide sufficient accommodation and facilities for tourists.

iii. Identify and promote opportunities for additional tourism related development.

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

Objective 4 - Local business economy

Enable the evolution and growth of the local business economy:

i. Maintain a buoyant and broad-based economy.

ii. Support the reuse and redevelopment of existing employment-generating sites and premises in order to maintain a sustainable balance between jobs and local labour.

This objective meets the following Strategic Plan themes: **Residents first, Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future**

Objective 5 - Town, district and local centres

To promote the vitality and viability of town centres so that they are at the heart of their communities:

i. Promote the town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead as the principal locations for office, retail, tourism and leisure development.

ii. Support the delivery of the adopted Maidenhead Area Action Plan Development Plan Document.

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

Spatial Vision and Objectives   4

Objective 6 - Infrastructure

To retain, improve and provide new facilities and other infrastructure to support new development and ensure a high quality of life for residents of all ages:

i. Secure the provision of utilities, services and facilities to enable planned development in a coordinated and timely manner

ii. Ensure that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards infrastructure needs arising from such development.

This objective meets the following Strategic Plan hemes: **Residents first, Delivering together, Value for money, Equip ourselves for the future**

Objective 7 - Sustainable transport

To promote sustainable transport and alternatives to the use of private vehicles:

i. Encourage the provision of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in new development

ii. Locate development to minimise the need for travel

iii. Promote the use of public transport.

This objective meets the main Strategic Plan themes of **Residents first; Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future.**

Objective 8 - Heritage

To seek to maintain and enhance the rich heritage of the Borough:

i. Protection of designated areas and developments, such as scheduled monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

ii. Promotion of high quality development and design in sensitive heritage areas.

This objective meets the main Strategic Plan themes of **Residents first; Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future.**

Spatial Vision and Objectives

4

Objective 9 - Environmental protection

To maintain and enhance the natural environment of the Borough:

i. Ensure that new development contributes to environmental improvement

ii. Protect designated areas and features.

*This objective meets the main Strategic Plan themes of **Residents first; Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future.***

Objective 10 - Open space and leisure

To provide adequate open space for planned development and appropriate leisure and recreation facilities:

i. Ensure that new development contributes to providing open space within new development

ii. Maintain and enhance leisure and recreation facilities.

*This objective meets the main Strategic Plan themes of **Residents first; Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future.***

Objective 11 - Climate change and biodiversity

To ensure that new development takes account of the need to mitigate the impacts of climate change and on biodiversity:

i. Promote sustainable design and construction.

ii. Promote the use of renewable energy.

iii. Manage flood risk through the location and design of development.

*This objective meets the main Strategic Plan themes of **Residents first; Delivering together, Equip ourselves for the future.***

Spatial Strategy

5

5 Spatial Strategy

5.1 Strategic context

5.1.1   Following the formulation of the spatial vision and objectives, the Borough Local Plan(BLP) presents policies which identify the quantum of new development which is envisaged to accommodate the population growth and economic needs of the Borough over the plan period. A further principal aim of the BLP is to set out clearly the Borough's policies for the spatial distribution of development based on the vision and objectives of the plan.

5.1.2   This section presents the housing and economic development targets for the Local Plan period (2013 - 2032) and describes the Borough's approach to the distribution of future development. The justification for this approach has been derived from the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment(SA/SEA) and the substantial evidence base produced by the Council. Of paramount importance is the evidence that determines the Borough's objectively assessed needs for housing and employment and additional capacity for retail, and key to delivering these targets will be the availability of suitable sites and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

5.2 Housing needs

5.2.1   Of crucial importance to the BLP is the evidence which determines the Borough's objectively assessed need for housing, including affordable housing, and land for gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people. The principal source of evidence for housing need is the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (February 2016)(SHMAA) which was commissioned by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership on behalf of the Berkshire local authorities (Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough Council) and South Bucks District Council and carried out by consultants GL Hearn.

5.2.2   The consultants defined two separate housing market areas within the overall Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA); namely a western housing market area (WHMA), comprising Bracknell Forest, Reading,West Berkshire and Wokingham, and an eastern housing market area (EHMA) comprising the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council and South Bucks District Council. The SHMAA identified the objectively assessed needs for housing in the Borough, as required by the NPPF, as 13,528 new dwellings, equivalent to 712 new dwellings per annum for the plan period (2013-2032).

5.2.3   This need is based on an analysis of national population projections with key local inputs, including net migration, household formation rates and housing vacancy rates. Further national data is expected to be published during 2016 and the Council will monitor the impact of new data releases on its objectively assessed housing need and respond as appropriate.

5.2.4   The Council is required to assess the need for accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people in line with the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites published by the Government in 2015 which covers a wide range of issues including need assessment, appropriate supply of sites and environmental and related matters. It also seeks to reduce tensions between the settled and traveller communities.

5.2.5   The Council commissioned a Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2015 which was based on the planning definition of gypsies and travellers at that time which has subsequently been superseded by legislation. Further work is now being done jointly with other Berkshire authorities with regard to the implications of the new definition for this specific housing need, and results will be presented in due course. The assessment will be used as evidence base to support the development of a Gypsy and Travellers Local Plan as noted in the Local Development Scheme.

5.3 Economic development needs

5.3.1   Economic growth in Berkshire is guided by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP). RBWM is working closely with the LEP and the other Berkshire authorities to ensure that the aspirations of the TVBLEP's Strategic Economic Plan for Berkshire (SEP) can be accommodated in a way that recognises the Borough's very special character and the considerable land supply constraints it faces. The Berkshire SEP articulates how the LEP will achieve the ambition of creating 20,000 new jobs across Berkshire by 2021.

Spatial Strategy

5.3.2   TVBLEP and the six Berkshire authorities jointly commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to undertake identification of the functional economic market areas (FEMAs) that they operate within and also to analyse the land requirements necessary to accommodate jobs in the main "B Class" sectors which together broadly cover office, manufacturing and warehousing land uses. These studies form a key part of the detailed analysis for the implementation of the SEP and are an essential element of the plan making process.

5.3.3   The evidence base to support the identification of economic development needs for RBWM draws on these Economic Development Needs Assessments (EDNAs) produced by NLP.   The studies have been carried out by NLP in accordance with the NPPG to provide an assessment of future business needs and requirements for employment land and floorspace within each FEMA, focusing on the group of 'B Class' sectors. However, the Borough recognises that not all jobs fall within these use classes; growth in the service industry, retail, leisure and tourism is also expected to provide further economic growth.

5.3.4   Two core FEMAs operate across the Borough which reflect the varied characteristics and economic roles associated with different parts of it. The Borough's position within two FEMAs illustrates the equally strong relationships that RBWM exhibits with more central parts of Berkshire as well as areas to the north and east.

5.3.5   In labour market terms, eastern parts of the Borough share a Travel to Work Area (TTWA) with Slough and Heathrow, while northern and western parts of the Borough have stronger functional economic relationships with western M4 corridor locations such as Reading and Wokingham.

5.3.6   Three separate FEMAs were identified in Berkshire as follows: Western Berkshire FEMA, comprising West Berkshire; a Central Berkshire FEMA, comprising Bracknell Forest, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham, and an Eastern Berkshire FEMA comprising Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead and South Buckinghamshire.

5.3.7   In March 2015 the report "Housing Market Areas and Functional Economic Market Areas in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding areas" was published. This study included South Bucks within a Berkshire FEMA which included Bracknell, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham districts. This reflected the best fit to the plan making geography at the time.

5.3.8   In July 2016 an update to the study was published which found that the functional relationship between the markets was unchanged but the best fit to the plan making geography had altered due to the decision to produce a joint plan by South Bucks and Chiltern Councils. In order to align the market areas with the best fit to the plan making areas, the update to the study accepted that South Bucks district should now be considered part of a Central Buckinghamshire FEMA. This Central Buckinghamshire FEMA now comprises Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe districts.

5.3.9   In recognition of the evolution of the plan making geography since the publication of the Berkshire FEMA study in February 2016, needs arising in South Bucks are now, and will continue to be, identified by the Central Buckinghamshire EDNA and subsequent updates. The decision not to include analysis for South Bucks is not seen as impacting on the analysis of the needs arising within Slough and the Borough, due to the methodological approach of the study.

5.3.10   The evidence from the studies help to inform the basis for the development of the economic policies for the BLP. It is recognised that the boundaries of the four core FEMA identified across Berkshire and Central Buckinghamshire are porous rather than fixed, and that the Duty to Cooperate will need to be discharged across the four core FEMA.

5.3.11   The outputs of the Economic Development Needs Assessments (EDNA) include the land requirements from the two FEMAs relating to Windsor and Maidenhead; the figures for B Class employment space requirements were based on three scenarios for future economic growth to 2036 based on labour demand, past trends of completion of employment space, and local labour supply.   The results for Windsor and Maidenhead are as follows:

5 Spatial Strategy

	Employment floorspace need (sqm)			Land requirements (Ha)		
	Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply	Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply
B1a/B1b	261,545	-438,955	276,000	105.5	-18.5	107.4
B1c, B2, B8	638,250	18,285	660,200	218.5	51.1	212.6
Total	944,795	-420,670	936,200	324.0	32.6	320.0

Table 1 : Central Berkshire FEMA

	Employment floorspace need (sqm)			Land requirements (Ha)		
Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply	Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply	
B1a/B1b	108,800	-26,565	137,950	37.9	14.7	42.2
B1c, B2, B8	27,150	206,310	733,540	182.4	76.1	209.0
Total	735,950	179,745	871,490	220.3	90.8	251.2

Table 2 : Berkshire LPAs in Eastern Berkshire FEMA

	Employment floorspace need (sqm)			Land requirements (Ha)		
Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply	Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply	
B1a/B1b	50,500	-25,760	52,680	19.3	6.3	19.6
B1c, B2, B8	171,580	-26,680	168,400	52.2	1.5	51.4
Total	222,080	-52,440	221,080	71.5	7.8	71.0

Table 3 : RBWM

5.3.12   In order to relate to the BLP plan period (2013-2032), the figures for employment space need have been adjusted as follows:

	Employment floorspace need (sqm)		
	Labour Demand	Completions	Labour Supply
B1a/B1b	41,717	21,280	43,518
B1c, B2, B8	141,740	22,040	139,113
Total	183,457	43,320	182,631

Table 4 : RBWM (Plan Period)

5.3.13   The derivation of floorspace requirements from forecast growth is highly sensitive to the assumptions made during the analysis. A key assumption used in the EDNAs relates to the conversion of industrial sectors to use classes and types of property.

5.3.14   The translations that the EDNA has made provide an approximation on the macro-economic scale of sub-regional planning, but may not be the most appropriate to the specific circumstances and markets within individual districts. For the Borough, the assessment for B8, B2, and B1(c) figures appears at odds with market trends, reflecting the propensity for head offices of warehousing companies to locate here.

5.3.15   To check the validity of the findings in the local context, NLP were commissioned to undertake an assessment of the appropriateness of the broad sector classifications used in the Berkshire EDNAs to the local circumstances in the Borough. This sensitivity analysis is expected to identify a higher need for B1 floorspace and a lower requirement for B2 warehousing; which would be analogous to market trends.

5.3.16   In the light of this further work and the local circumstances, the BLP uses the past trends of completions of employment space as indicating plan requirements which have been calculated to 2036. To relate to the BLP plan period, figures for employment space needs have been adjusted to reflect the length of the plan period.

5.3.17   Since the forecast is expected to exhibit linear growth in requirements over the latter stages of the plan period it is considered appropriate to reduce the requirements by an average figure to approximate to the forecasts to the 2013 to 2032 plan period. This scenario suggests that the BLP will need to provide a of 43,320 square metres of employment floorspace within the Borough to 2032.

5.4 Retail needs

5.4.1   The economic prosperity of the Borough is in part due to the attractiveness of the area to both residents and business. One of the key contributors to the image and character of the borough are the town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead which offer the focal point for a range of commercial premises, shops and leisure facilities.

5.4.2   To ensure that the plan contributes to maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of these and other centres in the borough, the retail offer needs to be supported. A Retail and Town Centre Study was undertaken by consultants Cushman and Wakefield (formerly DTZ) during 2015. This retail study quantifies the capacity for additional retail floorspace between 2016 and 2031 and identifies the extent of the primary shopping areas and retail frontages in the main centres.

5.4.3   Forecasting undertaken by the retail study assumed that the 2015 pattern of market shares of convenience and comparison goods shopping in the Borough will remain unchanged throughout the forecasting period to 2031. Under this assumption the report anticipates capacity for an additional net tradable area of 3,150m^2 of convenience goods sales floorspace and 9,100m^2 of comparison goods sales floorspace for the period 2016 to 2031. It is expected that 40% of the convenience goods floorspace capacity will be found within Maidenhead town centre while 62% of the comparison goods floorspace capacity will be found in Windsor.

5.4.4   The forecasting period of the retail study does not match the plan period. An extrapolation of floorspace based on the average capacity expected for the preceding five years has been derived. Based on this extrapolation, the retail floorspace capacity will be 3,340m^2 of convenience goods sales floorspace and 9,550m^2 of comparison goods sales floorspace for the period 2016 to 2032.

Convenience Goods Forecast Floorspace Capacity (m^2)	2016	2021	2026	2031	2032
Windsor	100	300	500	700	740
Maidenhead	-50	400	850	1300	1390
Ascot	50	100	150	200	210
Sunningdale	0	100	200	250	260
Non-central stores	150	350	500	700	740

5 Spatial Strategy

Convenience Goods Forecast Floorspace Capacity (m^2)	2016	2021	2026	2031	2032
	250	1250	2200	3150	3340

Table 5 : Convenience Goods

Comparison Goods Forecast Floorspace Capacity (m^2)	2016	2021	2026	2031	2032
Windsor	550	2550	4350	5700	5950
Maidenhead	100	550	1550	2300	2450
Ascot	50	150	250	300	310
Sunningdale	50	150	250	300	310
Non-central stores	0	200	350	500	530
	750	3600	6750	9100	9550

Table 6 : Comparison Goods

5.5 Development of spatial strategy

5.5.1   In March 2009 options for the distribution of future development were identified to address the projected population and economic development needs, key issues and challenges which shared a number of common features relating to the economy of the Borough, housing within the Borough and protection of the environment. All options shared an approach that continued a strategy of urban focus and renaissance to maximise the role of towns in accommodation development and looked to support the role of town centres in accommodating development at the most accessible locations.

5.5.2   This approach recognised the difference between Windsor's role as a main visitor attraction with a high environmental quality that was not comparable to Maidenhead's role as a centre to serve the needs of residents, together with Maidenhead's strategic role as a transport hub including Crossrail. It also recognised the need to support the role of Maidenhead as a centre for retail, leisure and employment to stop the potential for a long term decline of the town centre due to competition with other larger neighbouring centres outside the Borough. It advocated the re-use of urban land which would also in turn help to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and all three options for development sought to maintain the quality of the towns and villages across the Borough.

5.5.3   Three strategic options for the distribution of development were, in March 2009, considered to be:

- Option A: High density growth
- Option B: Moderate density growth
- Option C: Low density growth

5.5.4   Option A would see development densities increase across the existing built up areas of the Borough. Maidenhead and to a lesser extent Windsor would be expected to absorb most new development, supporting their role as the most sustainable settlements, their importance as business locations and the availability of land. Other settlements outside the Green Belt would be expected to accommodate new development and there would be taller buildings in town centres and other specific locations. This option would result in no or minimal loss of Green Belt.

5.5.5   Option B would entail moderate increases in residential density. Again Maidenhead and to a lesser extent Windsor would absorb most new development with other settlements outside the Green Belt accommodating new development. Some land around the edge of settlements would be required to provide development and delivery would be through small sites with limited impact on infrastructure and the appearance of the area, with some loss of Green Belt.

5.5.6   Option C would result in lower residential densities across the Borough with a greater amount of greenfield land around the edges of settlements, resulting in a greater loss of Green Belt than other options.

5.5.7   The 2014 Preferred Options consultation set out another series of three options that responded to the strongly expressed public support for the Green Belt as a result of the 2009 consultation. The Green Belt may regarded as the primary determining factor in the potential site allocation.

Option1: To restrict building to the capacity of existing built up areas, avoiding building in the Green Belt

5.5.8   This option places an emphasis on environmental protection, specifically the Green Belt, over social and economic consequences. Protecting the current precise extent of the Green Belt would restrict building capacity and significantly fewer houses would be built than are projected to be needed.

Option 2: To permit building to a level that meets the projected population and economic development needs, recognising that this would require some building in the Green Belt.

5.5.9   This option places an emphasis on social and economic needs over environmental impacts and would require significant building in the Green Belt.

Option 3: To permit building to a level that strikes a balance between meeting the projected population and economic development needs and the environmental impacts, including some building in the Green Belt.

5.5.10   This option seeks a balance between social and economic needs with environmental impacts and would mean some limited use of existing Green Belt.

5.5.11   Based on careful consideration of the three strategic options, including taking into account the results of consultation with the wider community, Option 3 was 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.

Elements of the spatial strategy

5.5.12   The above option forms the basis for the spatial strategy for the Borough, comprising the following main components:

- within the context of the functional area, seeking to provide 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

- promoting a strong network of town, district and local centres which are at the heart of their community, providing shopping, services, employment and leisure.

5.5.13   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. 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.

5.5.14   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.

5

Spatial Strategy

5.5.15 Throughout the Borough there are examples of the unique history and long association with the Crown, with many exceptional buildings and places. To maintain the success of the Borough and its competitiveness into the future it is essential that development is compatible with its special qualities and character.

5.5.16 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.

5.5.17 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 and 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.

5.5.18 Town centres should be at the heart of the community, providing a range of services, shops, leisure opportunities and employment. Town centres 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.

5.5.19 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. About 2,000 additional new homes are envisaged and opportunities to increase residential provision within the town centre will be pursued.

5.5.20 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 2014. 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.

5.6 Land availability

5.6.1 A joint methodology for a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) has been developed by all Berkshire authorities, except Bracknell Forest, to be applied to achieve a common approach when assessing sites for development. Each local authority will now follow this base methodology to ensure comparable information is available and recognise they may need to vary from it in order to respond to local characteristics.

5.6.2 The HELAA recently prepared by the Council(2016) identifies suitable land available for housing and economic development, its development potential and when development is likely to occur. This has identified a wide range of sites which are available for development, achievable and deliverable within the plan period.

5.6.3 The full list of sites from which allocations are made for the draft BLP was initiated in 2014 as part of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and responses to the BLP Preferred Options consultation, also in 2014. A formal Call for Sites was made in 2015, which was a publicised event where agents and landowners were encouraged to submit information regarding sites across the Borough.

5.6.4 Since 2015, landowners and agents have continued to submit information regarding sites which are then subject to assessment through the HELAA process. The inclusion of land within a HELAA report does not in itself determine that it is suitable for development, or that the land is necessarily available for development.

5.6.5 Assessments made through a HELAA assist the process of site selection which is a primary purpose of the BLP or, where produced, a Neighbourhood Plan. Further remarks relating to the site selection process are made below.

5.6.6 For the Borough's HELAA, a key source of information has been the Edge of Settlement Study prepared by the Council in 2016, as well as technical studies by promoters and land-owners. Sites which have been subject to planning applications and pre-application advice have also been considered.

5.7 Sustainability appraisal

5.7.1   The RBWM Borough Local Plan must be accompanied by a sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment (SA/SEA) that considers the impact of policies on the community, the economy and the environment. The SA/SEA seeks to maximise the positive impacts of local plan policies and minimise the adverse. Related to the SA/SEA is the requirement to undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) which assesses the likely impacts of local plan policies on the integrity of nationally and internationally designated locations.

5.7.2   A SA/SEA was carried out on the BLP Preferred Options 2014 which identified Option 3 as the preferred strategic policy option that sought a balance between social and economic needs while protecting the quality of the environment. Similarly, a SA/SEA has been carried out on the present draft BLP including a HRA and supports the process of assessment described below.

5.8 Site selection

5.8.1   The selection of sites to be incorporated into policies for housing, economic development, and infrastructure provision is a primary function of the draft BLP. Following from a spatial strategy which promotes sustainable development, the strengthening of existing settlements and some release of existing Green Belt sites while protecting the high quality built and natural environments of the Borough, it is necessary to identify sites which are suitable for development within the plan period (2013-2032).

5.8.2   Assessment forms a key component of the evidence base to underpin policies in development plans for housing and economic development, including supporting the delivery of land to meet identified need for these uses. As noted in the NPPG, plan makers will then be able to plan proactively by choosing sites to go forward into their development plan documents to meet objectively assessed needs.

5.8.3   The assessment is an important evidence source to inform plan making but does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. This is because not all sites considered in the assessment will be suitable for development (for instance, because of policy constraints or if they are unviable). It is the role of the assessment to provide information on the range of sites which are available to meet need, but it is for the development plan itself to determine which of those sites are the most suitable to meet those needs.

5.8.4   The draft BLP will identify sites for specific or mixed uses and activities, and the HELAA, informed by the Council's Edge of Settlement Study (EoSS) prepared in 2015, presents the total number of sites for which information has been provided to the Council, as the draft BLP seeks to provide for the objectively assessed needs for housing and economic development. The Council does not need to allocate land in the BLP to meet total needs because a certain number of sites have already been developed since the beginning of the plan period, and unanticipated sites, known as 'windfall sites' become available generally later in the plan period.

5.8.5   A significant number of the sites identified in policies in the draft BLP were first consulted on in the 2014 Preferred Options. Further sites have been identified as appropriate for inclusion as a result of being offered by land owners subsequently or due to re-evaluation of previously offered sites. The role of the Green Belt in the determination of appropriate sites is discussed in Section 7 below and it is both national and local policy to continue to protect as much as possible of the 83% of the area of the Borough which is covered by this designation.

5.8.6   Over 220 sites have been submitted, through the Call for Sites, and responses to consultations, lapsed planning permissions and other sources. They are geographically spread throughout the Borough and comprise urban, peripheral and some rural sites.

5.8.7   These sites have been assessed in accordance with the Berkshire HELAA methodology to produce a number of options for site allocations. The options related to the proportion of objectively assessed need for housing and economic development which is met.

5.8.8   The Council has decided to pursue an option for consultation that can provide 13,026 housing units, which fully satisfies the housing need identified. A balance will be sought between the provision of housing and employment and an appropriate number of sites will be allocated in the BLP taking account of the highly significant constraints affecting development in the Borough.

5 Spatial Strategy

5.8.9 Specific allocations are presented in Sections 7 and 8 in policies for housing and economic development (Policies HO1 and ED1). Details of the assessment process are included in the Council's HELAA report and the Council is satisfied that the exceptional circumstances required for the limited release of Green Belt are satisfied; further discussion may be found in Section 6.8 below.

5.9 Policy SP1 Spatial Strategy

Policy SP 1

Spatial Strategy for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

1. The Borough Local Plan will provide for 14,211 new dwellings and seek to enable up to 43,320 square metres of employment floor space and up to 9,550 square metres of additional retail floor space in the plan period up to 2032.

2. Development will be focused primarily on the urban area of Maidenhead, and the strategy recognises the national and international significance of Windsor as a significant town centre in the Borough. Proposed development in Ascot with its special characteristics and further retail and employment development will be directed to district and village centres.

3. New housing and economic development will be directed in the first instance to the following strategic locations as identified on the Policies Map:

Strategic locations for development:

   a. Maidenhead town centre

   b. Ascot town centre

   c. Maidenhead golf course and associated sites

   d. The Triangle (Land bounded by M4, A308(M), A330)

   e. Land west of Windsor, north and south of A308

4. Maidenhead town centre will be the main focus for sustainable growth in the Borough to support its role as a focus within the wider Thames Valley. 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 to take advantage of Crossrail connections.

5. 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.

6. Windsor town centre has national and international significance as a major focus of visitor and tourist activity based on Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park. Conservation issues are particularly important and limited development will be permitted which seeks to enhance the town centre's attractiveness and does not compromise its character and appearance.

7. Ascot town centre will provide the opportunity for the coordinated development of several sites related to Ascot High Street to strengthen its role as a significant centre in the Borough providing a wide range of uses and activities.

8. Maidenhead Golf Course and land to the south of the golf course (Land south of Harvest Hill Road, Maidenhead; Land south of Manor Lane) as defined on the Policies Map will accommodate over 2000 housing units and associated infrastructure.

9. Land south of A308, north of the M4, and west of Ascot Road (Triangle site) may accommodate industrial and warehousing floor-space.

10. The Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in line with the guidance contained in ministerial statements, legislation and policy, and those sites proposed for development which are presently designated as Green Belt are identified in Policies HO1 and ED2 and are supported by evidence which justifies their inclusion as appropriate for development. This includes sites identified as Important Previously Developed Sites as defined on the Policies Map including the provision of hotel accommodation associated with Ascot and Windsor Racecourses.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

5.10 Sustainable and community led development

5.10.1   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 which is set out in the NPPF. The BLP interprets the national guidance into the local area, and in so doing defines what constitutes sustainable development for the Borough.

5.10.2   National guidance also indicates where 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 as shown on the Policies Map.

5.10.3   The Localism Act 2011 promotes community-led proposals which are driven by local residents, rather than the Council or commercial interests. The Borough wishes to encourage residents to engage directly 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. The preferred method of this engagement will be through Neighbourhood Plans.

5.10.4   A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area and may not be used to constrain the delivery of development inappropriately. 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.

5.10.5   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

Spatial Strategy

5.11 Policy SP2 Community Led Development

Policy SP 2

Community Led Development

1. Community led development proposals will be supported 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 Planning Regulations and can therefore demonstrate clear community support.

2. 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, and 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;

3. Elements of open market development delivered as part of a community led development scheme will be considered acceptable where:

    a. it can be demonstrated through a financial appraisal that it is essential to enable the delivery of community benefit

    b. 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.

Quality of Place

6

Quality of Place

6.1 Context

6.1.1   A key objective of planning is to maintain and where possible enhance the quality of a place. This quality is not only about how an area looks, but also about how it feels and is used. 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 qualities of our towns, villages, hamlets, spaces, and countryside are maintained and enhanced, and that new development contributes to these values.

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

6.1.3   Further strategic policies relate to the significance of good design, townscape and landscape, River Thames Corridor, Green Belt and countryside character of the Borough.

6.2 Design

6.2.1   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 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.

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

6.2.3   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 do 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.

6.2.4   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.

6.2.5   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.

6.2.6   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.

6.2.7   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.

6.2.8   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.

6.2.9   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 twelve storeys (40 metres) based on the height of existing tall buildings. Maidenhead town centre provides an opportunity to create more dynamic variations in building heights and elsewhere contrasting building heights should generally be avoided.

6.2.10   To assist the rejuvenation and optimise the use of land in Maidenhead town centre, greater flexibility in building height than currently outlined in the AAP will be considered, including proposals in excess of the twelve storey (40 metres) 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.

6.2.11   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.

6.3 Policy SP3 Design

Policy SP 3

Design

1. New development should contribute towards achieving high quality design in buildings, spaces and areas.

2. Development proposals will achieve high quality design in buildings, spaces, and connections with the wider community. All development proposals will have regard to the following design principles:

    a. local character and context: respecting and enhancing where possible the local character, to help establish distinctive neighbourhoods; making the most of existing features on and off site to connect to the local area and create interesting places

    b. views: retaining important local views of historic buildings or features, positive areas of townscape or scenic importance, and making the most of opportunities to improve views where possible and recognising public views of key landmarks such as Windsor Castle, Eton College and the River Thames

    c. appearance: incorporating interesting frontages and design details, whilst delivering development that will be appropriate for its use and locality in terms of height, scale, bulk, mass, proportions, built form, rhythm, urban grain, layout and materials

    d. relationships: achieving a satisfactory relationship with neighbouring properties and between neighbouring properties within a proposed scheme; avoiding unacceptable impacts on the privacy, daylight or sunlight, or outlook of neighbouring properties and potential conflict between uses

    e. movement and access: delivering easy and safe access and movement for cars, pedestrians, cyclists, and service vehicles, maximising opportunities to enhance permeability and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible

    f. legibility: creating a place that is easy to navigate through the provision of clear and convenient routes, using building identity and landmarks and clear intersections.

6

Quality of Place

g. public realm: delivering streets, spaces, and other routes which are safe, uncluttered, and that provide a good sense of enclosure and are easily accessible for all, with a clear definition between public and private areas

h. parking: delivering adequate levels of parking that is logical, safe and secure for users and not dominating the landscape

i. landscaping and amenity: including comprehensive landscaping schemes that are integrated into proposals, adequate levels of amenity space both in terms of visual amenity space and useable private, shared or public spaces, linking development with the surrounding area, adding interest and screening where necessary

j. materials: using high quality materials that are suitable for the location and purpose

k. interiors: providing internal spaces that are accessible for all users regardless of disabilities, promoting wellness of users through adequate light and space standards. And being capable of adaptation to meet future needs

l. community safety: minimising the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour through design that creates safe places

m. storage: providing adequate, efficient, and secure internal and external storage space, including for recycling waste bins and outdoor equipment, that is integrated into the scheme to minimise visual impact

n. sustainability: development should be sustainable in its design, construction and operation.

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 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

c. design panels as appropriate for major schemes, with the cost of the design panel to be borne by the applicant.

5. A Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared to illustrate further how this policy will be implemented.

6.4 Townscape and landscape

6.4.1   The Borough has varied landscapes and townscapes which contribute to its distinctiveness and attraction to residents, businesses and visitors. Retaining this distinctiveness is essential especially in areas of high quality townscape or landscape, and in areas of lower value new development should seek improvements.

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

6.4.3   The 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.

6.4.4   In urban areas, the Townscape Assessment should be used to identify the character attributes of both the immediate and wider area. Development proposals should demonstrate how they make the most of important townscape features contributing to the specific characteristics identified, including capitalising on any opportunities to enhance local character.

6.4.5   The Landscape Character Assessment identifies a number of landscape 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 into account in development proposals. Key elements of local landscape character can include natural features such as trees and hedgerows and also structural features such as walls, fences, buildings and surface materials.

6.5 Policy SP4 Townscape and Landscape

Policy SP 4

Townscape and Landscape

1. Development proposals should 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 should maintain and enhance local character in terms of both the immediate surroundings and streetscene; and at the wider settlement or character type area, respond positively to defining features.

3. Using the Landscape Character Assessment, development proposals in rural areas should maintain and enhance the quality, distinctive local characteristics and features that contribute positively to landscape character and rural views.

6.6 River Thames Corridor

6.6.1   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.

6.6.2   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.

6.6.3   Policy should support and promote the key heritage attractions associated with the River Thames. This applies to development of all uses and scales with an impact on the River Thames and its setting, including 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.

6

Quality of Place

6.6.4   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 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.

6.6.5   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.

6.6.6   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.

6.6.7   The principles of high quality design are set out in Policy SP3. Particular care will be taken to ensure developments within the setting of the Thames complement the distinctive character of the water frontage and important views. The extent of the setting of the Thames is defined on the Policies Map.

6.6.8   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.

6.6.9   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.

6.6.10   The variety of wildlife related to the river, its tributaries and islands adds to the enjoyment of the river. Policy SP5 seeks to maintain the ecological value of the river and in appropriate circumstances, restore and enhance natural elements of the riparian environment.

6.6.11   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.

6.6.12   Policy SP5 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 to prepare wider strategies or projects.

6.7 Policy SP5 River Thames Corridor

Policy SP 5

River Thames Corridor

1. The special character and setting of the River Thames as defined on the Policies Map will be conserved and enhanced, and appropriate development proposals associated with river related activities and employment will be supported.

2. Particular care will be taken to ensure developments within the setting of the Thames complement 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.

3. 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

    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.

4. Appropriate proposals for sport, leisure, and river-related employment, infrastructure, and renewable energy generation will be supported 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

5. The principle of supporting sites associated with river-related activities and employment will be supported. Opportunities for generating renewable energy will also be supported in principle, provided that they do not adversely impact on the River Thames Corridor.

6. The ecological value of the river will be maintained and in appropriate circumstances, restored and enhanced together with natural elements of the riparian environment, and proposals should 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 in line with the objectives of the Thames Waterway Plan and the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plan.

6.8 Green Belt

6.8.1   The whole of the Borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt which, with the exclusion of the larger settlements, comprises 83% of the Borough's area. Much of the Green Belt is used for agriculture, forestry, open land and recreational uses, but it also includes a number of small villages and hamlets, educational establishments and other institutional uses, employment premises and mineral workings.

6.8.2   The spatial strategy for the Borough is to a large extent determined by the extent of the Green Belt, and the towns and villages which are excluded from the Green Belt 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. As well as continuing to restrict development in the Green Belt as set out in national

6

Quality of Place

policy, another key way to achieve a sustainable pattern of development is 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.

6.8.3   National government policy assigns great weight to the protection of the Green Belt, which is regarded as the primary constraint on the location of new development in the Borough. This is supplemented by the results of public consultation during the preparation of the BLP in 2009 and 2014 which overwhelmingly supported protection of the Green Belt.

6.8.4   In reviewing the availability of sites for development outside the Green Belt against the objectively assessed needs for housing and economic development as identified in Section 5 above, it is apparent that it is not possible to accommodate all anticipated development needs in the Borough during the plan period without using a limited area of the Green Belt. The most recent 'call for sites' took place in June 2015, and provides the basis for the assessment of suitable land for development throughout the Borough.

6.8.5   The Green Belt and Edge of Settlement studies conducted between 2013 and 2016 assessed land on the edge of settlements which are themselves excluded from the Green Belt for development. The purpose of the 2016 Edge of Settlement Study : Part 1 - Green Belt Purpose Assessment is to consider specifically how land currently designated Green Belt performs against the purposes of Green Belt as defined in the NPPF. This assessment therefore builds on the strategic level Green Belt Purpose Analysis (2013) which comprehensively considered all land designated Green Belt within the Borough.

6.8.6   In the Green Belt Purpose Analysis (2013) the options of establishing a new settlement and the significant expansion of an existing settlement that would alter the existing settlement hierarchy were both rejected by the Council through the sustainability appraisal process as unreasonable. Having identified those parcels of land in Part 1 which perform least well against the purpose of the Green Belt, further indicators of their suitability were considered in the Edge of Settlement Study: Part 2 - Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment.

6.8.7   The Council examined in detail the scope for parcels of land on the edge of existing settlements to be released from the Green Belt where it is considered that:

- development could reasonably be fitted into the urban fabric;
- landowners have indicated that they are willing to promote the site for development;
- contributions that the proposed sites make to Green Belt purposes are modest; and
- a range of other planning requirements are satisfied (for example, in terms of flood risk, impacts on wildlife, impacts on landscape and impacts on the historic environment.)

6.8.8   The EoSS informs the HELAA study which provides a comprehensive assessment and inventory of available and suitable sites for development based on the range of criteria as noted above. These comprise sites in the Green Belt which have been previously developed together with a limited number of sites for new development where Green Belt objectives have been compromised or are not as relevant as previously, and these comprise the exceptional circumstances required by the NPPF for the release of Green Belt.

6.8.9   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. Exceptions to the general presumption against development are either proposals supported by a case of 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.

Residential and non-residential development including agricultural and forestry workers dwellings

6.8.10   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 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.

6.8.11   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 BLP's objective to maintain a buoyant and broad-based economy in the countryside parts of the Borough.

6.8.12   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.

6.8.13   National planning guidance states that new homes should be sustainably located and this will normally be within existing towns and villages. The construction of new dwellings in the Green Belt constitutes inappropriate development and requires very special circumstances to be shown before they can be permitted. Very special circumstances may exist if a new dwelling is required for those engaged in agriculture or forestry where there is both an essential and permanent need for a worker to be housed at their place of work. The need for a new dwelling in the Green Belt for a worker engaged in any other type of enterprise will be judged on a case by case basis. Any such dwelling should be proportionate to the holding or other enterprise it is intended to serve, not the personal preference of the occupier. For this reason consideration may be given to the removal of permitted development rights for the extension of dwellings so approved to ensure that the dwelling remains proportionate and available to the agricultural holding in the long term.

6.8.14   To demonstrate that the need is essential applications for new dwellings in the Green Belt should show that a new dwelling is required on the grounds of animal welfare or agricultural/forestry processes, where attendance is needed at short notice, at all times of the day or night and where failure to attend could lead to serious loss of crops or livestock. The location of the dwelling must be suitable for this purpose. To demonstrate that the need is permanent, applications for new dwellings in the Green Belt should show that the worker is required on a full time basis, the enterprise is sound enough to support a permanent need both now and as far as can reasonably be seen ahead and that the dwelling will remain available while ever the need remains.

6.8.15   Where a new dwelling is being proposed to support a new agricultural or forestry enterprise, or where immediate viability cannot be established but there is a clear functional need, only a temporary planning permission will be granted initially so as to allow the enterprise to be developed or viability to be established. Temporary permission will normally be for a period of three years. Permission for a temporary dwelling should not be approved where a permanent dwelling would not be acceptable. If by the end of the initial three year period the viability of the enterprise cannot be demonstrated temporary permission will not normally be renewed nor will permission be granted for a permanent dwelling. If however, there is clear evidence that a permanent need is being established at the site the local planning authority may exceptionally agree an appropriate extension. If the need cannot be demonstrated then the local planning authority would require the building to be removed as it would be unlikely that a need would be established without repeated renewals.

6.8.16   It is reasonable to put in place mechanisms to ensure that both the proposed dwelling and any existing dwellings within the holding are retained for use by the enterprise. This will prevent further demand for dwellings in the Green Belt either because an existing dwelling has ceased to be available or because separate businesses have been created each with a need for residential accommodation. This will be achieved by the use of occupancy conditions. Agricultural occupancy conditions will only be removed where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for which the dwelling was approved no longer exists.

Facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries

6.8.17   There are many existing sport and recreation facilities in the Green Belt, including stables, football pitches, golf courses, cricket grounds etc. The Green Belt in the Borough also contains a number of cemeteries. For their continued proper functioning the need for new associated buildings occasionally arises. As the principal objective of Green Belt policy is to maintain an open character it follows that any new building, as well as the treatment of associated outside space, including for access and car parking should be no more than is genuinely required to enable that use to be carried on. Even then the consequent impact on the Green Belt may render a proposal unacceptable. In accordance with core planning principles it will be preferable if an existing building can be converted to provide the accommodation required.

6.8.18   Any development, including any new access, car parking areas, floodlighting or additional curtilage, should be unobtrusive and will not be acceptable where it would create a significant and essentially urban element in the landscape to the detriment of its Green Belt setting. Consideration will be given as to whether the new facility proposed would lead to the expansion of the existing use to the extent that it would become unacceptable in its location because the noise and other disturbance it would generate, both on site and on the road network leading to the site, would be harmful to the amenity of local residents or people visiting the area for recreation. In these cases permission should not be forthcoming.

6

Quality of Place

6.8.19   As a consequence of changes to agricultural practises and a decline in agriculture generally, the fragmentation of former agricultural holdings often results in individual land parcels being used for the keeping and grazing of horses, where a need for new stabling, including associated buildings for the storage of feed and tack, can arise. Usually the proposal will be for ready-made stables and these are generally acceptable where they are of timber construction and can be appropriately and unobtrusively sited. The use of more permanent materials should be resisted as this can result in a proliferation of permanent structures to the detriment of the open character of the landscape should the use as a stable cease. Stables should where possible be sited where access already exists, as the impact of any new access will be taken into account in assessing impact. In all cases the local authority will ensure that regard has been made of latest guidelines on the welfare of horses to ensure that the scale of the proposal is proportionate to the amount of land associated with it. Proposals deemed excessive will not be acceptable.

6.8.20   Facilities for the exercising of horses, (usually referred to as menages), riding arenas, training facilities and horse walkers may be acceptable in the Green Belt as they are associated with an open land use, provided that they can be unobtrusively located and designed and do not detrimentally impact on residential amenity, highway safety and landscape quality. They are structures that require a large, flat surface and in many cases this cannot be achieved without a significant degree of engineering involving the realignment of slopes and erection of retaining structures. This can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the local landscape and any proposal that would result in a detrimental impact will not be acceptable. Where the degree of engineering and impact can be accepted, it will be expected to be mitigated through the use of appropriate hard and soft landscaping. This will include consideration of the type of surfacing and boundary treatment proposed which should be appropriate to the character of the surrounding landscape.

6.8.21   Floodlighting at menages will not be accepted as this is deemed to have an undesirable urbanising effect and can lead to unacceptable light pollution in the countryside.

6.9 Policy SP6 Development in the Green Belt

Policy SP 6

Development in the Green Belt

1. The Metropolitan Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map and the open and rural character of the Green Belt will generally 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 Council will determine whether any local exceptional circumstances exist to warrant any changes to those boundaries.

Residential

3. New residential development in the Green Belt will only be permitted where:

   a. the development proposal would be entirely contained within the boundary of a settlement or constitutes limited infilling within the boundaries of a village as defined on the Policies Map

   b. Proposals for new dwellings associated with agriculture or forestry will normally be acceptable where:

      i. there is both an essential and permanent need for the new dwelling based on the functional requirements of the enterprise it is intended to serve;

      ii. the new dwelling is suitably located for the purpose for which it is intended;

      iii. there is no other suitable accommodation available in nearby settlements, no available existing dwelling on the holding and no suitable existing building on the holding available for conversion to residential use that would meet the demonstrated need;

      iv. it can be clearly shown that residential accommodation is required to establish an agricultural or forestry business in the green belt.

   c. where there would be no other justification for such accommodation, consideration will be given only to the grant of planning permission for the siting of a mobile home or other suitable form of temporary accommodation for a maximum of three years. If at the end of this period viability cannot be demonstrated the temporary accommodation would be expected to be removed and the site restored, unless there is clear evidence that a permanent need will be established within a period to be agreed with the local authority;

   d. a satisfactory mechanism will be put in place to secure the long term control of the dwelling by the business and of any other dwelling that meets the need of the business. Occupancy of the dwelling in question (and of any other dwelling that meets the need of the business) will be restricted to persons solely, mainly or last working in agriculture or in forestry. In all cases the history of the enterprise will be scrutinised and where fragmentation has occurred to sever land from agricultural dwellings or from buildings that could have been converted to residential use a new dwelling will not normally be permitted.

   e. any proposals for a new dwelling deemed disproportionate in scale to the enterprise it is intended to serve or inappropriately sited or designed in terms of impact, including the treatment of land around it, will not be acceptable. Consideration will be given to the removal of permitted development rights for the extension of any dwelling so approved where it is felt that extension could risk rendering the dwelling disproportionate to the holding and so unlikely to remain available for future occupation by an agricultural worker.

6

Quality of Place

f. 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

g. the development proposal relates to affordable housing on rural exception sites

h. the development proposal relates to affordable housing on rural exception sites through a community led proposal identified in a made Neighbourhood Plan

Non-residential

5. Development proposals for the reuse or replacement of non residential buildings in the Green Belt will only be permitted where:

a. an existing lawful building remains that is substantially complete

b. 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

c. 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

d. 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.

Equestrian

In the Green Belt proposals for new buildings or structures associated with outdoor sport, outdoor recreation or cemeteries will normally be acceptable provided that;

a. the scale of the building is no more than is genuinely required for the proper functioning of the enterprise or the use of the land to which it is associated;

b. the building is unobtrusively located and designed so as not to introduce a prominent urban element into a countryside location, including the impact of any new or improved access and car parking areas;

c. there is no detrimental effect on landscape quality, residential amenity or highway safety.

6.10 Countryside character

6.10.1   The BLP 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.

6.10.2   Five key countryside principles are important to the delivery of the BLP and sit alongside and complement Green Belt objectives:

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

6.10.3   Whilst striving for greater versatility in the rural area, the BLP seeks 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.

6.10.4   The BLP 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.

6.11 Policy SP7 Countryside Character

Policy SP 7

Countryside Character

1. Development proposals in the countryside will need to respect its character. Development proposals for infrastructure in the countryside will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there are very special circumstances which outweigh any harm to the Green Belt. 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. Development proposals will be permitted where very special circumstances can be demonstrated that take into account the following principles:

   a. development 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.

3.   Development proposals for the following types of development will be permitted, subject to the requirements of policy regarding the Green Belt:

   a. development for agriculture

   b. the re-use or replacement of non-residential buildings

   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

   e. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites.

Housing   7

Housing

7.1 Context

7.1.1   The BLP supports the provision of housing to ensure that homes are available in the Borough 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 should address.

7.1.2   It is vital to make the best and most efficient use of previously developed land to minimise the amount of new land required for house building and 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.

7.1.3   The Council has determined that to aim to meet the level of need for housing in the Borough there will be a limited amount of development and redevelopment on land presently designated as Green Belt. Strategic locations have been identified in Policy SP1 and further sites are identified in spatial policies for housing, economic development, retail and other uses and activities.

7.1.4   The Council will monitor the supply of housing land to ensure that a five year supply of deliverable sites is maintained as required by Government legislation. The Council will also keep under review the monitoring and updating of housing land supply data through an Annual Monitoring Report.

7.2 Amount and distribution

7.2.1   The NPPF requires local authorities to meet the full 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 indicate that development should be restricted. This is placed against the background of positively seeking opportunities to meet need and the BLP takes a positive approach to providing for the identified level of need across the Borough as noted in the spatial strategy(Policy SP1).

7.2.2   The spatial strategy proposes the building of 14,211 new homes within the Borough in strategic locations as identified in Policy SP1, sites in existing settlements, important previously developed sites in the Green Belt, and a limited number of sites which will be released from the Green Belt due to the exceptional circumstances identified by this Local Plan. The spatial strategy pursues with vigour the more intensive use of urban land, particularly in town centre locations.

7.2.3   The result of the step change in the level of housing provision within Maidenhead town centre will result in higher urban density development and inevitably alter the character of the central area by increasing the number of residents and increasing the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre particularly into the evenings and weekends. The Council is also allocating a number of smaller brownfield sites elsewhere which will make a valuable contribution towards meeting the identified need for housing. There is a number of sites where a mix of uses is proposed including housing, employment, retail and community facilities and details are provided on the individual site proformas.

7.2.4   The Council will be supportive of new residential development on the number of small sites that are impractical to identify in advance and other 'windfall' sites which unexpectedly become available during the plan period providing that the sites are suitable and appropriate for residential development. This source of land recycling is expected to provide for at least and additional 3,772 new dwellings over the plan period.

7.2.5   As noted in Section 5.8 above, the Council has examined in detail the scope for parcels of land on the edges of settlements to be released from the Green Belt in the Edge of Settlement Study, Volumes 1 and 2; where:

a. development could reasonably be fitted into the urban fabric of existing settlements

b. landowners are willing to promote development

c   the contributions that the parcels make towards Green Belt purposes are considered to be modest

d. a range of other planning requirements are able to be satisfied e.g in terms of flood risk, impact on landscape, wildlife or heritage.

7

Housing

7.2.6   National policy and guidance require the 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 migration and demographic change.

7.2.7   The Borough forms part of a wider Strategic Housing Market Area and has close links with other Housing Market Areas in neighbouring areas. 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 objectively assessed need for the Borough of 712 dwellings per annum or 13,528 new dwellings over the plan period from 1st April 2013 to 1st April 2032.

7.2.8   The approach to identifying sites seeks to meet the identified need for housing in line with the expectations of national policy and guidance and reflects the requirement 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.

Housing need

7.2.9   The BLP aims to accommodate a significant increase in housing provision over the plan period. This includes continued work to identify emerging windfall 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.

7.2.10   The BLP makes provision for 14,211 new dwellings over the plan period from 2013 to 2032, which comprises the objectively assessed need of 13,528 plus a 5% increase to take account of non delivery. A significant contribution of 3,772 new dwellings towards meeting this target has already been made by sites which have either been developed or are committed.

7.2.11   A further contribution of 1,950 dwellings is made by small sites and windfalls over the plan period. It is proposed to allocate a number of former Green Belt sites to accommodate new dwellings, and 1,500 new dwellings within an area which includes the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan boundary.

Category	Amount
Completions since 1st April 2013	1,476
Commitments (sites with planning permission)	2,296
Small sites allowance/windfall (unidentified sites)	1,950
Allocations (defined in Policy H01)	8,489
Total	14,211

Table 7 : Housing supply

Housing delivery and targets

7.2.12   Government policy requires the Council to illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period. 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:

Time period	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016
South East Plan[1] housing target			
Emerging Borough Local Plan housing target	490?[1]	490?[1]	490?[1]
No of new dwellings completed	360	514	602

Table 8 : Historic Housing Delivery

7.2.13   The BLP should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against housing requirements, with an additional buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land related to the rate of housing delivery. The plan will also need to identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years six to ten of the plan period, and where possible years eleven to fifteen, and will need to show a trajectory of expected housing delivery throughout the plan period.

7.2.14   NPPG recommends that the assessment of a local delivery record is likely to be more robust if a longer term view is taken, since this is likely to take account of the peaks and troughs of the housing market cycle. Housing delivery within the Borough has historically been above the Berkshire Structure Plan housing target and South East Plan housing target with the exception of the reduced returns in 2010/11 to 2012/13, which were due to the effects of the economic recession.

7.2.15   Delivery rates have since recovered and are currently rising above past trends, and a 5% additional 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 five year housing land supply which will include a list of the sites considered to comprise the supply as at 1st April each year.

7.2.16   The five year housing land supply figure 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 HO1.

7.2.17   Increasing the housing delivery from past trends to the levels required to meet demand during the plan period will require a market adjustment and delivery of the necessary infrastructure, particularly for larger sites. This is likely to result in a phased housing delivery as illustrated below. However, the early delivery of allocated sites will be supported where appropriate, subject to the provision of necessary infrastructure.

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1   The South East Plan was the Regional Spatial strategy for the south east. It was revoke by government on 25 March 2013

7 Housing

7.3 Housing development sites

Housing development sites

7.3.1   Sites are allocated for housing through the process described in Sections 5 and 7.2 above as the result of the application of criteria identified in Section 7.2 above and through the sustainability appraisal process. Allocated sites in Policy HO1 are in the following five categories:

- strategic locations for development
- Maidenhead
- Windsor
- Ascot, Sunningdale and Sunninghill
- other areas.

7.4 Policy HO1 Housing Development Sites

Policy HO 1

Housing Development Sites

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

Site reference	Site	Estimated Capacity (Net)
	Strategic locations	
	Maidenhead town centre	
HA1	Railway Station	150
HA2	Reform Road	150
HA3	Saint-Cloud Way	640
HA4	West Street	240
HA5	York Road	320
	Maidenhead Golf Course and associated sites	

Site reference	Site	Estimated Capacity (Net)
HA6	Maidenhead Golf Course	2000
HA7	Land south of Harvest Hill Road, Maidenhead	350
HA8	Land south of Manor Lane, Maidenhead	180
HA9	Land south of the A308(M), west of Ascot Road and north of the M4 (Known as the Triangle Site)	150
HA10	Ascot Town Centre	300
HA11	Land west of Windsor, north and south of A308	650
	Maidenhead	
HA12	Boyn Valley Road Industrial Area, Maidenhead	300
HA13	Exclusive House, Oldfield Road, Maidenhead	30
HA14	Land south of Ray Mill Road East, Maidenhead	60
HA15	Middlehurst, 90-103 Boyn Valley Road, Maidenhead	45
HA16	Osbornes Garage, 55 St Marks Road Maidenhead	20
HA17	Tectonic Place, Holyport Road, Maidenhead	25
HA18	Land between Windsor Road and Bray Lake, south of Maidenhead	140
HA19	Land east of Whitebrook Park, Lower Cookham Road, Maidenhead	75
HA20	Land east of Woodlands Park Avenue and north of Woodlands Business Park, Maidenhead	300
HA21	Land known as Spencer's Farm, north of Lutman Lane, Maidenhead	300
HA22	Land north of Breadcroft Lane and south of the railway line, Maidenhead	100
HA23	Land west of Monkey Island Lane, including water treatment works, Maidenhead	100
HA24	Summerleaze, Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead	80
	Windsor	
HA25	Minton Place, Victoria Street, Windsor	75
HA26	Shirley Avenue (Vale Road Industrial Estate), Windsor	80
HA27	Territorial Army Centre, Bolton Road, Windsor	25

7 Housing

Site reference	Site	Estimated Capacity (Net)
HA28	Windsor and Eton Riverside Station Car Park, Windsor	30
HA29	Windsor Police Station, Alma Road, Windsor	35
	Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale	
HA30	Ascot Station Car Park, Ascot	35
HA31	Englemere Lodge, London Road, Ascot	10
HA32	Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot	250
HA33	Silwood Park, Sunningdale	75
HA34	Sunningdale Park, Sunningdale	230
HA35	Gas holder site, Bridge Road, Sunninghill	53
HA36	Broomhall Car Park, Sunningdale	28
HA37	White House, London Road, Sunningdale	10
	Other Areas	
HA38	Cookham Gas holder, Whyteladyes Lane, Cookham	60
HA39	Land east of Strande Park, Cookham	20
HA40	Land north of Lower Mount Farm Long Lane Cookham	200
HA41	Land north and east of Churchmede Secondary School, Priory Road, Datchet	175
HA42	Land at Slough Road/Riding Court Road, Datchet	150
HA43	Land north of Eton Road adj to St Augustine's Church, Datchet	35
HA44	Land east of Queen Mother Reservoir, Horton	130
HA45	Land adjacent to Coppermill Road, Horton	27
HA46	Straight Works, Old Windsor	20
HA47	95 Straight Road, Old Windsor	11
HA48	Tithe Farm, Tithe Lane, Wraysbury	20
	TOTAL	**8,489**

7.5 Meeting housing need

7.5.1   The Borough seeks to deliver a wide variety of high quality homes 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 take account of local need to allow for a genuine choice of housing options and the creation of sustainable, balanced and mixed communities.

Protection of existing stock

7.5.2   Given the pressure on existing housing stock the Borough 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.

7.5.3   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 BLP 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.

Self or custom build

7.5.4   The Government is actively supporting the self and custom-build sectors for people who wish to design and build their own home. The Borough is obliged to keep a register of people and interested associations that are seeking land to construct self build or custom build housing. Regard will be had to the information on the register when the Borough is carrying out its planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions.

7.5.5   Self-build and custom housebuilding registers provide valuable information on the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in a relevant authority's area and provide evidence base of demand for this type of housing. Future demand for such plots will be kept under review and this may lead to the allocation of further sites to meet expressed demand.

7 Housing

7.6 Policy HO2 Meeting Housing Need

Policy HO 2

Meeting Housing Need

1. 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
>
> 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 permitted 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 have been taken into account and show how they seek to demonstrate how dwellings have been designed to be adaptable.

4. Development proposals should 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 Council 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. retention of the residential use would be undesirable due to proven environmental constraints
>
> b. the development proposal would provide an essential community service or another form of residential accommodation;

5. Development proposals that would result in the partial loss of an existing unit of residential accommodation to non residential use will only be permitted 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.

7.7 Affordable housing

7.7.1   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 regard 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 serves to increase demand for housing which in turn leads to increased house prices.

7.7.2   Affordability is a measure of whether housing can be afforded by certain groups of households and is defined by the relationship between local incomes and the local general housing market. Therefore, the ability of a household to satisfy its own housing requirement is fundamentally a factor of the relationship between local house prices and household income.

7.7.3   The high cost of home ownership in the Borough has always presented an issue of affordability for many of the Borough's residents and leaves many people unable to afford market housing. In addition the high cost of renting on the open market leaves many local people unable to afford this tenure without dependency on benefits. This increases the demand for the provision of affordable housing. The current SHMA shows that there is a need for an additional 434 new affordable homes in the Borough every year.

7.7.4   Affordability is a major concern to those on the lowest earnings, who are generally first time buyers. The Borough's affordability ratio of median house price to salary is 13.45 (CLG, 2015) which means that house cost, on average, over thirteen times the average salary. Due to the high price of housing many 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.

7.7.5   The Council has a corporate policy to encourage affordable housing, including key worker housing. The Council seeks to encourage more residents to invest in securing their own housing in the Borough and thus the provision of a broader range of affordable housing products to meet the demand across the whole of the local housing market.

Hierarchy of provision - alternative sites

7.7.6   The Council will expect new affordable housing to be provided on site in the first instance. If, in accordance with the policy, a case is advanced justifying provision on an alternative site, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to identify a suitable alternative or donor site. To ensure no overall loss of affordable units, the alternative site will be expected to deliver those units foregone on the original site plus any affordable units that would be required should the alternative site in itself also trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing. In such circumstances the Council will require an amount of affordable housing commensurate with that which could have been secured had the site come forward in its own right in addition to the quantum of affordable housing to be provided to secure compliance with obligations for the original site.

7.7.7   The delivery of affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the following order of priority.

a. on-site as part of the development and distributed across the development as much as is reasonable and practical to create a sustainable, balanced community.

b. on an alternative site, only if provision would result in a more effective use of available resources or would meet an identified housing need, such as providing a better social mix and wider housing choice.

c. a financial payment to be utilised in providing affordable housing on an alternative site.

7.7.8   Planning conditions and/or obligations will be used to ensure that the affordable housing will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled to alternative affordable housing provision.

Viability

7.7.9   In exceptional circumstances, where the provision of affordable housing in accordance with this policy is not economically viable, the Council will expect the submission of financial appraisal information alongside the planning application. Applicants will be expected to pay for an independent review of the information submitted.

7

Housing

7.7.10   If the Council is satisfied that affordable housing cannot be provided in accordance with this policy, it will seek to negotiate alternative provision. Reference may be made to the economic viability analysis provided for the Community Infrastructure Levy which is now implemented.

Exceptional circumstances

7.7.11   On the basis of the results of the SHMA and the HELAA, it is clear that the Council will not be able to deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet the level of identified need. The Council will therefore explore opportunities to deliver affordable housing from other sources of sites. The details will be determined on a site-by-site basis through negotiation.

7.7.12   The proportion of affordable housing should not prejudice the provision of other planning elements necessary and reasonably related to the scheme. This will not override the objective of achieving sustainable development in the Borough.

7.7.13   This policy applies to all sites where new residential development is proposed, including mixed use schemes and proposals where there is a net increase in the number of units on a site. This will include sheltered and extra care accommodation and other forms of residential accommodation where relevant.

7.7.14   Financial contributions collected by the Council in lieu of on site provision will be used to fund new affordable homes through the following mechanisms:

- the provision of grant funding to Registered Providers.
- the provision of grant funding directly to a developer.
- a local housing company

7.7.15   The Council will prepare and keep under review an Affordable Housing Delivery SPD which will provide detailed information regarding the implementation and delivery of this policy. Specifically, the SPD will include:

- a formula for calculating financial contributions in lieu of on site provision
- details of the size and type of units that the Council will expect to be delivered on site
- details of the distribution of affordable housing across developments (e.g. approach to 'pepper potting' and 'clustering')
- the Council's approach to rounding
- details of any exceptional circumstances
- advice on the open book approach to viability assessments
- details on the requirement for affordable units to be secured in affordable tenure in perpetuity through the use of section 106 agreements

Rural exception sites

7.7.16   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 in which they have an element of equity. There is a considerable component within the community across the Borough, particularly in the countryside 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.

7.7.17   There are few opportunities to build in the countryside due to the Green Belt. Certain parts of the Borough are designated as 'Rural Areas' under current guidance and legislation and there are provisions within legislation that allow 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 Borough 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.

7.7.18   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 is, the minimum land value likely to trigger an owner to sell the land.

7.8 Policy HO3 Affordable Housing

Policy HO 3

Affordable Housing

1. The quantum (subject to the minimum requirement of 30%), tenure, size and type of affordable housing units will be negotiated on a site by site basis, having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors.

2. Development proposals that provide for a wide range of affordable housing products in line with government initiatives will be encouraged.

3. Constraints on the development of the site imposed by other planning objectives.

4. The need to achieve a successful housing development in terms of the location and mix of affordable homes.

5. The costs relating to the development; in particular the financial viability of developing the site (using an approved viability model) in which instance the Council will consider off site contributions in lieu of on site provision.

6. If a site allocated or identified for housing is sub-divided so as to create two or more separate development schemes one or more of which falls below the relevant threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing to reflect the provision that would have been achieved on the site as a whole had it come forward as a single scheme for the allocated or identified site.

7. The delivery of affordable housing will be provided in accordance with the following order of priority.

    a. On-site as part of the development and distributed across the development as much as is reasonable and practical to create a sustainable, balanced community.

    b. On an alternative site, only if provision would result in a more effective use of available resources or would meet an identified housing need, such as providing a better social mix and wider housing choice.

    c. Planning conditions and/or obligations will be used to ensure that the affordable housing will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled to alternative affordable housing provision.

Rural exception sites

5. 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

7 Housing

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

h. any application including market housing must be accompanied by a development appraisal to demonstrate viability.

7.9 Gypsies and Travellers

7.9.1 Gypsies and Travellers form part of the community within the Borough with particular housing needs. The Council 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 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.

7.9.2 The Council undertook a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in 2015 to help inform the development of the Gypsy and Travellers Borough Local Plan using the planning definitions available at the time. Recent legislative changes have altered these definitions and the Council is now working with other Berkshire local authorities to provide the robust evidence base needed for appropriate proposals for this specific area of housing need.

7.10 Policy HO4 Gypsies and Travellers

Policy HO 4

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 Showpeople 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

   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

   d. the site is not located in a flood zone as shown on the Policies Map.

3. In addition to the above, the following criterion applies to Travelling Showpeople accommodation only: 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.

4. Due to the nature of this housing need, there will be continuing cooperation with neighbouring local planning authorities to ensure that the appropriate demand is identified and provision made.

7.11 Housing layout and design

7.11.1   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. It is also important to ensure that those good and attractive elements of the existing environment are protected and 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.

7.11.2   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.

7.11.3   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 Policy SS3 which sets out design principles which are applicable to all proposals, including residential.

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

7.12 Policy HO5 Housing Layout and Design

Policy HO 5

Housing Layout and Design

1. Development proposals for residential development should achieve high standards of design and landscaping to create attractive and safe residential areas.

2. In addition to the requirements of Policy SP3 Design, development proposals for residential development will be required to demonstrate how the proposal aims to mitigate the impact of climate change, and how 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 such measures as siting and orientation, internal layout, landscaping and natural lighting and ventilation, energy efficiency, micro-generation, thermal mass, water recycling, sustainable drainage and tree coverage of temperature regulation

   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

   i. avoid prejudicing the satisfactory development of the wider area.

3. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

7

Housing

7.13 Policy HO6 Density and Amenity

Policy HO 6

Housing Density and Amenity

1. Proposals for higher density residential schemes in sustainable locations in and around town centres will be permitted, particularly those with good access to transport nodes and interchanges. The density of development will 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

   c. the accessibility of the location and the availability of existing and proposed services, facilities and infrastructure.

2. Development proposals for new or extended residential accommodation will be required to**:**

   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.

3. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

7.14 Policy HO7 Sub-division of Dwellings

Policy HO 7

Sub-division of Dwellings

1. Development proposals for the sub-division of dwellings to form additional dwellings or housing in multiple occupation in areas excluded from the Green Belt will be permitted 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 usable outdoor amenity space

   g. provide suitable space for refuse and recycling storage and drying space

   h. provide satisfactory access, car parking and secure cycle parking.

2. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and a Parking Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

7.15 Policy HO8 Development Involving Residential Gardens

Policy HO 8

Development Involving Residential Gardens

1. The erection of new dwellings in residential gardens in areas excluded from the Metropolitan Green Belt will be permitted where this can be achieved without compromising the quality of the environment and where they can 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

   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

   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.

2. In areas within the Metropolitan Green Belt disproportionate additions to buildings and the creation of outbuildings are inappropriate and in such cases, development proposals would need to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

7

Housing

7.16 Policy HO9 Extensions and Outbuildings in Residential Curtilages

Policy HO 9

Extensions and Outbuildings in Residential Curtilages

1. 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 will be permitted 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. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

Economy   8

8

Economy

8.1 Context

8.1.1   The Borough is part of the prosperous Thames Valley and one of the key drivers of economic activity in the area. The BLP seeks 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 which ensures that local residents will benefit from a thriving and healthy economy.

8.1.2   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.

8.1.3   Significant local sources of employment comprise a variety of major companies. GlaxoSmithKline has one of their manufacturing sites in Maidenhead and there are significant offices for major international companies such as Hitachi, Volvo, Blackberry and Seiko together 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.

8.1.4   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.

8.2 Economic development

8.2.1   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.

8.2.2   Alongside these strengths, challenges exist which may act to limit the growth of the local economy these include high housing costs and wage level, high levels of out-commuting to London and a highly constrained development land supply.

8.2.3   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.

8.2.4   Economic growth in Berkshire is guided by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP). RBWM is working closely with the LEP and the other Berkshire authorities to ensure that the aspirations of the TVBLEP's Strategic Economic Plan for Berkshire (SEP) can be accommodated in a way that recognises the Borough's very special character and the considerable land supply constraints it faces. The Berkshire SEP articulates how the LEP will achieve the ambition of creating 20,000 new jobs across Berkshire by 2021.

8.2.5   Employment space will be managed and appropriate development and redevelopment supported including the promotion of appropriate infrastructure to support home and flexible working patters. This will be supported by the Borough's Economic Development Strategy.

Economy   8

8.2.6   TVBLEP and the six Berkshire authorities jointly commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to undertake identification of the functional economic market areas (FEMAs) that they operate within and also to analyse the land requirements necessary to accommodate jobs in the main "B Class" sectors which together broadly cover office, manufacturing and warehousing land uses. These studies form a key part of the detailed analysis for the implementation of the SEP and are an essential element of the plan making process.

8.2.7   The evidence base to support the identification of economic development needs for RBWM draws on these Economic Development Needs Assessments (EDNAs) produced by NLP.   The studies have been carried out by NLP in accordance with the National Planning Practice Guidance to provide an assessment of future business needs and requirements for employment land and floorspace within each FEMA, focusing on the group of 'B Class' sectors. However, RBWM recognises that not all jobs fall within these use classes; growth in the service industry, retail, leisure and tourism is also expected to provide further economic growth.

8.2.8   Two core FEMAs operate across the Borough which reflects the varied characteristics and economic roles associated with different parts of it. The Borough's position within two FEMAs illustrates the equally strong relationships that RBWM exhibits with more central parts of Berkshire as well as areas to the north and east. In labour market terms, eastern parts of the Borough share a Travel to Work Area (TTWA) with Slough and Heathrow, while northern and western parts of the Borough have stronger functional economic relationships with western M4 corridor locations such as Reading and Wokingham.

8.2.9   Three separate FEMAs were identified as follows: Western Berkshire FEMA comprising West Berkshire, a Central Berkshire FEMA comprising Bracknell Forest, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham and an Eastern Berkshire FEMA comprising Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks.

8.2.10   The evidence from the studies help to inform the economic policies for the BLP. The outputs of the EDNAs include land requirements from the two FEMAs relating to RBWM; the figures for B Class employment space requirements were based on three scenarios for future economic growth to 2036 based on labour demand, past trends of completion of employment space, and local labour supply.   These are reproduced below in Figures 9 and 10 below:

Land Use	Scenario 1. Baseline Labour Demand	Scenario 2. Past Completion Rates	Scenario 3. Labour Supply
Offices (B1a/B1b)	50,500	-25,760	52,680
Industrial (B1c/B2/B8)	171,580	-26,680	168,400
Total B Class Land (sq.m)	222,080	-52,440	221,080

Table 9 : Net Employment Space Requirements (GEA sq.m) for RBWM by Scenario (2013 to 2036)

Land Use	Scenario 1. Baseline Labour Demand	Scenario 2. Past Completion Rates	Scenario 3. Labour Supply
Offices (B1a/B1b)	19.3	6.3	19.6
Industrial (B1c/B2/B8)	52.2	1.5	51.4
Total B Class Land (ha)	**71.5**	**7.8**	**71.0**

Table 10 : Gross Employment Land Requirements (ha) for RBWM by Scenario (2013 to 2036)

8.2.11   The derivation of floorspace requirements from forecast growth is highly sensitive to the assumptions made during the analysis. A key assumption used in the EDNAs relates to the conversion of industrial sectors to use classes and types of property. The translations that the EDNA has made provide a good approximation on the macro-economic scale of sub-regional planning, but may not be the most appropriate to the specific circumstances and markets within individual districts.

8.2.12   For RBWM the assessment for B8, B2, and B1(c) figures appears at odds with market trends, reflecting the propensity for head offices of warehousing companies to locate within the Borough. To check the validity of the findings in the local context, RBWM have commissioned NLP to undertake an assessment of the

8

Economy

appropriateness of the broad sector classifications used in the Berkshire EDNAs to the local circumstances in RBWM. This sensitivity analysis is expected to identify a higher need for B1 floorspace and a lower requirement for B2 warehousing; which would be analogous to market trends.

8.2.13   In the light of this further work and the local circumstances, the BLP uses the past trends of completions of employment space as indicating plan requirements which have been calculated to 2036. Adjusting for the length of the plan period from 2013 to 2032 indicates that the requirements will be 43,320sqm.

8.2.14   The EDNA forecasts indicate that there will continue to be a demand for office space within the Borough accompanied by continued demand for industrial and warehousing floorspace, driven by the distribution sector. In response, policies within the BLP aim to protect existing employment floorspace and support the creation of further employment floorspace both through the policy approach and allocation of specific sites.

8.2.15   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.

8.2.16   Policies will manage the availability of employment land and premises flexibly 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 and policies will ensure that any loss of employment land or premises is properly justified by evidence.

8.3 Policy ED1 Economic Development

Policy ED 1

Economic Development

1. A range of different types and sizes of employment land and premises will be encouraged 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

2. Proposals should endeavour to improve the education and skills levels of Borough residents and initiatives will 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.

3. The development of large and small businesses will be supported to encourage local employment opportunities and useful services.

8.4 Growth and skills

8.4.1   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.

8.4.2   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.

8.4.3   The EDNA identifies there will also be a rise in smarter and more flexible forms of working. This reflects national trends and is likely to become a more important factor in the local economy in future. To reflect the need for flexibility and support smart growth in the economy encouragement the BLP aims to support home-working and other forms of flexible working, including the provision of the infrastructure necessary to support this.

8.4.4   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.

8.4.5   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 these activities.

8.4.6   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.

8.4.7   Home working will be supported 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.

8.5 Range of uses

8.5.1   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.

8.5.2   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.

8.5.3   The presence of a range of types of businesses provides a number of benefits for Borough residents. These include the opportunity to access sustainably 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.

8.5.4   Nationally 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.

8.6 Small businesses

8.6.1   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.

8.6.2   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 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.

8

Economy

8.7 Defined employment sites

8.7.1   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.

8.7.2   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.

8.7.3   The BLP 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.

8.7.4   This policy approach helps to reinforce the current floorspace provision and enable the delivery of a flexible supply of floorspace that is responsive to the needs of local businesses. 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.

8.7.5   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.

8.8 Policy ED2 Defined Employment Sites

Policy ED 2

Employment Sites

1. The BLP will retain sites for economic use and employment as defined on the Policies Map and inset maps. Proposals for other uses on defined employment sites will be supported if they demonstrate a sufficient benefit for the economy.

2. The following sites are allocated as strategic locations in Policy SP1 for mixed uses:

    a. Land south of the A308(M), west of Ascot Road and North of the M4 (Known as the Triangle Site)

    b. Maidenhead town centre:

        i.   Railway station

        ii.   Reform Road, Maidenhead

        iii. Saint-Cloud Way, Maidenhead

        iv.   West Street, Maidenhead

        v.   York Road, Maidenhead

    c. Ascot Centre

3. Employment sites listed below are defined on the Policies Map 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. Employment sites listed below are defined on the Policies Map as Industrial Areas:

    a. Furze Platt Industrial Area, Maidenhead

    b. Cordwallis Industrial Area, Maidenhead

    c. Howarth Road, Stafferton Way, Maidenhead

    d. Prior's Way Industrial Estate, Maidenhead

    e. Vansittart Road Industrial Area, Windsor

    f. Fairacres Industrial Area, Windsor

    g. Queens Road Industrial Estate, Sunninghill

5. The sites listed below are defined on the Policies Map as Mixed Use Areas:

    a. Land north and east of Churchmede Secondary School, Priory Road, Datchet

    b. Land at Riding Court Road and London Road, Datchet

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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Within industrial, business and mixed use areas, development proposals that improve and upgrade the facilities available to support businesses will be supported.

8

Economy

8.9 Other sites and loss of employment floorspace

8.9.1   The BLP 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, together with premises for industrial and warehousing operations.

8.9.2   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. By ensuring that a sufficient portfolio of sites will remain available to service businesses in a variety of economic sectors the policies aims to support the needs of the local economy.

8.9.3   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 and where the site is already in employment use, the proposals will be supported in principle.

8.9.4   The policy approach 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.

8.9.5   In order ensure that any loss of employment land is properly justified each application will need to be supported by appropriate 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.

8.9.6   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.

8.9.7   Recent legislation on extensions to permitted development rights allows 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.

8.10 Policy ED3 Other Sites and Loss of Employment Floorspace

Policy ED 3

Other Sites and Loss of Employment Floorspace

1. Development proposals for employment development on sites currently in employment use will be supported.

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.

4. Marketing evidence should prove that both the land and the premises have been widely advertised and marketed for a wine range of economic uses for at least one continuous year immediately prior to submission of a relevant planning application. The exercise should 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.

5. Information should be provided detailing any interest received from potential buyers or tenants since the marketing commence. Where interest has been received 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.

6. Marketing evidence will be assessed within the context of:

     a. the overall quality of the site as an employment location

     b. the level of occupation/vacancy of the site

     c. consideration of the suitability of conversion for start up and micro businesses

     d. whether the employment use generates any adverse impacts on the adjoining area

     e. Possible benefits from relocating the economic use; possible benefits from using the site for alternative uses

     f. The achievement of other plan objectives.

Town Centres and Retail   9

Town Centres and Retail

9.1 Context

9.1.1   Town centres offer an accessible focal point for a range of commercial premises, shops and leisure facilities for the surrounding communities. Attractive town centres can contribute to the image and character of an area, helping to attract business and investment.

9.1.2   Changes in the retail sector coupled with the continued growth of online shopping mean that the role of town centres is evolving. It is essential that the attractiveness of town centres is supported by planning policy in order to maintain their vitality and viability.

9.1.3   The Thames Valley has a complex network and hierarchy of town centres, with each fulfilling different but complementary roles. The retail offer in the Borough is dominated by the two town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead where a range of comparison goods shops, leisure services and services are provided.

9.1.4   Further district centres at Ascot and Sunningdale and a number of local centres provide for predominantly convenience based shopping and service needs in other locations across the Borough. A survey of visitors undertaken to support the 2015 Retail and Town Centre Study confirmed that the retail catchment of RBWM extends into neighbouring areas, with residents from settlements outside the Borough including Beaconsfield, Marlow, Staines and Slough, making use of the services on offer in the town centres of Windsor and Maidenhead. The nearby centres of Reading, Bracknell and central London offer the widest range of shops and services in locations that are easily accessible by both road and rail to local residents.

9.1.5   It is important that the BLP 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.

9.1.6   The BLP strategy is to promote and maintain a range of uses within town centres, and define a hierarchy of centre including a strong, central core of retail and allied uses, to support their vitality and viability and promote customer choice. The BLP 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.

9.2 Hierarchy of centres

9.2.1   The hierarchy of centres within the Borough is shown in this policy. It is important to note that centres do not operate in isolation and the Thames Valley has a complex network and hierarchy of town centres, with each fulfilling different but complementary roles.

9.2.2   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.

9.2.3   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.

9.2.4   Windsor is a highly attractive town centre which supplements the shopping and service needs of residents with stores catering to the needs of tourists. The town was 107th in the 2014 CACI Retail Footprint rankings having risen from 215th in 2010.   There is a strong comparison retail offer in the town.

9.2.5   The majority of the town's retail stores are concentrated within the King Edward Court shopping precinct, the Windsor Royal Station development which is also hosts an arts and crafts market, and the more traditional high street on Peascod Street. Together these areas comprise a relatively high quality environment.

9.2.6   Core shopping areas benefit from the proximity of Windsor Castle which generates high footfall. The cafes and restaurants around Windsor Royal Station help increase the footfall for a cluster of fashion retailers catering to the high end of the market which are located there. Businesses that serve the tourist market are concentrated to the north of Peascod Street and east of High Street.

9

Town Centres and Retail

9.2.7   The town centre of Maidenhead has been the subject of a programme of public realm improvements which is ongoing. While the attractiveness of the centre has been hampered in recent years by high vacancy rates, the level of vacancies is now declining. A range of major and multiple retailers are located within the town, focused within the Nicholsons Centre shopping precinct and along the pedestrianised section of the High Street. There is a wide range of land uses within the town centre including a range of offices, hotels, cinema, restaurants and residential developments, which together help to ensure that the centre enjoys high levels of footfall.

9.2.8   Ascot district centre has a total of 56 retail units which together cater for local convenience shopping and service needs. It is a pleasant centre with well maintained streets and shop units and enjoys a very low vacancy rate. Ascot has a high proportion of comparison goods shops and a high number of independent retailers which benefit from the footfall generated by the four retails anchors of Boots, Tesco, Budgens and WH Smith.

9.2.9   Visitors are attracted to Ascot because of the racecourse and their spend helps to support a number of retail outlets catering to the high-end of the market, and the many cafés in the High Street. A number of bars and pubs thrive from the patronage of race goers and the evening economy is supported by racecourse activities. However, traffic congestion and a lack of suitable parking is perceived to be a problem by users of Ascot centre.

9.2.10   Sunningdale district centre is attractive with well maintained streets enhanced by planters and shop canopies. The centre is fragmented with two distinct centres to the east and west separated by the railway line. Sunningdale has a total of 58 retail units with a very high proportion of comparison good retailers for a centre of this size and also a relatively high proportion of financial and business service units for a district centre, including a number of estate agents and a bank.

9.2.11   The centre has a low vacancy rate. A Waitrose supermarket is the main anchor and the majority of visitors to Sunningdale travel by private car. Traffic congestion and the high costs of car parking are perceived to be a problem by users of Sunningdale centre.

9.2.12   Local neighbourhood centres are located at Cookham; Cookham Rise; Datchet; Dedworth Road West, Windsor; Eton; Eton Wick; Old Windsor; Shifford Crescent, Maidenhead; Sunninghill; Vale Road, Windsor; Wessex Way, Cox Green; Wooton Way, Maidenhead; Wraysbury provide for daily needs.

9.3 Policy TR1 Hierarchy of Centres

Policy TR 1

Hierarchy of Centres

1. The area's centres will be supported and strengthened to ensure that they continue to be the focus of communities. Initiatives which safeguard and enhance their role and function will be supported.

2. The hierarchy of centres in the Borough is defined as follows:

   Town Centres: Windsor; Maidenhead

   District Centres: Ascot; Sunningdale

   Local Centres: Cookham; Cookham Rise; Datchet; Dedworth Road West, Windsor; Eton; Eton Wick; Old Windsor; Shifford Crescent, Maidenhead; Sunninghill; Vale Road, Windsor; Wessex Way, Cox Green; Wooton Way, Maidenhead; Wraysbury.

3. Windsor and Maidenhead will be the preferred location for the development of main town centre uses, followed by the District and Local Centres. The extent of the centres is defined on the Policies Map.

4. Development proposals for main town centre uses including retail development, leisure, entertainment facilities, offices and arts, cultural and tourism development will be supported in accordance with the hierarchy, provided they are appropriate in terms of their scale and design, and are well-related to the centre.

9.4 Retail context

9.4.1   The retail studies undertaken to aid the development of the BLP, support the view that a successful retail sector is key to securing a vital and viable town centre. The most recent 2015 Retail study produced by Cushman and Wakefield (the Retail Study) supports the view that a key method of supporting the retail sector is through securing a mix of uses within town centres to maximise the likelihood of linked trips, which have the effect of increasing the amount of time spent in the centres and the likelihood of a higher spend per trip.

9.4.2   Borough residents are expected to continue to use centres both within and outside the Borough to fulfil their diverse retail and leisure needs, with centres fulfilling different functions for different people. The BLP aims to promote and maintain a range of uses within the defined centres, including a strong, central core of retail and allied uses, to support their vitality and viability and promote customer choice.

9.5 Frontages and diversity of use

9.5.1   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.

9.5.2   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.

9.5.3   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.

9.5.4   Secondary frontages comprise areas where a greater variety of uses is apparent and 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.

9.5.5   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.

9.5.6   The BLP 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.

9.5.7   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.

9.6 Windsor town centre

9.6.1   The retail function of any town centre is defined by its Class A1 shops whilst other uses play a valuable role in creating a balanced town centre and an attractive experience for visitors. In Windsor, there is a need to balance the needs of residents with the needs of visitors and tourists.

9.6.2   The forecasts for retail growth in Windsor are based on retaining the 2015 pattern of market shares over the forecast period. Under this assumption, it is expected that Windsor will have the capacity to accommodate a net tradable area of approximately 5,950m^2 comparison goods floorspace and 740m^2 convenience goods floorspace between 2016 and 2032.

9

Town Centres and Retail

9.6.3   Windsor town centre is highly constrained and it is considered that the modest capacity for additional retail floorspace over the plan period would be most appropriately accommodated through the allocation of land at Minton Place and through the intensification of the existing town centre for example, through the reconfiguration of the existing layout of the King Edward Court shopping complex to provide additional retail floorspace, or the provision of mezzanine floors within existing units.

9.7 Policy TR2 Windsor Town Centre

Policy TR 2

Windsor Town Centre

1. Development proposals should promote and enhance the role of Windsor town centre and its vitality and viability. The retail role of Windsor town centre will be supported.

2. New development proposals within the primary shopping area, as defined on the Policies Map, should broaden the range of shopping opportunities and improve the image of the town as a sustainable and high quality shopping destination. In particular proposals to extend retail floorspace within existing stores and complexes and to extend department store provision within Windsor Town centre will be supported.

3. Development proposals for retail and service provision aimed particularly at visitors will be supported in the visitor development area, defined on the Policies Map, provided that it would be appropriate to the character and function of the area. The visitor development area includes: Windsor Castle; Royal Windsor Shopping Centre; High Street; and Thames Street.

4.   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, be appropriate to the character and function of the area and retain prominent shop units within the primary frontage.

5. Development proposals in secondary frontages will be supported where they contribute to the existing character, function and vitality of the street or surrounding environment.

6.   Development proposals for residential use on upper floors throughout Windsor town centre will be encouraged.

7. An allocation for a mixed use development comprising ground floor retail units with residential units is identified on the Policies Map at Minton Place.

9.8 Maidenhead town centre

9.8.1   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. Certain policies within the Maidenhead Town Centre Action Plan are superseded by policies in this BLP and the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Project is a key driver for the rejuvenation of the town, and support is offered for proposals that would enhance the town's waterways in line with the Waterways Development Brief.

9.8.2   The forecasts for retail growth for Maidenhead are based on the 2015 pattern of market shares over the forecast period assuming development of an additional 2300 dwellings within Maidenhead town centre to 2031. Under this assumption, the retail study forecasts that Maidenhead town centre will have the capacity to accommodate a net tradable area of approximately 3,250 m^2 comparison goods floor space together with a net tradable area of approximately 1,750 m^2 convenience goods floor space to 2031.

9.8.3   The Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (MTCAAP) proposed a total of 25,000 m^2 of retail floor space within the Broadway Opportunity Area allocation which is one of seven Opportunity Areas identified in the MTCAAP. Consent for the development of the majority of the Broadway Opportunity Area has been granted

through "The Landing" development, and a substantial area to the north of Broadway connected to the Nicholson's centre offers further scope for retail development linked to the redevelopment of the site of the current multi-storey car park.

9.8.4   A second retail led scheme as currently proposed by the MTCAAP for the rest of the Broadway Opportunity Area, known as 'Nicholson's Car Park,' provides further retail capacity, anticipated to be up to approximately 2,500 square metres of A1 retail floor space. With the implementation of these two permissions it is anticipated that the retail provision of the Broadway Opportunity Area will include approximately ....625 m^2 of retail floor space which is significantly short of the 25,000 square metres anticipated by the MTCAAP.

9.8.5   There are currently significant numbers of empty units within the town centre at Maidenhead, although the numbers are declining. The retail floorspace forecasts noted in sectin 9.4 above take account of the empty units and the additional retail capacity provided by 'The Landing' together with proposals for the High Street/York Road Opportunity Area which are being implemented.

9.8.6   Policy for the Maidenhead town centre takes account of both the adopted MTCAAP and more recent retail forecasts which adjust the figures for anticipated retail floor space. A review of the MTCAAP should seek to reflect the changing circumstances for retail provision while maintaining the requirements for high quality development to achieve a vibrant and vital town centre.

9.9 Policy TR3 Maidenhead Town Centre

Policy TR 3

Maidenhead Town Centre

1. Development proposals should promote and enhance the role of Maidenhead town centre and its vitality and viability. The retail role of Maidenhead will be supported and development proposals for the regeneration of sites for town centre uses and those that protect, enhance or diversify retail activity, within the primary shopping area will be supported.

2. Reference should be made to the adopted Maidenhead Town Centre Action Area Plan with regard to the most appropriate locations and requirements for town centre uses and activities. Subsequent revisions of retail floor space projections should be taken into account in development proposals.

2. 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, be appropriate to the character and function of the area and retain prominent shop units within the primary frontage.

3. Development proposals in secondary frontages will be supported where they contribute to the existing character, function and vitality of the street or surrounding environment. In particular, proposals to expand the cultural, entertainment and food offer of Maidenhead will be encouraged.

4. 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.

5. Development proposals for residential use on upper floors throughout Maidenhead town centre and proposals that would enhance the town's waterways, will be encouraged.

9.10 District centres

9.10.1   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.

9.10.2   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.

9 Town Centres and Retail

9.10.3   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 and a superstore draws trade from further afield.

9.10.4   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.

9.10.5   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.

9.11 Policy TR4 District Centres

Policy TR 4

District Centres

1. 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. A broad mix of uses will be maintained within the centres to support their current functions and to help them meet their full potential.

2. Development proposals for retail use within district centres will be supported, particularly within the primary shopping areas as defined on the Policies Map.

3. Non-retail uses and services will also be supported provided the overall function of the centre and opportunities for customer choice are maintained.

4. 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.

5. Development proposals for residential use on upper floors in district and local centres will be supported. 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.

6. 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 Council will consider active town centre uses as a first resort with residential or other uses at ground floor level as a last resort.

7. A diverse range of appropriate uses including retailing will be appropriate and 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.

9.12 Local centres

9.12.1   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.

9.12.2   The local centres identified in Policy TR5 exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. The 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.

9.13 Policy TR5 Local Centres

Policy TR 5

Local Centres

1. Development proposals for retail use within local centres will be supported, 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.

2. The scale of development that will be appropriate in local centres 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. Development proposals for residential use on upper floors in local centres will be supported. 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. 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, preference will be given to to active town centre uses. Residential or other uses at ground floor level will also be considered by the Borough provided they would not adversely affect the function of the centre within the retail hierarchy.

5. Local centres defined on the Policies Map will be supported 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.

6. The local centres identified in Policy TR exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance.

9.14 Impact and conditions

9.14.1   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.

9.14.2   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.

9.14.3   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 Borough.

9   Town Centres and Retail

9.14.4   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.

9.14.5   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.

9.14.6   A threshold of 500 square metres (gross external area) is considered appropriate for retail uses elsewhere. This approximates to a large convenience store or 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 assess fully the impact of a proposed development to inform properly the decision made on any such planning application.

9.14.7   Where impact assessments indicate significant adverse impacts on an existing vitality and viability of the centre, development will be refused. What constitutes a significant adverse impact will be based on the circumstances of each case. The cumulative impact of recent/committed proposals may also be relevant. Where the evidence shows there is no significant adverse impact the positive and negative effects of the proposal will be balanced, together with locational and other considerations, to reach an overall judgement.

9.14.8   Conditions will be used to ensure that the impacts of retail development are acceptable and will remain 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.

9.14.9   Flexible unit sizes are preferred to cope with flexible future trends and appropriate conditions for 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.

Town Centres and Retail

9.15 Policy TR6 Strengthening the Role of Centres

Policy TR 6

Strengthening the Role of Centres

1. Main town centre uses must be located within the centres defined in the hierarchy of centres 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 centre.

4. 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 the 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 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 square metres within Maidenhead and Windsor urban areas; 500 square metres elsewhere b. leisure development: 2,500 square metres c. office development: 2,500 square metres

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

9.16 Shops and parardes outside defined centres

9.16.1   Not all town centre uses can be accommodated within existing centres. In recognition of this a number of retail parks and large free-standing stores have been developed.

9.16.2   Individual shops and small parades, located outside centres, can play a vital role in their local community. They can provide convenient access to day to day requirements and may be the sole accessible store for less mobile residents.

9.16.3   It is 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 the use of the shop to the local community can no longer be demonstrated.

9   # Town Centres and Retail

9.16.4   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, residential or other uses at ground floor level may be considered.

9.17 Policy TR7 Shops and Parades Outside Defined Centres

Policy TR 7

Shops and Parades Outside Defined Centres

1. Development proposals that enhance the community function of shops and parades located outside centres defined on the Policies Map will be supported.

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.

3. 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, marketing evidence will not be required.

9.18 Markets

9.18.1   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.

9.18.2   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 of the centre.

9.19 Policy TR8 Markets

Policy TR 8

Markets

1. Existing and proposed markets within town, district and local centres will be supported. Development proposals that include 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. Development proposals should show how they are not creating an adverse impact on the residential amenity of nearby properties, especially with regard to noise.

Visitors and Tourism   10

10

Visitors and Tourism

10.1 Context

10.1.1   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.

10.1.2   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 BLP is to enable the continued success and evolution of the Borough's distinct visitor economy.

10.1.3   Key objectives include:

- supporting and promoting the key heritage attractions of Windsor, Ascot and the River Thames

- providing sufficient visitor accommodation and facilities

- promoting opportunities for visitor related development

10.1.4   To work towards these objectives, the Council 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. Visitor and tourism policies encourage development which supports the sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

10.1.5   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.

10.2 Tourism in the Borough

10.2.1   Windsor is one of the major tourist attractions of the south east 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 require careful management.

10.2.2   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.

10.2.3   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.

10.2.4   There are many other visitor attractions and events in the Borough, including 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.

10.3 Key challenges and issues

Key challenges and issues

10.3.1   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.

Visitors and Tourism

10.3.2   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.

10.3.3   Staying trips in 2014 resulted in an estimated 1,930,000 visitor nights in the 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.

10.3.4   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%.

10.3.5   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.

10.3.6   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 are spread across a wide range of service sectors from catering and retail to public service jobs such as in local government as well as tourism. Total tourism related expenditure supported 11% of all jobs in the Borough in 2014.

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

10.3.8   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.

10   Visitors and Tourism

10.4 Policy VT1 Visitor Development

Policy VT 1

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, protect historic and heritage assets, are in conformity with current Green Belt guidance, policy and legislation, and 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.

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

Visitors and Tourism

10.5 Policy VT2 Visitor Accommodation

Policy VT 2

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, for example, accommodation for people with mobility or visual disabilities

    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

    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 illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

Historic Environment 11

Historic Environment

11.1 Context

11.1.1   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.

11.1.2   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.

11.1.3   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) to villages (such as Cookham Dean) and towns like Windsor; all of which have unique historic and architectural interest.

11.1.4   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.

11.2 Conservation and heritage

11.2.1   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 and meeting this objective is essential to ensure that residents, visitors and future generations can enjoy the historic environment of the Borough in the future.

11.2.2   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.

11.2.3   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 Assessment will form a key evidence document to support the development of the Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.

11.2.4   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.

11.2.5   Conservation Area Appraisals have influenced the 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.

11.2.6   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 BLP 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.

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Historic Environment

11.3 Policy HE1 Historic Environment

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Policy HE 1

Historic Environment

1. Development proposals will be required to conserve and enhance, where possible, the character, appearance and function of heritage assets and their settings, and respect the significance of the historic environment.

2. Development proposals should seek to protect, conserve and enhance the architectural features, structures, settings, historic character and significance of heritage assets and designations.

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 Council.

4. A local register of heritage assets at risk will be maintained. 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 illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

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11.4 Listed buildings

11.4.1   The main aim of listing a building is to prevent alterations that harm the special character of the building or structure and 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.

11.4.2   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.

11.4.3   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.

11.4.4   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.

Historic Environment

11.4.5   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.

11.4.6   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:

- justification for the development proposal
- assessment of the heritage asset's significance
- a structural assessment where appropriate
- impact on the significance of the heritage asset
- full details of the proposed alterations and/or extensions.

11.4.7   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

11.4.8   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.

11.4.9   When considering the viability of proposals, the Borough 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.

11.4.10   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 a group, for example, agricultural buildings, it is important to ensure that the proposed new use can form part of a sustainable scheme for the future.

11.4.11   Proposals which fail to incorporate heritage assets into overall schemes, thereby risking the isolation and deterioration of the assets, will not be permitted. 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)

11.4.12   The Borough 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.

11.4.13   In line with national planning guidance, 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 (for example, mileposts and walls).

11.4.14   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:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site, and

Historic Environment

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

11.4.15   In the exceptional circumstance where demolition is permitted, the Borough 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 Council.

11.5 Policy HE2 Listed Buildings

Policy HE 2

Listed Buildings

1.   Development proposals should seek to enhance and conserve heritage assets. The Council will only support development proposals that respect the significance of a Listed Building and its setting.

2.   All development proposals that affect Listed Buildings or their settings should 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
>
> 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.

4. When considering development proposals the Council will take account of the previous management of the heritage asset and any neglect of the asset resulting in its deterioration. The Council will only support development proposals where appropriate changes to the heritage asset are claimed to be justified in order to secure future viability.

5.   Development proposals will be supported 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
>
> d. they use appropriate materials.

6. Development proposals for an appropriate change of use for a Listed Building will be supported where they conserve and enhance its special interest and physical fabric, both internally and externally, and its setting.

7. Development proposals should not result in the loss or demolition of Listed Buildings or their settings. In exceptional circumstances where the Council 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.

8. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

11

Historic Environment

11.6 Ancient monuments and archaeology

11.6.1   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.

11.6.2   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.

11.6.3   Nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by designation, that is, inclusion on the National Heritage List as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Consent for works to a Scheduled Ancient Monument is issued by Historic England.

11.6.4   There are 22 Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the Borough which 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 to the modern period.

11.6.5   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 .

11.6.6   Archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource, providing irreplaceable information about our past. There is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation and their settings.

11.6.7   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.

11.6.8   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.

Historic Environment

11.7 Policy HE3 Ancient Monuments

Policy HE 3

Ancient Monuments

1. Scheduled and nationally important Ancient Monuments and their settings will be protected. Development proposals must show how the 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

   c. show how the development proposal would, where possible, enhance the monument and its setting.

2. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

11.8 Policy HE4 Archaeology

Policy HE 4

Archaeology

1. Development proposals affecting national and local sites, or known or potential sites of archaeological interest will only be considered where the Historic Environment Record has been consulted to ensure that the significance of such assets is fully understood. Applicants for a development proposal must show how they have met the following requirements:

   a. an appropriate desk based assessment by a suitably qualified person, and

   b. a field evaluation to clarify the findings of the assessment and the anticipated impact of the proposals, and

   c. design and layout development proposals to secure archaeological preservation in situ where warranted, or by record (that is, 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. Development proposals should have regard to their impacts upon the historic environment, protecting and where possible enhancing designated and undesignated archaeological remains and their settings.

4. 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. A Local Heritage Asset Register, as part of the Heritage Strategy, will provide further guidance on assessments of local archaeological potential.

6. A Heritage Strategy Supplementary Planning Document will illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

11

Historic Environment

11.9 Registered parks and gardens

11.9.1   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 which is managed by Historic England.

11.9.2   The Royal Borough has ten 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.

11.9.3   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.

11.9.4   Some of the registered parks and gardens in the Borough are under pressure for development or from commercial activities. Windsor Great Park is a regional visitor attraction and 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 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.

11.9.5   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.

11.9.6   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.

11.10 Policy HE5 Registered Parks and Gardens

Policy HE 5

Registered Parks and Gardens

1. Development proposals for changes of use in or within the setting of locally significant or registered parks or gardens will be considered 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. Development proposals should 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.

11.11 Conservation Areas

11.11.1   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.

Historic Environment

11.11.2   The 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 which 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.

11.11.3   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.

11.11.4   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.

11.11.5   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 and demolition will not be supported until an appropriate redevelopment scheme has been approved.

11.11.6   The use of appropriate materials is encouraged (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.

11.11.7   Certain 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 .

11.11.8   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.

11.11.9   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.

11.11.10   Conservation Area Appraisals detail their character and provide key focus for improvement and can be viewed on the Council's 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.

11.11.11   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.

11 Historic Environment

11.12 Policy HE6 Conservation Areas

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Policy HE 6

Conservation Areas

1. Development proposals will need to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas within which they are proposed, and contribute positively to the character, local distinctiveness and significance of the historic environment. Development proposals will be required to:

   a. for new development or alterations to existing buildings structures, 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 be in keeping with the character of the area in general, and

   b. use appropriate materials and finishes, and

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

   d. not 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. retain any buildings and protect views that contribute to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area.

2. The Council 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.

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11.13 Windsor Castle and Great Park

11.13.1   Windsor Castle, home to Her Majesty 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 and 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.

11.13.2   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.

11.13.3   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.

11.13.4   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.

Historic Environment

11.13.5   The setting of Windsor Castle and Home Park sits within the wider setting of the Great Park. Both Home Park and Windsor Great Park are included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and therefore benefit from added protection due to this status.

11.14 Policy HE7 Windsor Castle and Great Park

Policy HE 7

Windsor Castle and Great Park

1.   Development proposals that affect Windsor Castle, as defined on the Policies Map, 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 to meet the needs of visitors to the Castle and the Great Park.

11.15 Local heritage assets

11.15.1   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 include in the Heritage Strategy and updated via the Annual Monitoring Report.

11.15.2   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.

11.16 Policy HE8 Local Heritage Assets

Policy HE 8

Local Heritage Assets

1. Development proposals that affect local heritage assets detailed on the Local List 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   12

Natural Resources

12.1 Context

12.1.1   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 Borough requires new developments to be as sustainable as possible, and to 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.

12.2 Sustainable design and construction

12.2.1   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.

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

12.2.3   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. Should national energy efficiency standards change the Borough would then expect all new development to comply with the updated standards in full.

12.2.4   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.

12 Natural Resources

12.3 Policy NR1 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy NR 1

Sustainable Design and Construction

1. Development proposals that improve the sustainability of the built environment and sustainable ways of living and working will be supported. New development will be encouraged to be as sustainable as possible and to work towards a low carbon economy and applications should be accompanied by an Energy Demand Statement.

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. Development proposals should show how they have addressed 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

  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. Development proposals to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings will be supported.

5. A Borough Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to illustrate further how this policy should be implemented.

12.4 Renewable energy

12.4.1   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.

12.4.2   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.

12.4.3   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.

12.4.4   Applications for biomass infrastructure should consider the transportation and the feasibility of combined heat and power. The Borough will generally be supportive of hydro-electric turbines along the River Thames.

12.4.5   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, Local planning authorities 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

- 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.

12.4.6   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 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
-
- proximity to residential properties.

12.4.7   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.

12.4.8   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.

12.4.9   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).

12.4.10   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.

12 Natural Resources

12.5 Policy NR2 Renewable Energy

Policy NR 2

Renewable Energy

1. Development proposals for the production of renewable energy and associated infrastructure will be supported. Renewable energy development should be located and designed to minimise adverse impacts on landscape, wildlife, heritage assets and amenity. Priority will be given to development in less sensitive areas including major transport areas or on previously developed urban land.

2. Development proposals should 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 following matters will be considered in the determination of renewable energy generation proposals:

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

3. Development proposals for wind energy development will only be supported where they are located in areas identified as being suitable for small or medium and large turbines on the Wind Mapping Exercise Maps and on sites allocated for wind energy development in Neighbourhood Plans.

12.6 Managing flood risk and waterways

12.6.1   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 eight parishes and an additional five wards. Fluvial flooding and flooding from local sources (for instance, from groundwater, surface water and sewers) are constraints to development in parts of the Borough which have 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.

12.6.2   The BLP seeks to minimise the impact of climate change and one of the key ways to achieve this is by adapting to climate change through the careful management of flood risk. This 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.

12.6.3   Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding is set out in para 93 -108 of the NPPF. NPPG also advises that the effective implementation of the NPPF on development within areas of flood risk does not remove the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The main source of flood risk in the Borough is fluvial flooding and although the Thames is the largest river in the Borough, there are a number of other watercourses including the Bourne Ditch, the Battle Bourne, Wraysbury and Horton Drains, that can contribute to potential flooding problems in local areas.

12.6.4   The 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 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.

12.6.5 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 scheme 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.

12.6.6 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 is designed to look and function as a natural living river, containing water all year round, and is sensitively landscaped to enhance the environment and create new habitats for wildlife in addition to reducing fluvial flood risk.

12.6.7 There is 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.

12.6.8 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.

12.6.9 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

12.6.10 The Borough's SFRA and Environment Agency (EA) flood maps show that it is predominantly locations along the River Thames that are at highest risk of flooding for example, 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.

12.6.11 In addition some areas are more prone to experiencing surface water flooding. DEFRA has 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.

12.6.12 The SFRA which was last updated in 2014 and is subject to revision, 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

12.6.13 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 PFRA is a high level screening exercise that includes the collection of information on historic flood events, and potential, future, flood events.

12.6.14 The Borough's PFRA was published in 2009 and 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.

12.6.15 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 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), most recently revised in 2014, refines information on the probability of flooding, taking other sources of flooding and the impacts of climate change into account.

12 Natural Resources

12.6.16   In making decisions, the vulnerability and locational need of the proposed 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.

12.6.17   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.

12.6.18   Fundamental to the BLP 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 NR3. The policy also provides an opportunity to support and safeguard the Maidenhead Waterways.

12.6.19   The Borough will continue to work with the Environment Agency, water companies and other partners and individuals to manage water and flooding matters, 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.

Natural Resources 12

12.7 Policy NR3 Managing Flood Risk and Waterways

Policy NR 3

Managing Flood Risk and Waterways

1. Development will be guided 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. Development proposals will only be supported 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, development proposals should 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

  d. the scale of potential consequences

  e. site evacuation plan in the event of potential flooding.

3. In all cases, 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 in the area defined as functional floodplain.

5. Development proposals should:

  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. reduce flood risk both within and beyond sites wherever practical

  d. be constructed with adequate flood resilience and resistance measures suitable for the lifetime of the development

  e. incorporate flood evacuation plans where appropriate

6. Development proposals will be required to incorporate appropriate comprehensive flood risk management measures as agreed with the Environment Agency or the Council as Local Lead Flood Authority

7. Further development land associated with strategic flood relief measures will be safeguarded, including the proposed flood relief channel from Datchet to Wraysbury, as shown on the Policies Map. Development should facilitate the improvement and integration of waterways in Maidenhead, including the completion of the Maidenhead Waterway Project.

Environmental Protection   13

Environmental Protection

13.1 Context

13.1.1   Most of the 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.

13.1.2   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.

13.1.3   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.

13.2 Environmental protection

13.2.1   Environmental protection policies are linked with BLP objectives to minimise impact of development on climate change and the environment, and requiring new development to provide environmental improvements. 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.

13.3 Policy EP1 Environmental Protection

Policy EP 1

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, applicants will be required 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. 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.

13.4 Air pollution

13.4.1   Air pollution in the 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

Environmental Protection

where residents are exposed to pollutants in excess of the objectives .It is therefore important to ensure that new development proposals, either individually or cumulatively, do not significantly affect residents within existing AQMAs by generating unacceptable levels of pollution.

13.5 Policy EP2 Air Pollution

Policy EP 2

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. Development proposals will be supported 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. Development proposals should 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.

13.6 Light pollution

13.6.1   Many forms of artificial lighting can be beneficial but sometimes the installation of lighting can be intrusive and result in light pollution. Policy EP 3 sets out a development management approach to dealing with light pollution.

13.6.2   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:

- sky glow – the orange glow seen around urban areas at night;

- glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background

- light trespass – the spill of light beyond the boundary of property on which the light source is located.

13.6.3   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.

13.6.4   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.

13.6.5   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   13

13.7 Policy EP3 Artificial Light Pollution

Policy EP 3

Artificial Light Pollution

1. Development proposals should seek to avoid generating artificial light pollution where possible and 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. 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. Development proposals should seek to replace any existing light installations in order to mitigate or reduce existing light pollution.

3. The distinction between urban areas and the countryside should be maintained. 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.

4. Development proposals should 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, development proposals should not have an adverse effect on adjacent areas and use suitable methods for data provision, such as an isolux diagram.

13.8 Noise

13.8.1   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 an environmental noise.

13.8.2   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 and environmental noise is defined as transport noise from aircraft, road and rail.

13.8.3   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.

13 Environmental Protection

13.9 Policy EP4 Noise

Policy EP 4

Noise

1. Development proposals should 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. Development proposals that generate unacceptable levels of noise and affect quality of life will not be permitted. Effective mitigation measures will be required where development proposals may generate significant levels of noise (for example from plant and equipment) and may cause or have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents, the rural character of an area or biodiversity.

4. Development proposals in areas significantly affected by aircraft, road or rail noise will be supported 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 (LAmax) 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 Council 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 Council 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. 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.

13.10 Contaminated land and water

13.10.1   The objective of utilising previously developed land (PDL) often enables development in the most sustainable locations, but 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. Human activities can put groundwater resources at risk, both in terms

of quality and quantity and such activities include landfill sites, chemical works, petrol stations, effluent from farming practices. Groundwater plays a vital role in the environment, providing drinking water and maintaining river flows

13.10.2   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 where appropriate. 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, and applicants should provide a full assessment of how they plan to achieve the mitigation of any impacts on such sources. Source Protection Zones are designated for all groundwater supplies intended for human consumption.

13.10.3   There are several areas across the 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.

13.11 Policy EP5 Contaminated Land and Water

Policy EP 5

Contaminated Land and Water

1. Development proposals will be supported 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. Development proposals should demonstrate how they will achieve remedial or preventative measures and submit any supporting assessments.

2. Development proposals on, or near to land which is, or is suspected to be contaminated will be supported 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. Development proposals will be reviewed under pollutant linkage (source-pathway-receptor) risk assessments which should be represented by a conceptual model for the proposed use. The Council will liaise with the Environment Agency and water companies where appropriate, in relation to measures that affect surface and groundwater.

4. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that adequate and effective remedial measures to remove the potential harm to human health and the environment are successfully mitigated.

Natural Environment

Natural Environment

14.1 Context

14.1.1 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.

14.1.2 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.

14.1.3 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

14.2 Nature conservation

14.2.1 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.

14.2.2 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.

14 Natural Environment

14.3 Policy NE1 Nature Conservation

Policy NE 1

Nature Conservation

1. Designated sites of international, national and local importance will be maintained, protected and enhanced. Protected species will be safeguarded from harm or loss.

2. Development proposals should 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. The 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.

14.4 Habitats and designations

14.4.1   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.

14.4.2   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. Eleven such sites have been designated in the Borough, as follows:

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 theBborough)
   h.   Great Thrift Wood, Woodlands Park
   i.   Windsor Forest and Great Park
   j.   Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits
   k.   Wraysbury No.1 Gravel Pit

14.4.3   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.

14.4.4   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 K.

14.5 Conservation and improvement

14.5.1   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. Policy NE 2 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 Policy BLP 51 and implements a solution to enable the potential adverse effects of development to be mitigated.

14.5.2   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.

14.5.3   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 according to the statutory requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

14.5.4   Natural England has identified that net additional housing development up to five kilometres from the SPA, and large-scale housing development up to seven kilometres from the SPA, are 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 metres 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.

14

Natural Environment

14.5.5   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.

14.6 Mitigation and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)

14.6.1   An alternative area for residents to use for recreation, in the form of a strategic Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), has been provided in the Borough at Allen's Field, south of Ascot. This 9.5 hectare 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.

14.6.2   While capacity remains, the Allen's Field SANG can be used to mitigate the impact of any sized residential development proposal within two kilometres of its boundary and inside the Borough. Proposals for fewer than ten dwellings do not need to fall within a relevant SANG catchment area, thus the Allen's Field SANG can also be used to mitigate the impact of proposals for a net increase of fewer than ten dwellings within five kilometres of the SPA and inside the Borough. The following diagram indicates the location of the SPA's five kilometre 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*

14.6.3   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 extensions to Allen's Field. This will increase its mitigation capacity and catchment area.

14.6.4   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. SANG size and associated catchment criteria are specified in the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Supplementary Planning Document.

14.7 Mitigation and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)

14.7.1   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.

14.7.2   The Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document on the application of mitigation measures. This guidance will be revised and updated after adoption of the BLP.

14.8 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

14.8.1   The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area is a European designated site which is accorded priority protection and conservation.

14.9 Policy NE2 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

Policy NE 2

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 Special Protection Area (SPA).

2. A precautionary approach to the protection and conservation of the SPA will be taken 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.

3. No sites will be allocated nor planning permission granted, 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 400 metres threshold but within five kilometres linear distance of the SPA boundary (the SPA zone of influence) 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).

4. Development proposals between five to seven kilometres 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.

5. Future levels of housing development expected in the area of influence of the SPA will require appropriate mitigation and it is likely that new strategic 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.

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

   a. land South of Allen's Field (extension to Allen's Field strategic SANG)

   b. land east of Allen's Field (extension to Allen's Field strategic SANG)

   c. land at Heatherwood Hospital and Sunningdale Park (bespoke SANGs which may also have a strategic role)

7. An applicant may wish to provide a bespoke SANG as part of development. Such bespoke SANG provision will usually be necessary only for larger developments of 50 or more dwellings. 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.

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

14.10 Trees, woodlands and hedgerows

14.10.1   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

14

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.

14.10.2   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.

14.10.3   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.

14.11 Policy NE3 Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

Policy NE 3

Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

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.

14.12 Open space

14.12.1   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 Cookham, 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.

14.12.2   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).

14.12.3   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 Borough has an extensive green infrastructure network, with open space forming an intrinsic feature and characteristic of urban areas.

14 Natural Environment

14.12.4   Green Infrastructure relates to a network of multi-functional open space and other environmental features. Together these are highly valued by local people and play a key role in the Borough's landscape setting and local identity. The following can form part of green infrastructure networks:

- Parks and gardens
- Natural and semi-natural greenspaces
- Green corridors
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Amenity greenspace
- Provision for children and teenagers
- Allotments, community gardens/orchards and urban farms
- Cemeteries and churchyard
- Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas
- River corridors and waterways (blue infrastructure)
- Green roofs and walls.

14.12.5   Overall the 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.

14.12.6   The Indoor Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy for the Borough produced following a Built Facilities Assessment identifies the importance of existing current leisure stock at multi-use indoor centres across the Borough such as Windsor Leisure Centre, Charters Leisure Centre, Cox Green School, Furze Platt School and other dual use provision. The Strategy recommends that where any new state schools are built, site master planning and sports provision location and design should be orientated to accommodate community use, and secured via an appropriate and binding community use agreement.

Natural Environment

14.13 Policy NE4 Open Space

Policy NE 4

Open Space

1. Existing open space in the Borough will be protected, maintained, and where possible, enhanced to increase capacity and make open space more usable, attractive and accessible. Improvements to the quality of open space will be encouraged and development proposals that create new open space will be supported.

2. New open space will be required on allocated housing sites as set out in the site pro forma and in line with the most up to date requirements contained in the Open Space Strategy. Elsewhere money collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy will be used to provide open space to meet the recommended local standards for the relevant type of open space

3. Development proposals to increase access to natural open space should be subject to evaluation of the impact of visitor numbers.

4. Development which would create additional pressures on the network of Green Infrastructure should, as part of the planning application process, incorporate details of how it is intended to mitigate against these pressures.

5. Allotments within the Borough will be protected. There will be in principle support for new allotments and community gardens/orchards.

6. Provision of an alternative open space is deemed appropriate as part of development proposals, 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.

7. The Council will encourage improvements to the quality and quantity of the Green Infrastructure Network in the Borough. The protection and enhancement of physical access, including Public Rights of Way, to open space is supported.

8. Land at Ockwells, Maidenhead is allocated on the Policies Map to provide Open Space to meet the needs of new development within the town centre.

The Policies Map identifies areas of Important Open Space across the Borough to meet the needs of the community.

14.14 Local Green Space

14.14.1   Paragraph 76 of the National Planning Policy Framework introduced the ability for Local Plans to designate Local Green Space. In accordance with paragraph 77 Local Green Space should meet the criteria listed below:

- The Local Green Space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, usually within easy walking distance.
- The Local Green Space should be local in character and not an extensive tract of land. Blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate.

14.14.2   In addition, a Local Green Space must be demonstrably special and hold a particular local significance. Local Green Spaces should therefore also meet at **least one** of the following criteria and be of a particular local significance because of its:

- Beauty – the site makes a significant visual contribution to the street scene or visual attractiveness of the area;

14   # Natural Environment

- Historic significance – the site includes or provides a setting for a locally valued landmark or is of cultural value;
- Recreational value – the site is used for sport or recreation activities or used by the local community for informal recreation;
- Tranquillity – the site provides a peaceful and tranquil space within a settlement;
- Richness of its wildlife – this site is recognisable as a priority habitat with a reasonable species diversity or harbours priority species (listed in the UK priority habitats and species list) and is managed to benefit the ecological interests.
- Other reason, including community value where the site is used by the wider community.

14.14.3   Sites already subject to statutory designation, such as Historic Parks & Gardens or Scheduled Ancient Monuments, have high levels of protection and would not benefit from an additional local designation. Similarly, sites within the curtilage of a listed building or conservation area or subject to a tree preservation order do not necessarily need additional protection as Local Green Space as their importance and contribution to the area must be considered if a planning application is submitted within or near these sites.

14.14.4   On the basis of the above methodology the Council has identified one area of Local Green Space worthy of designation: Poundfield, Cookham.

14.14.5   The Cookham Village Design Statement (VDS) identifies green space as being a key characteristic of all three settlements that the VDS covers. The fields to the north and west of The Pound in Cookham are known as 'Poundfield'. The VDS sets out that Poundfield's importance derives from a unique combination of ecological, rural, and heritage factors; it is also a tranquil space in the heart of the village. Poundfield's undeveloped frontage faces Maidenhead Road, and the glimpse of its more distant slope rising to the north are signals of the rural character of Cookham. Poundfield forms a green wedge at the heart of Cookham, dividing the picturesque narrow roadway of The Pound (the edge of Cookham village) from Cookham's more commercial areas (the Station Hill area and Cookham Rise). It is an intrinsic part of the character of the village and in very close proximity to the community that it serves being surrounded by houses. It is also visible in views from the Moor and from the eastern end of the Causeway. Poundfield is the subject of several Stanley Spencer paintings, including a series of scenes at Englefield and a panoramic view stretching towards The Pound. This is considered in greater detail in the context of the Cookham High Street Conservation Area within the accompanying appraisal reviewed in 2016.

14.15 Policy NE5 Local Green Space

Policy NE 5

Local Green Space

1. The council will give special protection to sites designated as Local Green Space that are important to the local community and shown on the Policies Map.

2. Inappropriate development within a designated Local Green Space will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances, except:-

a. new buildings for appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries, provided they do not conflict with the purpose of the Local Green Space;

b. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building;

c. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Natural Environment

14.16 Rights of way and access to the countryside

14.16.1   The Borough has a network of over 300 kilometres 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.

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

14 Natural Environment

14.17 Policy NE6 Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside

Policy NE 6

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

>   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

>   d. are consistent with the Royal Borough's 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. Opportunities will be sought 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 Council will continue to develop a new route linking Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell, Ascot and Windsor to be designated as NCN422.

4. New walkways and pedestrian 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 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 following initiatives will be encouraged:

>   a. improvements to the existing public rights of way network including improving accessibility for disabled or elderly people and families with pushchair

>   b. creation of new rights of way and cycle routes 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

>   e. improvement of public transport links to the countryside.

15 Infrastructure

15.1 Context

15.1.1   The timely provision of suitable and appropriate infrastructure is crucial to the well being of the Borough's resident population, those who visit, provide services and those who invest and work in the Borough. Infrastructure has not always historically kept pace with development and there are some parts of the Borough where infrastructure demands are currently near to or at full capacity. Fundamental to delivering the spatial strategy is ensuring that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure is put in place to support the level of growth proposed and to serve the changes in the Borough's demographic make-up that is expected to take place over the Plan period.

15.1.2   The definition of infrastructure is wide and includes a range of services and facilities provided by both public and private bodies. For the purpose of the Local Plan, the definition of infrastructure is that set out in the below:

1.   **Transport:** road network, cycling and walking infrastructure, rail network, parking
2.   **Housing:** affordable housing
3.   **Education:** further and higher education, secondary and primary education, nursery schools and other early years provision
4.   **Health:** acute care and general hospitals, mental hospitals, health centres/primary care trusts, ambulance services
5.   **Social and community infrastructure:** supported accommodation, social and community facilities, sports centres, open spaces, parks and play space
6.   **Public services:** waste management and disposal, libraries, cemeteries, emergency services (police, fire,ambulance), places of worship, prisons, drug treatment centres
7.   **Utility services:** gas supply, electricity supply, heat supply, water supply, waste water treatment, telecommunications infrastructure
8.   **Flood Alleviation measures**
9.   **Green infrastructure:** parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces, green corridors,outdoor sports facilities, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, accessible countryside in urban fringe areas, river and canal corridors, green roofs and walls.

15.2 Infrastructure Delivery Plan

15.2.1   The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that supports the BLP 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.

15.3 Community facilities

15.3.1   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. 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.

15.3.2   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.

15.3.3   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.

15.4 Policy IF1 Community Facilities

Policy IF 1

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. Existing community facilities should be retained, improved and enhanced. 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 only 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

    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. 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 will 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 twelve months, demonstrating lack of demand for the community facility.

15.5 New sports and leisure development at Braywick Park

15.5.1   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

Infrastructure

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.

15.5.2   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.

15.5.3   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.

15.5.4   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.

15.5.5   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.

15.5.6   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

1.   There is an evidence base of objectively assessed needs (OAN) for a new leisure centre to meet Maidenhead's current and future needs;

2.   A sequential site assessment demonstrates that there are no sequentially preferable sites which are appropriate, suitable or viable alternatives;

3.   Braywick Park golf driving range is within the Council's ownership, and subject to planning, capable of delivery well within five years and before the existing centre is decommissioned ;

4.   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;

5.   Housing development at Saint-Cloud Way would be a sustainable pattern of development, in accordance with the BLP strategy to deliver additional new homes within Maidenhead town centre;

6.   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;

7.   Braywick Park is a short walking distance from Maidenhead town centre, is accessible by public transport, and a highly prominent and accessible location;

8. 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.

9.   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;

10.   The Council as owner and funder of the new leisure centre would ensure a high quality design response; and

11.   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.

15.6 Policy IF2 New Sports and Leisure Development at Braywick Park

Policy IF 2

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. The new facilities will be operational before the current Magnet Leisure Centre is decommissioned.

15

Infrastructure

15.7 Sustainable transport

15.7.1   One of the key principles of sustainable development is to reduce the need to travel 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.

15.7.2   Accordingly, the BLP 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 manage actively 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.

15.7.3   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
-
- higher than average levels of car ownership and per capita contribution to carbon emissions.

15.7.4   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.

15.7.5   The Borough also benefits from having ten 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 form 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 to180 destinations in 90 countries.

15.7.6   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.

15.7.7   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.

15.7.8   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.

15.7.9   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.

15.7.10   Crossrail is due to be delivered by 2019. The Borough will work in partnership with service providers, developers, public transport operators and neighbouring local transport authorities to support the delivery of sustainable transport improvements in the Borough and to improve access for residents, businesses and visitors to key services and facilities.

15.7.11   Transport Assessments set out the transport issues related to development proposals and identify measures to reduce impacts and improve accessibility. Transport Assessments will be expected for development proposals with significant transport implications to fully assess the impacts of development and identify appropriate mitigation measures. Developer contributions will be secured to implement transport mitigation schemes. Where transport impacts are anticipated to be small, development proposals may be required to submit a Transport Statement, in line with DfT Guidance on Transport Assessments.

15.7.12   New developments that lead to an increase in the number of people travelling to a site can put pressure on the road network, particularly as car ownership in the Borough is higher than the national average. A Travel Plan can be utilised to manage the travel demands of occupiers and visitors, employing measures to control the number of private vehicle trips to a site and influence a shift to sustainable transport choices for site users. The Council will require a Travel Plan from development proposals that generate significant traffic and a Travel Statement from smaller scale developments, in accordance with good practice guidance from the Department for Transport.

15.7.13   The Council will support proposals that deliver improvements and increased accessibility to cycle, pedestrian and public transport networks and interchange facilities. In particular, proposals to improve easy access between Maidenhead, Windsor Central, Windsor and Eton Riverside and Ascot Rail Stations and the town centre will be encouraged. Consideration will be given to the provision of development proposals with zero parking in Town Centres, providing it does not create new or exacerbate existing on-street car parking problems. Minimum standards will be set for residential development. However, in applying these standards, the Council will seek to ensure that this will not undermine the overall sustainability objectives of the Local Plan, including the effects on highway safety. The Council will ensure that changes made to transport infrastructure or increase in road vehicle usage will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an SPA, SAC or Ramsar site.

15

Infrastructure

15.8 Policy IF3 Sustainable Transport

Policy IF 3

Sustainable Transport

1. Development proposals should support the policies and objectives of the Transport Strategy as set out in the Local Transport Plan.

2. The Council 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. New development should be located close to offices and employment, shops and local services and facilities and provide safe, convenient and sustainable modes of transport. Development proposals that help to create a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists and improve access by public transport will be supported.

4. Development proposals should 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. Transport Assessments and Statements and Travel Plans will be required 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.

6. Any development proposals for new or additional school provision should be accompanied by a Travel Plan.

7. A Parking Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to further illustrate how this policy should be implemented.

15.9 Local Economic Partnership

15.9.1   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 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.

15.10 Local Transport Plan

15.10.1   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 the Government's over-arching principles which are reflected in Policy IF3 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

15.10.2   Policy IF3 seeks to optimise accessibility, particularly to and within the 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 and is seeking to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts by establishing a clear and legible hierarchy of movement and access across the 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.

15.10.3   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.

15.11 Developer contributions

15.11.1   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.

15.11.2   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 meets 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. Detailed decisions about this will be determined on the merits of individual schemes through the development management process.

15.11.3   Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It aims to create sustainable communities by ensuring that development policies are integrated with other policies and programmes that influence the nature and function of places. The provision of infrastructure is therefore central to supporting the spatial vision and spatial strategy set out in this document. Spatial planning is not limited to the activities of the Council. Fundamental to the delivery of the spatial strategy is the Council's ability to work with partners to deliver the spatial vision and in particular, to secure infrastructure provision.

15.11.4   The Local Plan is supported by an IDP that sets out the capacity of existing infrastructure, the impact of development on that infrastructure, and the likely funding sources available to meet future needs. The IDP also gives an indication of where opportunities may be available to co-ordinate provision through co-location of services, for example. The IDP includes a schedule of infrastructure that is considered necessary to support the spatial strategy. The Council has already implemented CIL from1 September 2016, however the IDP to accompany the Local Plan will form the evidence base for a review of the CIL which will ensure that all new development contributes to the provision of new infrastructure. In the interim revisions will be sought to the Regulation 123 List to be consistent with the site pro formas.

15   Infrastructure

15.11.5   The Council's strategy is to optimise use of existing infrastructure, to reduce demand (for example, by managing travel demand) and to seek new infrastructure where required. The loss of existing facilities will therefore be resisted and land will be safeguarded for the provision of future infrastructure requirements where necessary. The Council will ensure a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure management and investment through partnership working with key infrastructure service providers.

15.12 Policy IF4 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Policy IF 4

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

1. Development proposals will be supported that deliver infrastructure to support the overall spatial strategy of the Borough.

2. The Council 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.

3. Introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ensures 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.

4. Applicants will subject to a requirement for a financial viability appraisal if it is considered that the level of affordable housing being sought will threaten the viability of the development proposal.

5. The loss of existing infrastructure will be resisted 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 Council will expect development proposals to demonstrate that consultation with an appropriate range of service providers and the community has taken place.

6. The Council will work in partnership with infrastructure service providers and developers to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support development is provided in a timely manner to meet the needs of the community. In some cases, it will be necessary for the infrastructure to be provided before development commences. Development may be phased to ensure the timely delivery of the infrastructure that will be necessary to serve it. Each case will be determined on its individual merits during the development management process.

15.13 Telecommunications

15.13.1   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.

15.13.2   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.

15.13.3   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.

15.14 Policy IF5 Telecommunications

Policy IF 5

Telecommunications

1. Expansion of electronic communications networks and the provision of suitable infrastructure to achieve this are supported, 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

   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.

15.15 Water supply and sewerage infrastructure

15.15.1   Sustainable management of natural resources is important and the Borough is in one of the driest parts of the country. It also experiences a high level of demand for water and in some areas the demand is close to exceeding the available supply. The provision of water and waste water and sewerage infrastructure is an essential element of any new development. The Borough has worked with partners to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) 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.

15 Infrastructure

15.15.2   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.

15.15.3   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.

15.15.4   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. 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.

15.16 Policy IF6 Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

Policy IF 6

Water Supply and Sewerage Infrastructure

1. Development proposals should 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 Council 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. Where works 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. 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 will be supported. 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. Development proposals should include water efficiency measures aimed at reducing overall water consumption to reduce the pressure that a proposal will have on existing infrastructure.

Monitoring and Implementation 16

16

Monitoring and Implementation

16.0.1   Policies in the BLP have been designed to deliver a sustainable pattern of growth and development across the Borough over the plan period. The BLP aims to protect the environment and heritage assets of the Borough and at the same time make appropriate provision for the identified levels of need for housing, employment, service and facilities.

16.0.2   A robust monitoring framework is essential to ensure that the BLP 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 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 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 BLP is performing in terms of delivering sustainable development and protecting and enhancing the environment and assets within it, and also to indicate whether a review of the plan is necessary.

16.0.3   The delivery of necessary infrastructure to support the level of growth and development prescribed by the BLP is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It is extremely important to ensure that the identified infrastructure requirements are delivered and robustly monitored. Given that the spatial strategy 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.

16.0.4   Monitoring indicators are drawn directly from the objectives of the BLP and targets indicate how these objectives may be met. Related policies in the BLP are identified, and for each Monitoring Objective the achievement of targets will be assessed annually.

Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Indicator 1:   Special qualities of the Borough

Indicators: Delivery of development in accordance with policy related to conserving and enhancing special qualities of the Borough; amount of development permitted on Green Belt sites

Related Policies: SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP6, SP7, TR1, TR2, HE1, HE2, HE3, HE4, HE5, HE6, HRE7

Targets:

Development delivered in accordance with policies which relate to high quality design, heritage and specific environmental qualities
No loss of listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, ancient monuments, ancient woodlands, sites of archaeological interest
No reduction in the extent of Conservation Areas and other designated areas
Number of appeals dismissed on Green Belt reasons as a % of all appeals on Green Belt sites

Monitoring Indicator 2:   Meeting housing needs

Indicator: Delivery of housing as compared with the housing trajectory; delivery of affordable and specific needs; delivery of housing on previously developed land; adaptation to existing homes to take account of changed circumstances for residents.

Related Policies: HO1, HO2, HO3, HO4, HO5

Targets:

Number of dwellings completed				
Number of dwellings completed for the following periods:				
2013-2018	2019-2023	2024-2028	2029-2032	
Retain a five year housing land supply through the plan period				
Number of affordable houses as a percentage of total dwellings completed				
Number of units in different tenures delivered in accordance with the SHMA outputs				
Number of housing units provided with special facilities				
Production of a Housing SPD in accordance with May 2016 Local Development Scheme				

16.0.5   Gypsy and Traveller housing needs and provision will be addressed in the Gypsy and Travellers Local Plan in preparation

16   Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Indicator 3:   Visitor economy

Indicator: Reinforce key visitor and tourism assets in the Borough; provide sufficient accommodation and facilities for visitors

Related Policies: SP5, ED1, TR2, VT1, VT2

Targets:

Promotion of visitor and tourist attractions and facilities throughout the Borough
Delivery of new visitor accommodation

Monitoring Objective 4:   Local business economy

Indicators: Actual growth of the the local economic base in several sectors; provision of employment and retail floor space

Related Policies: SP1, ED1, ED2, ED3, TR2, TR3

Targets:

Delivery of office (Use Class B1) floorspace
Delivery of warehouse and other industrial (use Class B2, B8) floorspace
Promotion of allocated sites for employment growth

Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Objective 5:   Town, district and local centres

Indicators: Promote the viability and vitality of the town centres in the Borough; promote appropriate shopping and services in district and local centres
Related Policies: SP1, ED1, ED2, ED3, TR2, TR3, TR4, TR5
Targets:

Development according to policies on allocated sites for housing, commercial and retail uses
Borough promotion of Maidenhead and Windsor as principal centres
No change in the number of shops and community uses within designated district and local centres

Monitoring Indicator 6:   Infrastructure

Indicator: Provision of utilities, services and facilities to support planned development

Related Policies: IF1, IF2, IF3, IF4, IF5, IF6

Targets:

Provision of utilities, services and facilities according to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
Increase in the amount of the Borough provided with Superfast Broadband
Production of the Parking SPD in accordance with the May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Detailed provision in this area is coordinated and guided through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

16   Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Indicator 7:   Sustainable transport

Indicator: Delivery of sustainable transport schemes and facilities

Related Policies: IF7

Targets:

Number of and amount of applications and floor space refused on Local Transport Plan grounds
Number of applications accompanied by Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
Amount of sustainable transport schemes and facilities required in developing allocated sites provided
Creation of new facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and car charging points
Production of the Parking SPD in accordance with the May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Monitoring Indicator 8:   Heritage

Indicator: Maintenance and protection of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and registered parks and gardens.

Related Policies: HE1, E2, HE3, HE4, HE5, HE6, HE7, HE8

Targets:

Protection of the historic environment
Number of entries on the Local Heritage List
Number of applications and appeals dismissed relating to Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and registered parks and gardens.
No reduction in the extent of Conservation Areas due to insensitive development
Production of Heritage Strategy in line with May 2016 Local Development Scheme

Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Indicator 9:   Environmental protection

Indicator: Specific protection of designated environmental areas and issues

Related Policies: EP1, EP2, EP3, EP4, EP5

Targets:

Protection of the Environment
Number of new Air Quality Management Areas declared
Number of applications and/or appeals refused or dismissed on air, light or noise pollution grounds.
Number of applications likely to have a negative impact on air quality where mitigation is required.
Number of planning applications and or appeals refused or dismissed on contaminated land or water grounds.

Monitoring Indicator 10:   Open space and leisure

Indicator: Provision of open space; provision of leisure and recreation facilities and rights of way

Related Policies: NE3, NE4, NE5, IF2, IF3

Targets:

Quantity of open space provided on allocated housing sites
Provision of specific indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation facilities
Amount of open space lost to other development

16

Monitoring and Implementation

Monitoring Indicator 11:   Climate change and biodiversity

Indicator: Minimise the effect of flooding; amelioration of climate change impacts in development proposals; maintain and enhance natural environmental conditions

Related Policies: HO5, NR1, NR2, NR3, EP1, EP21, NE1, NE2

Targets:

Amount of development permitted in designated flood zones
Number of dwellings permitted requiring the provision of SANG
Amount of SANG provided
Amount of renewable energy delivered

Glossary

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Glossary

- **Air Quality Management Areas**: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.
- **Affordable Housing**: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.
- **Ancient Woodland:** A descriptive term for a group of native woodland habitats. These special areas have remained as woodland since at least 1600 and their soils are relatively undisturbed by people. Ancient woodland is the richest terrestrial habitat for wildlife, being home to more threatened species than any other, and represents the last fragments of the wildwood that once covered the country. (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk).
- **Biodiversity**: The variety of life in a particular habitat or ecosystem.
- **Borough Local Plan**: The plan currently being prepared by RBWM for the future development of the local area, in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy**: A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.
- **Conservation**: The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
- **Cumulative impact:** Impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project.
- **Development Plan**: This includes adopted Local Plans, Area Action Plans and Neighbourhood Plans within the Borough, plus one saved policy of the South East Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- **Economic Development**: Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).
- **Edge of Centre**: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.
- **Green Belt**: In the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Green Belt refers to the Metropolitan Green Belt. The designation accounts for 83% of the land area of the Royal Borough.
- **Green Networks / Green Corridors**: The linking together of natural, semi-natural and man-made open spaces to create an interconnected network.
- **Greenfield:** Any land that is not classified as PDL (previously developed land). Greenfield is not only countryside but also for example, open spaces in urban areas.
- **Green Infrastructure**: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Habitable rooms**: Habitable rooms are defined as any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. Enclosed spaces such as bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces are excluded from this definition.
- **Heritage Asset**: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Infilling**: The infilling of a small gap within an otherwise built up frontage or group of houses
- **Isolux Diagram**: A line through all points on a surface where the illumination is the same; called an isofootcandle line if the illumination is expressed in foot-candles. A series of such lines for various illumination values is called an isolux diagram.
- **Main Town Centre Uses**: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities; the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**: National planning guidance issued by the Government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. Local Planning Authorities must take the content into account in preparing Local Plans and decision making.