

4 Policy Context

4.1 A number of national, regional and local planning policies influence the nature of future development in Maidenhead town centre. This section provides a summary of the key policy documents. For the purposes of the S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 'Act'), the development plan comprises Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) 2001 incorporating subsequent alterations (the RSS), the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 (Adopted in July 2003) and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations Adopted in June 2003). Development of the site will be expected to comply with all national, regional and local policy and guidance.

4.2 The objective of this Brief is to ensure that development will enhance and contribute to Maidenhead town centre's overall vitality and viability and to secure high quality buildings and an atmospheric public realm. Developers will be expected to comply with the policy set out within this document.

National Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

4.3 PPS1 sets out the Government's vision for new development which seeks high quality design which is accessible to all, reinforces the unique character of its location and employs sustainable principles wherever possible. The general approach to delivering sustainable development includes promoting more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed-use development and previously developed, vacant or under-utilised land or buildings. Policies should promote mixed use developments for locations that allow the creation of linkages between different uses and can thereby create more vibrant places.

4.4 PPS1 also promotes focusing developments that attract a large number of people, such as retail, leisure and offices, in existing centres, to promote their vitality and viability.

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

4.5 PPS3 prioritises the provision of new housing on previously developed land and the reduction of car dependency by focusing new residential development on urban sites with good public transport accessibility. In particular, providing housing as part of mixed use town centre development on re-used urban land.

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres

4.6 PPS6 focuses on the Government's objective of promoting vitality and viability of town centres by planning for the growth and development of existing centres and encouraging a wide range of services in an attractive and accessible environment.

4.7 PPS6 sets out the following objectives:

- planning for the growth and development of existing centres;
- promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.
- enhancing consumer choice by providing a range of services which meet the needs of the entire community, particularly socially excluded groups;
- supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure and tourism sectors, with improving productivity; and
- improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport;

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport

4.8 PPG13 seeks to promote increased use of sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling and public transport. New development should therefore reduce the need to travel and prioritise the needs of pedestrians over motorised transport. It promotes focussing land uses which are major generators of travel demand within town centres.

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Regional Planning Guidance

4.9 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, RPG9 is to be replaced by a new Regional Spatial Strategy – the South East Plan. The South East Plan has been prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) and was submitted to the Government in July 2006. It sets out the vision for the region through to 2026. The examination into the South East was undertaken during November 2006 – March 2007. The report of the Panel was published in August 2007. At the time of writing, it is understood that the Secretary of State, through the Government Office for the South East will publish the Proposed Changes to the South East Plan before the summer recess 2008.

RPG 9- South East Regional Guidance

4.10 Regional Planning Guidance for Berkshire is provided by the South East Regional Guidance (RPG 9), which was adopted in August 2001 and will eventually be replaced by the South East Plan.

4.11 The Guidance sets out Government Policy for the South East and provides the regional planning framework for the next fifteen years. The primary purposes of the guidance is to provide a regional framework for the preparation of local authority development plans.

4.12 RPG9 emphasises that major town centres, such as Maidenhead, should be the normal focus for major retail, leisure and office developments, to support an urban renaissance, promote social inclusion and encourage more sustainable patterns of development.

The South East Plan

4.13 The Draft Plan emphasises the importance of accessible, attractive and vibrant town centres for sustainable development. Policy TC2 states that town centres should be a focus for major retail developments, major cultural, tourism, social and community venues, employment and a range of housing. In addition, Policy TC3 states that new development and redevelopment should consider identified needs, the existing character of town centres, effect on neighbouring centres and transport impacts.

4.14 With regard to housing, Policy H1 states that an annual average of 28,900 net additional homes should be provided in the South East between 2006 and 2026, with a total of 5,620 in Windsor and Maidenhead, at an average of 281 homes per annum². Across the region 60% of housing should be provided on previously developed land and should be in sustainable locations, well-served by a choice of transport modes.

Berkshire Structure Plan

4.15 The Berkshire Structure Plan was adopted in July 2005 and sets out the desired vision for Berkshire over the period 2001-2016.

4.16 In particular, the Structure Plan identifies that Maidenhead town centre will:

‘undergo major regeneration in the Plan period, with the intention of revitalising it as a balanced community providing for retail, employment, residential and leisure uses. It will expand its position as a civic and cultural centre, assisted by transportation and infrastructure improvements.’

4.17 Policy DP1 highlights Maidenhead, along with the other Major Towns of Newbury, Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell as areas that should be the principal focus for major developments.

4.18 Policy S1 regarding the major retail and leisure development in town centres identifies the scope for growth in Maidenhead in order for it to serve the needs of its catchment population. The plan proposes a strategy of consolidation and expansion of Maidenhead’s retail and leisure function over the structure plan period. It warns that any scheme must not adversely affect the vitality and viability of other town centres and/or result in unacceptable increases in the number of car-borne shoppers.

4.19 With regard to the function, scale and future needs of Maidenhead the Policy states the following:

² The Panel has recommended a higher figure of 346 however this figure is subject to change following the publication of the Proposed Modifications to the South East Plan by the Secretary of State.

Policy Context

'Function and scale: Maidenhead provides an important centre for both convenience and comparison shopping for the urban area and its surrounding catchment.

Following relatively little recent significant retail development in the town centre, there is identified scope for growth in order to serve the needs of its catchment population.

Future strategy: The town centre is undergoing a period of regeneration and revitalisation, and there will be a need to consolidate and expand its retail and leisure function over the Structure Plan period.'

RBWM Local Plan

4.20 The Local Plan was adopted in July 1999 with further alterations being incorporated and subsequently adopted in June 2003. A Direction issued by the Government Office for the South East on 25 September 2007, confirmed policies in the Adopted Local Plan that would be continued to be saved beyond the initial 3 year period up to 27 September 2007.

4.21 The site is within the Maidenhead town centre commercial boundary. Secondary Shopping Frontages (MTC9) run along Queen Street and King Street and the primary shopping area sits directly to the north of the site (MTC8). The multi storey car park is identified as a major development site (MTC7). King Street is designated as being part of the cycle network running through the town centre (T7).

4.22 The Local Plan is supportive of redevelopment of this site (MTC1). Policy S1 states that retail development will be permitted where it would enhance the attractiveness and viability of the existing centres provided that it is can be integrated into the existing centre, meets required standards and is of an appropriate scale.

4.23 Part of the site is specifically identified in Policy S2 as a site allocated for additional retail development and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead expect major new retail development uses to be located within the centre of Maidenhead under Policy S5.

4.24 The Broadway Car Park/King Street is described under Policy MTC7 as being the most significant opportunity to help shape the future of Maidenhead as a major retail centre. The Broadway Car Park/King Street is identified as site M1 and being the location of shopping development, specifically;

'additional shopping floorspace linking into Nicholson's Walk with retail frontages onto King Street and Broadway.'

4.25 Other requirements include the retention of provision of 600 public car parking spaces and the link to adjoining car park to the rear of Siena Court, servicing to be provided for from the upper levels of Nicholson's Walk.

RBWM Local Development Framework

4.26 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) lies at the heart of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LDF. The Core Strategy is therefore the overarching document that sets out the vision for the borough over the next 20 years and how spatial planning will contribute towards achieving the vision. It will run until 2026. The Core Strategy is the first major policy development plan document that will be produced as part of the LDF and is in presently at an early stage. This is being produced in parallel with a Delivery and Development Principles document which will set out the Council's individual site allocations for housing; employment and other uses and their associated site-related policies. It will include policies associated with, amongst other things, housing; employment; retail/recreation and visitors; Green Belt and the Countryside; historic environment; and transport.

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4.27 The Council is also producing a supplementary planning document (SPD) on sustainable design and construction. Once adopted, this will be a material consideration in the development of this site together with already adopted SPD on Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions⁽³⁾ and supplementary planning guidance on the Council's Affordable Housing Policy⁽⁴⁾, open space⁽⁵⁾ and secondary shopping areas⁽⁶⁾.

Other Policy Considerations

4.28 The following additional key studies and documents are also relevant to the consideration of any emerging development proposal for the site:

- RBWM Annual Monitoring Report 2006/7
- Retail and Leisure Study April 2006
- Employment Land Review April 2006 and Addendum, October 2006
- Housing Needs Survey 2005
- Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011
- Community Strategy 2003-2013
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Nov 2007)
- Maidenhead Town Centre: Towards 2026. A Plan for Partnership Action (Jan 2007)
- Urban Potential Review 2006

4.29 The key findings from these reports indicate that Maidenhead town centre overall will need to accommodate an additional:

- 17,800 sq m of A1 retail space for comparison shopping by 2016, with unit sizes ranging from 100 sq m to 2,800 sq m for fashion and household goods, with some cafes and restaurants (A3).
- A proportion of the Royal Borough's forecast 85,300 sq m B1 office space to meet demand consistent with growth forecasts.
- A proportion of the Royal Borough's housing allocation of 4,100 dwellings to 2016 to (although this may be reviewed by the South East plan) to promote more mixed use and sustainable town centres, and related community services and facilities.

4.30 The proposals for this site should consider the incorporation of all or some of these uses as part of a retail-led mixed use town centre redevelopment.

Design Guidance

4.31 There are a number of Government backed guides, manuals and handbooks that promote best practice on good design. The following publications will provide the necessary context for development proposals on the site:

- Better Places to Live – By Design Guide (September 2001)
- The Urban Design Compendium (August 2000)
- Building in Context – New Developments in Historic Areas (January 2002)
- Manual for Streets (2007) (Department of Transport)

3 The Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in December 2005. The SPD outlines detailed policy on securing appropriate contributions towards certain infrastructure, services and facilities made necessary by new development.

4 The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on the Implementation of Local Plan Policy H3 on Affordable Housing was adopted in March 1999. The SPG outlines detailed policy on the provision of affordable housing as part of the residential development schemes.

5 Interpretation of Policies R2, R3, R4, R5 and R6 (Public Open Space Provision) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was originally adopted in February 2003 with updates adopted in May 2004 and February 2005. The SPG outlines detailed policy on the provision of public open space, including qualitative standards for new development.

6 Interpretation of Existing Planning Policy for Secondary Shopping Areas of Windsor and Maidenhead Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was adopted in September 1999. The SPG outlines detailed policy on developments within the Windsor and Maidenhead secondary shopping areas.