

7 Sustainability

Sustainable Construction and Design

7.1 The design of buildings should seek to be sustainable in terms of energy use, design and construction. The Council expects development to achieve a BREEAM 'very good' rating and demands a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. The Borough Council is currently preparing an SPD on Sustainable Design and Construction, when adopted; this document should be taken into consideration when designing a development scheme for the site. Developments should seek to minimise the use of natural resources such as water and fossil fuels through design and orientation; efficient use of land; choice of construction materials and methods; and application of appropriate technology. The developer should seek to consult the Environment Agency at the earliest opportunity to ensure Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can be accommodated in the new development wherever possible.

7.2 Construction methods and materials should be selected with a view to minimising damage to the environment and disruption to local people. Materials should be sourced locally where possible in order to minimise the pollution caused by transport. Construction waste should be minimised through careful planning and site management.

7.3 The proposal should seek to provide an efficient layout in order to make best use of this important brown field site. This should be achieved by designing buildings in compact form, minimising the ground area devoted to vehicular movement and storage, and providing residential and commercial space at upper levels. Opportunities should be explored to accommodate green roofs where appropriate.

Energy Conservation/Renewable Energy

7.4 Building design should aim to reduce the overall energy requirements for heating, cooling and maintenance through selection of appropriate building forms, plant and materials.

Travel Plans

7.5 A travel plan should be submitted with any planning application for proposed new development that exceeds the thresholds set out in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport'. The format and contents of the Travel Plan should be discussed and agreed with the Council prior to submission.

Sustainability Appraisal

7.6 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this planning brief is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal which assesses the social, economic and environmental effects.

Assessment under Habitat Regulations

7.7 Under the requirements of Article 6 of European Directive 92/43/EEC and Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, any plan or programme not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the sites conservation objectives.

7.8 Articles 3-9 provide the legal means to protect habitats and species of EC interest through the establishment and conservation of a European-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC) (commonly known as the 'Birds Directive').

7.9 The first stage of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process is to produce a screening opinion for the proposed SPD. This will examine the likely effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, upon the International sites and consider whether it can objectively be concluded that these effects will not be significant and therefore an appropriate assessment is not required. Maidenhead town centre does not fall within 5km of any of the identified international sites over which Natural England should be consulted for individual planning applications. The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is the closest site to Maidenhead town centre. The Council

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recently undertook an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of the LDF Core Strategy's policies on these sites. It concluded that the Core Strategy, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to affect the integrity of the international sites.

7.10 It can therefore be concluded that the proposed development of the site at Queen Street, King Street and Broadway would not have a significant effect upon the above international sites covered by the Habitat Regulations.