Further to your information request ER64908 please find your questions and our responses below:

1. Do you know if the Borough has reviewed and completed its local plan as required by the Government under the new planning regime for sustainable development?

Response: The Council is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan. Consultation on the Draft Borough Local Plan will be undertaken during the summer 2013 with the aim of adoption by December 2014.

   a. Please let me know if the plan has been revised and will be available for the 1st May 2013.

Response: See above. The Borough Local Plan will not be adopted for the 1st May 2013.

   b. Secondly what local consultation has taken place? When would I have had a chance to express my views? See Above. Consultation on sites was undertaken during November 2012-January 2013.

Response:
See link to Cabinet report:

2. I have been in touch with the EA at Wallingford who are responsible for reviewing and responding to planning enquiries in regard to flood issues. The EA’s standing advice for householder extensions is that small householder extensions of up to 250m2 are not considered significant. The EA standing advice is that the building must be either be built above the highest flood level or be flood resistant. As the Borough Planning Officers seem to be ignoring the EA standing advice I made further enquires. I was told that each council should have a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Upon checking indeed RBWM does have a SFRA that was produced on 2007. The document runs to about 80 pages and was I believe produced by Jacobs. Upon scan reading of the document there is nowhere within the document that refers to the EA standing advice (eg 250m2 for householder extensions). The document refers to the 30m2 F1 policy but does not provide any justification for retaining this restriction in the light of the EA’s standing advice.


Further, an addendum to the 2009 SFRA was published to support the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan. Please refer to document here:
http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/pp_aap_background_evidence.htm

Reference to EA Standing advice is contained in para 244 of the SFRA
(April 2009). All RBWM SFRA work has been undertaken with full support and cooperation with the EA - see para 54, 58 and 89 of the SFRA. Also refer to Section 7 of the document where the basis of any future review of the SFRA is heavily dependant on data and advice from the EA.

a. I guess this is a FOI request. Can I have the record of the discussions and correspondence relating to the Policy F1 and the EA standing advice throughout the commissioning of the SFRA document?

Response: A copy of the approval of the SFRA by Cabinet in 2007 is copied below.

Also see link:
http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/meetings_071122_agenda_cabinet.htm

22 NOVEMBER 2007

Planning and Housing
RBWM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Cabinet considered the RBWM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, together with approving it for development control purposes. It was noted that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment had been undertaken during the summer of 2006 prior to the submission of the Council’s Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document. It was based upon the Draft PPS25, and had been prepared by Jacobs. It was a ‘living’ document that would be required to be regularly reviewed and updated. Cabinet noted that the Council had worked closely with the Environment Agency in developing the Assessment.

RESOLVED: That

a) The RBWM Strategic Flood Risk Assessment be approved for development control purposes and to inform the Local Development Framework,
b) The approval of future updates to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment be delegated to the Planning Policy Manager and the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Housing.

b. Can I have the contact details within Jacobs so I can ask them how they were able to produce the SFRA without reference or justification for ignoring the EA standing advice?

Staff who worked on the SFRA have now left Jacobs. The last contact name related to the 2009 update of the SFRA is:
Jose Tavares
Technical Director
Jacobs, Jacobs House, London Road,
Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1BL, UK
c. Can I ask what consultation was undertaken with riverside residents on the SFRA? Was I asked for my comments on the SFRA?

The 2009 update of the SFRA was not subject to consultation. The Inspector into the RBWM Core Strategy also commented on the SFRA. He found that Details can be found here:

If requested the Council can provide copies of comments from the EA in relation to the Core Strategy Flood Policy CS10.

Para 7.29:
"Criticisms are made of the content of the SFRA and the consultative arrangements. I am not convinced that these concerns are well founded but they largely fall outside my remit in any event. It is also relevant that the SFRA is viewed as a “living” document to be reviewed and up-dated annually. Indeed I understand that if and when inaccuracies are identified—see the list set out in the letter dated 25.6.2007 from the River Thames Society for example - they will be addressed ahead of the next annual review. So far as the consultative arrangements are concerned, I note that the public was largely excluded but like other technical exercises that is not of itself unusual."

This concludes your request ER64908.

If you require translation of the information you have been sent please do not hesitate the contact us.

If you are unhappy with the information we have provided in response to your request please write to:

Information Management Team Manager
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Town Hall, St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF

or send an e-mail to martin.tubbs@rbwm.gov.uk

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http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/foi_information_requests.htm
We are keen to hear about your experience with the Information Management Team here at the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and look forward to receiving any comments you have about the way your information request was processed.

Please send any feedback to the Information Management Team Manager either by e-mail martin.tubbs@rbwm.gov.uk or in writing to the address above.

Yours sincerely

Chris Daniels
Information Management Officer
Legal Department
Corporate Directorate
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Town Hall, St.Ives Road
Maidenhead SL6 1RF