

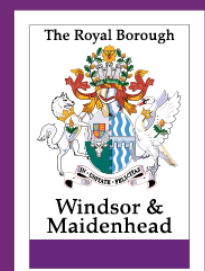
Borough Local Plan

Edge of Settlement Analysis

Part 2

Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment

Draft methodology
October 2015



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1 Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the study

1.1 This assessment is the second part of a process which considers the suitability of land on the edge of settlements which are themselves excluded from the Green Belt for development. The form of development considered is major residential or commercial development.

1.2 The Council is now taking the detailed step of reviewing existing planning designations (for example employment land, retail need and Green Belt) to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that:

1. Plans are positively prepared, and
2. Plans should meet objectively assessed needs unless
 - the impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole, or
 - specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

1.3 It should be understood that the act of reviewing a designation does not in itself indicate that the designation will change, that is a review can find the existing designation remains valid.

1.4 This part of the process specifically considers the development potential of those land parcels which have been assessed as performing less well against the purposes of Green Belt as defined in the Framework. In doing this the assessment considers a wide range of factors including constraints, opportunities and matters which affect delivery. The outcome of this assessment will identify those areas which are more or less suitable for development. This information will be used to inform consideration of land supply including possible site allocations within the Borough Local Plan.

1.5 By focusing on land on the edge of those settlements excluded from the Green Belt, this assessment provides in depth analysis of the suitability of land in locations considered to be reasonable and comparatively sustainable compared to other options relating to Green Belt. This is considered to be proportionate and in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development advocated in the Framework.

Study purpose at a glance	
What it will do	What it don't do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify land which is considered comparatively more suitable for development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set future development requirements ● Amend the boundary of the Green Belt ● Indicate whether exceptional circumstances exist which support the alteration to the boundary of the Green Belt ● Allocate land for development

Edge of Settlement - Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment

1.6 The Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment formed the first part of the process which considered the suitability of land on the edge of settlements by specifically considering how land performs against the purposes of Green Belt as defined in the Framework.

1.7 The outcome of this first study was to identify those parcels of land which perform less well against the purposes of the Green Belt. Having identified these areas, this Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 2 Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment continues to consider the wider suitability of the site.

1.8 In total [NUMBER TO BE INSERTED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE STUDY] parcels were recommended for further analysis. A map showing these parcels is provided below.

MAP TO BE INSERTED SHOWING THE PARCELS RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

2.1 In England, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out the government's policy on planning including the context in which Local Plans must be prepared. Being consistent with national policy is one of the tests against which Local Plans are examined.

2.2 At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for plan making means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁽¹⁾ Examples of specific policies in the Framework which restrict development include sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space; designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding.⁽²⁾

2.3 The Framework outlines 12 core planning principles.⁽³⁾ Amongst these principles are that planning should

1. Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
2. Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);
3. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;
4. Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;
5. Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
6. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations; and
7. Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

2.4 In addition to establishing the core planning principles, the Framework sets out detailed policy on a wide range of matters. A summary of the policy relating to Green Belt is provided in the Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment. A summary of those matters which are considered to be relevant to this study is provided in Section 3.0 Methodology, Appendix A and Appendix B.

National Planning Practice Guidance

2.5 The government has published National Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance) to expand and clarify policy within the Framework. The Guidance is an online resource and subject to being updated. The following guidance is considered relevant to this study.

1. Climate change
2. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
3. Flood risk and coastal change
4. Hazardous substances
5. Health and wellbeing
6. Land affected by contamination
7. Land stability

1 NPPF, paragraph 14.

2 NPPF, footnote 9.

3 NPPF, paragraph 17.

2 Policy context

8. Light pollution
9. Minerals
10. Natural environment
11. Noise
12. Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space
13. Transport evidence base in plan making and decision taking
14. Tree Preservation Orders and trees in conservation areas
15. Viability
16. Waste
17. Water supply, waste water and water quality

2.6 Given the information from this study will be used to inform site allocations, it is important to note that for a site to be considered available for development there must be confidence that it can be delivered. Generally only land that is controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop, or the landowner has expressed an intention to sell can be considered available.⁽⁴⁾ The land must also be capable of being developed in a timely fashion.⁽⁵⁾

National Planning Policy for Waste

2.7 The National Planning Policy for Waste (2014) builds upon the Waste Management Plan for England which sets out the Government's ambition to work towards a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management. Amongst other matters, the guidance advocates meeting needs for the management of waste streams including the adequate provision for waste disposal.

Borough Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation (January 2014)

2.8 The Council undertook the Borough Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation from January to March 2014. Question 20 asked how important consultees considered a range of factors to be in considering the suitability of areas in the Green Belt for housing. The results are presented and summarised below.

2.9 In summary, factors considered most important to respondents were:

- Flooding;
- Prominence from within the Green Belt; and
- Wildlife.

2.10 The least important factors were:

- Minerals extraction; and
- Environmental quality.

Table 1 Results of Question 20 of the Borough Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation January 2014					
Factor	Importance (%)				
	1 Low	2	3	4	5 High
Avoiding areas which are more distant from services and facilities	9.3	11.3	18.0	18.0	43.3
Avoiding areas with higher quality agricultural land	6.7	4.7	18.0	16.0	54.7
Avoiding areas which are more important for wildlife	3.3	4.0	14.6	17.2	60.9

4 NPPG, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, ID 3-020-20140306.

5 NPPG, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, ID 3-021-20140306.

Policy context

Table 1
Results of Question 20 of the Borough Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation January 2014

Avoiding areas which are visually more prominent within the Green Belt	4.6	6.0	16.6	9.9	62.9
Avoiding areas which are at higher risk of flooding	1.3	0.6	7.6	10.8	79.6
Avoiding areas which are visually more prominent from within historic areas	3.5	4.2	20.8	22.9	48.6
Avoiding areas where gravel or sand could be extracted in the future	19.6	17.6	25.0	14.9	23.0
Avoiding areas with lower environmental quality such those affected by noise	13.2	16.6	21.9	13.9	34.4

2.11 Consultees were not specifically asked to comment on the methodology and its application. The consultation nonetheless provided an opportunity for interested parties to submit comments. A summary of comments is provided below.

- Greater clarity is needed on the methodology
- A common methodology should be used across all local authorities
- The assessment of Green Belt should consider all land in the borough not just land on the edge of excluded settlements
- The methodology should consider how land contributes to creating sustainable patterns of development
- The release of land on the edge of some settlements (e.g. Maidenhead) should be favoured over others
- Land owned by the Crown Estate should not be considered a strategic constraint . Crown land should be considered like other ownerships
- Support for heritage assets being a strategic constraint
- More work is required to assess potential impacts on heritage assets
- Land in the function floodplain should be rejected
- All land that floods should be rejected
- Locations within Flood Zone 3a and 2 should not be excluded from further consideration and should be considered through the application of the sequential and exceptions tests
- The assessment of Green Belt is not comprehensive of all purposes of including land in the Green Belt
- The assessment of gaps should take into account the visibility and function of the gap, not just its size
- The assessment of gaps should consider those between all settlements and not just excluded settlements
- The application of constraints appears inconsistent
- The assessment should consider access to services and facilities.

2.12 Comments regarding the treatment of the Crown Estate and the assessment of how land contributes to the purposes of the Green Belt are addressed in the Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment. The weight to be attached to other factors will be assessed on a site by sites basis within this study.

2.13 To support the Borough Local Plan process, the Council has identified sustainability objectives. These are used to identify the sustainability implications of policy options, helping to ensure that overall the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. A list of the sustainability objectives is provided below.

2 Policy context

Table 2 Sustainability Objectives
1. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home (SOC1)
2. Reduce and manage the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to people, property and the environment (ENV1).
3. Contribute to reducing the effects of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensure that the borough is prepared for its impacts (ENV2)
4. Protect and improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health (SOC2)
5. Encourage increased engagement in cultural and sporting activity across all sectors of the community (SOC3)
6. Reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest (SOC4)
7. Improve accessibility to key services and facilities (SOC5)
8. Reduce air pollution and the proportion of the local population subject to noise pollution (ENV3)
9. Conserve and enhance biodiversity (ENV4)
10. Conserve and enhance the historic environment and cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), its setting and access to it (SOC6)
11. Conserve and enhance the countryside and the landscape (ENV5)
12. Conserve and enhance local environmental quality and distinctiveness, including townscape character (ENV6)
13. Promote high quality design and sustainable construction (ENV7)
14. Improve travel choice, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of (EC7)
15. Ensure the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, and reusing buildings (ENV8)
16. Ensure the prudent use and sustainable management of man-made and natural resources (ENV9)
17. Increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable resources in the borough (ENV10)
18. Conserve and enhance soil quality (ENV11)
19. Ensure high and stable levels of employment (EC1)
20. Sustain and promote economic growth and competitiveness (EC2)
21. Encourage smart economic growth (EC3)
22. Sustain and promote the visitor economy and its attraction (EC4).
23. Raise educational achievement levels and develop opportunities for everyone to acquire skills needed to find and remain in work (EC5).
24. Manage waste more sustainably by using treatment techniques higher up the waste hierarchy (ENV 12)
25. Conserve and improve water quality and quantity in water courses including groundwater and to achieve sustainable water resource management (ENV13)

Table 2
Sustainability Objectives

26. Prevent and reduce crime and disorder, and the fear of crime (SOC7)

27. Promote and support the rejuvenation of Maidenhead town centre (EC6)

Summary: policy context

2.14 The Framework, the Guidance and other national policy documents identify a wide range of factors that should be considered when assessing which sites are more or less suitable for development. Neither the Framework nor the Guidance detail how such an assessment should be conducted. Each local authority is thereby required to establish a methodology which is appropriate to the local context.

2.15 Key points to note are:

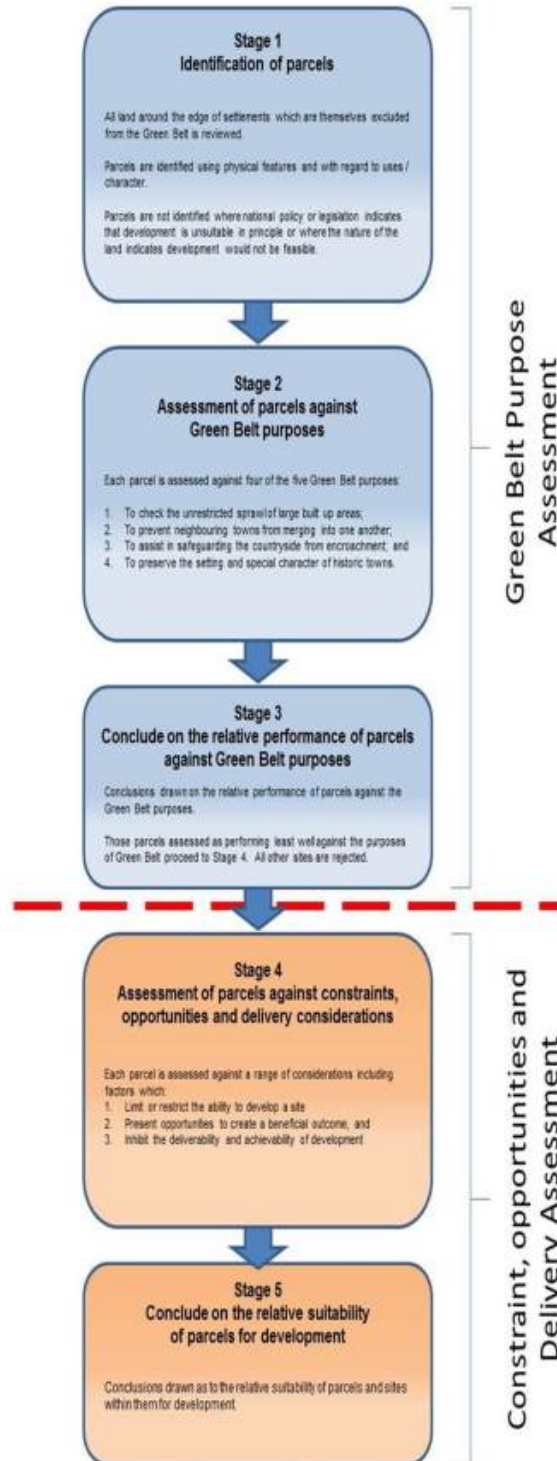
- The assessment should consider whether land is 'available' for development and whether it is 'achievable'. The Framework and Guidance clearly advise that only land which is known to be suitable, available and achievable can be considered deliverable for development and potential allocation.
- The assessment should consider opportunities which arise from development as well as factors which prevent or inhibit development. The Framework clearly identifies area where development should be restricted.

Methodology

METHODOLOGY

3.1 An overview of the overall methodology used to assess the suitability of land for development is set out in the figure below. The following section sets out the approach used in Stages 4 and 5.

3.2 The detailed methodology used in in Stages 1 to 3 can be found within the Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment.



Stage 4: Constraints, opportunities and delivery considerations

3.3 As outlined in Section 2, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for plan making means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

3.4 In deciding how to allocate sites, the Framework instructs that allocations of land should prefer land of lesser environmental value, however from the presumption it is clear that consideration can be given to both constraints and opportunities presented by sites. The definition of sustainable development and the sustainability objectives also acknowledge that sustainability is a balance between social and economic needs and environmental impacts.

Constraints

3.5 Constraints are factors which limit or restrict the ability to develop a site. In some instances constraints will prevent development, whilst in others they might limit or influence the type, form or capacity of a site.

3.6 Parcels were not identified where national policy or legislation indicates development would be unsuitable in principle at stage 1, or where the nature of the land indicates development would not be feasible or deliverable. Further details can be found in the Edge of Settlement Analysis: Part 1 Green Belt Purpose Assessment.

3.7 The assessment of constraints has considered factors within the following themes:

- Flooding
- Biodiversity
- Landscape
- Heritage
- Land use compatibility
- Resources
- Access and highways
- Infrastructure

3.8 Further explanation of these factors is provided in Appendix A.

Opportunities

3.9 Opportunities are beneficial factors. These might be the result of existing factors such as accessibility of a site to facilities, or they might be created through development itself such as in the case of the provision of a new community facility.

3.10 At an urban design level, good planning places the right things in the right places, supporting these with well related infrastructure and routes to move between places.

3.11 Drawing from the Framework, Guidance and the Borough Local Plan process to date, including the sustainability appraisal, the assessment of opportunities has considered the following beneficial factors:

- The potential to improve the setting of a heritage asset
- The potential to create or improve public access to a heritage asset
- The potential to remove unneighbourly uses
- The potential to remove eyesores
- The potential to create or improve public rights of way
- The potential to expand employment locations
- The potential to re-use of previously developed land
- The potential for mixed use development
- The potential to provide or improve community facilities
- The potential to support the regeneration initiatives at Maidenhead town centre and Ascot High Street
- The level of accessibility to existing services and facilities, including consideration of their capacity

3.12 Further explanation of these factors is provided in Appendix B.

Methodology

Deliverability considerations

3.13 Notwithstanding the potential sustainability credentials of a site, to allocate a site for development it must be 'available' and 'achievable'.

3.14 The Guidance indicates that for a site to be considered available for development there must be confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems, such as unresolved multiple ownerships, ransom strips tenancies or operational requirements of landowners. This will often mean that the land is controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop, or the landowner has expressed an intention to sell.⁽⁶⁾

3.15 A site may be considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.⁽⁷⁾

Presenting the assessment

3.16 Each parcel was assessed against the constraint, opportunities and delivery considerations, taking into national policy and guidance and the preferences expressed through local consultation. A pro-forma was prepared to capture information on each parcel in a consistent and transparent way. A copy of the pro-forma can be found in Appendix C.

3.17 An overall conclusion for each parcel is also provided indicating whether the land was more or less suitable for development, available and achievable; highlighting key factors.

6 NPPG, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, ID 3-020-20140306.

7 NPPG, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, ID 3-021-20140306.

Summary of constraint considerations

Summary of constraint considerations

1 The following pages provide a summary of constraint considerations

Flooding

2 Flooding is a significant constraint to development, either in principle or with regards to the layout and design considerations. The floodplain of the River Thames covers a significant area of the Royal Borough due to the relatively flat topography. In addition large areas are recognised to be at risk of groundwater and other forms of flooding.

3 The Framework advises that inappropriate development in areas of flood risk should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

4 Essential infrastructure and water compatible uses are the only compatible within Flood Zone 3b Functional Floodplain (following the application of the exceptions test).⁽⁸⁾ More vulnerable developments, which include dwellings, are compatible in Flood Zones 3a High Probability (following the application of the exceptions test), 2 Medium Probability and 1 Low Probability.⁽⁹⁾

Biodiversity

5 Biodiversity designations are a significant constraint to development, either in principle or with regards to the layout and design considerations. The Royal Borough has a number of areas recognised for the international and national importance in addition to numerous areas which are of local importance.

6 National legislation and the Framework advise that planning permission should not normally be granted for development which is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site (Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area)⁽¹⁰⁾ and that Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) should be protected similarly.⁽¹¹⁾ In addition, planning permission should not normally be granted for development which is likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments).⁽¹²⁾

7 With regards to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, Natural England advice is that the recreational impacts which result from residential development cannot be mitigated within 400m of the designation. Beyond this development can be permitted provided appropriate mitigation is in place. Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is one mitigation mechanism. The Framework advises that sites identified as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites should be given the same protection as the European sites themselves.⁽¹³⁾

8 Ancient woodland is an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. The Framework advises that planning permission should not normally be granted for development which results in the loss of deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland.⁽¹⁴⁾

9 A significant number of trees across the Royal Borough are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. These orders are used to protect selected trees and woodlands if their removal would have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. In addition to trees the Council has had a duty to protect important hedgerows in the countryside.

Landscape

10 The Framework highlights the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.⁽¹⁵⁾

8 Technical Guidance for the National Planning Policy Framework, Table 1.

9 Technical Guidance for the National Planning Policy Framework, Table 1.

10 The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010.

11 NPPF, paragraph 118.

12 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and NPPF, paragraph 118.

13 NPPF, paragraph 118.

14 NPPF, paragraph 118.

15 NPPF, paragraph 17 and 109.

Summary of constraint considerations

11 The Royal Borough's landscape and countryside are highly valued. This includes the River Thames corridor which flows through the borough for around 25 miles. The Council's Landscape Character Assessment describes and classifies the landscape, and is used to inform the sensitivity of the landscape to change.

Heritage

12 The Royal Borough has a rich heritage some of which relates to the area's long association with the Crown. Areas of historical significance are protected through being designated as conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments or registered parks and gardens. Individual buildings are protected through being listed. The local sites and monuments record indicates where archaeological finds have been uncovered in the past and can be used to indicate further archaeological potential.

13 The Framework recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.⁽¹⁶⁾ Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, should be wholly exceptional.⁽¹⁷⁾

Land use compatibility

14 It is important to consider whether or not new development would be compatible with existing or proposed developments. Key considerations will relate to the potential impact on potential future occupiers from matters such as odour, noise and air quality.

15 Within the Royal Borough areas which are subject to environmental impacts relate to the main road and train routes. Vehicle emissions have also lead to the designation of four Air Quality Management Areas where particular pollutants will be higher than recommend levels. These include Maidenhead town centre and one centres on Royal Windsor Way which forms the main vehicular route from the M4 motorway into Windsor. Additionally, the Council is aware of numerous sites where past or current activities may have resulted in some degree of contamination. The Framework acknowledges that the effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account in decisions.⁽¹⁸⁾

16 There is an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and other routes throughout the Royal Borough. The presence of a public right of way does not necessarily preclude development but it would form an important consideration in considering the layout and design of any proposal.

17 Common land may loosely be defined as land where certain people hold beneficial rights to use land that they do not own. National legislation restricts the kind of works that can be carried out on commons.⁽¹⁹⁾ Due to their nature and legal legislative framework common land is not suitable or available for development. Within the Royal Borough, common land can be found in proximity to Eton and Eton Wick, between northwest Maidenhead and Cookham Dean, the river frontage at Cookham, and between Maidenhead and Cookham.

18 The Royal Borough is home to a number of visitor attractions, including Windsor Castle, Legoland, Windsor, Ascot Racecourse, and Windsor Racecourse. These contribute to over 7 million people visiting the borough each year. The Council wishes to support the continued success and evolution of the Royal Borough's distinct visitor economy.

Resources

19 The Framework identifies that the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account.⁽²⁰⁾ It states that local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. Best and most versatile agricultural land comprises land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.⁽²¹⁾

16 NPPF, paragraph 126.

17 NPPF, paragraph 132.

18 NPPF, paragraph 120.

19 The Commons Act 2006.

20 NPPF, paragraph 112.

21 NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary.

Summary of constraint considerations

20 Within the Royal Borough, there are relatively small pockets of grade 1 around Datchet and Wraysbury, and between Maidenhead and Windsor. A significant area of grade 2 land lies to the west and north of Maidenhead. In addition there are large swathes of grade 3 land within the borough predominantly forming an extensive band running south of Maidenhead and Windsor. This will include areas of both grade 3a and grade 3b land.

21 The Environment Agency has identified a number groundwater Source Protection Zones within the Royal Borough. These have been identified to protect aquifers and groundwater flows including boreholes used for the public drinking water supply. The protection of groundwater from pollution, particularly potable water supplies is recognised by the Framework⁽²²⁾ and the Guidance.

22 There are five preferred areas for waste management and four preferred areas for minerals extraction/processing within the Royal Borough. All waste sites are safeguarded. The Council has a list of those sites which are safeguarded by this policy.

23 The Minerals Safeguarding Area aims to husband the identified mineral resource to minimise unnecessary sterilisation of mineral deposits and should be considered for more significant forms of development within this area. Primary aggregates are a limited resource and permitted waste management capacity in the area is limited and so consideration should be given to the potential loss of mineral resource, processing or management facilities in the area. Consideration will be given to the nature of the existing use and whether such a facility is specialist in nature (and relied upon locally or nationally) and whether the impacts of its loss can be accommodated by other permitted sites.

Access and highways

24 The Framework recognises that all decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved.⁽²³⁾

Infrastructure

25 The capacity of the utilities services and existing infrastructure is an important factor in determining the suitability of locations for development. The utility services include water, wastewater treatment, drainage, gas and electricity. The importance of providing infrastructure to support development is recognised throughout the Framework.

26 A wide range of other infrastructure will also be important to the suitability of areas for development. These include health, education and community facilities and services.

27 All areas of the Royal Borough are within a catchment of a doctors surgery or school. It is important that residents continue to have access to such facilities. The Council monitors the number pupils attending school and estimate how this might change in the future. This provides an indication of where capacity issues (either surplus or shortage of school places) exist.

28 The Framework recognises that important role played by community facilities in social interaction and in creating healthy and inclusive communities.⁽²⁴⁾ Decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.

22 NPPF, paragraph 109 and 156.

23 NPPF, paragraph 32.

24 NPPF, paragraph Section 8.

Summary of opportunity considerations

Summary of opportunity considerations

1 The following pages provide a summary of opportunity considerations

Heritage

2 The presence of a heritage asset can be a constraint to development. There may be circumstances where development can be used to improve the significance of a heritage asset. This may be through achieved through physical actions such as the removal of unsympathetic development or by actions which allow greater appreciation such as providing public access.

Unneighbourly uses

3 On occasion, uses can become established which are detrimental to the quality of the environment and cause a detrimental impact to other uses. One example would be a noisy activity in proximity to residential properties.

4 Through the assessment process, the Council wishes to ensure that new development is appropriately sited so that a nuisance does not occur. In most instances this is likely to mean avoiding planning for homes in proximity to existing activities which are considered to have an unacceptable detrimental impact. Notwithstanding this, there may be instances where the redevelopment of an existing unneighbourly use would benefit of the local environment.

Eyesores

5 Eyesores are unsightly buildings or land. Development may present the opportunity to remove such sites, putting the land to beneficial use.

Public rights of way

6 The presence of an existing public right of way is a factor which will be taken into account when assessing the suitability of sites, and the layout and design of any proposal.

7 In addition to the existing network, the Council wishes to also take into account the possible creation of new links which would result in improved access to the countryside to the benefit of residents.

Employment locations

8 The presence of an existing employment estate or similar provides an opportunity for the efficient expansion of business premises.

Previously developed land

9 The Framework prioritises the re-use of previously developed land (brownfield land), providing it is not of high environmental quality, over land which has previously been undeveloped (greenfield land).⁽²⁵⁾ This is identified as one of the core planning principles.

10 Previously developed land is defined as “land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.”⁽²⁶⁾

11 Within the Green Belt, the Framework supports the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.⁽²⁷⁾

25 NPPF, paragraph 17 and 111.

26 NPPF, Annex 2 Glossary.

27 NPPF, paragraph 89.

Summary of opportunity considerations

Accessibility

12 The location of a site in terms of links to public transport and services and facilities is a dimension of sustainable development. The Framework recognises that plans should support pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport⁽²⁸⁾ and that all decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved.⁽²⁹⁾ Key facilities should be located within walking distance of most properties.⁽³⁰⁾

13 National guidance within Manual for Streets advocates that walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to about 800m) walking distance, but emphasises that the propensity to walk is also influenced by the quality of the walking experience. The document “Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot” (IHT 2000) contains guidance on acceptable walking distances.

CIHT Provision for journeys on foot			
	Town centres	Commuting / School / Sightseeing	Elsewhere
Desirable	200m	500m	400m
Acceptable	400m	1,000m	800m
Preferred Maximum	800m	2,000m	1,200m

Mixed development

14 Larger scale residential developments provide an opportunity to promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day-to-day activities including work on site.

Community facilities

15 The Framework recognises that important role played by community facilities in social interaction and in creating healthy and inclusive communities.⁽³¹⁾ Decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services. Development may also create an opportunity to provide new or improved facilities.

16 As outlined above, the Framework recognises that key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties.⁽³²⁾ Larger scale residential developments provide an opportunity to provide new facilities on site or to fund improvements to existing facilities.

Regeneration initiatives

17 The Framework supports the identification of priority areas for regeneration.⁽³³⁾ Development in proximity to these areas provides an opportunity for investment which could improve vitality and viability.

18 Within the Royal Borough there are two regeneration initiatives supported in existing development plan policy, namely those at Maidenhead town centre and Ascot High Street.

28 NPPF, paragraph 30.

29 NPPF, paragraph 32.

30 NPPF, paragraph 38.

31 NPPF, paragraph Section 8.

32 NPPF, paragraph 38.

33 NPPF, paragraph 21.

Assessment pro-forma

Assessment pro-forma

C

Parcel Reference and Name

Location Plan

Implementation

Implementation	Availability	
	Achievability	

Map of promoted land

Flood risk

Flood zone	FZ3b	
	FZ3a	
	FZ2	
	FZ1	
	Flood defence	
	Flood storage	
	Groundwater	
	Surface water	
	Safety	

Biodiversity

Biodiversity	SAC	
	SPA	
	Ramsar	
	SSSI	
	TBH SPA buffer	
	SANGS	
	Ancient woodland	
	LNR	

Assessment pro-forma

Biodiversity		
	RIGS	
	LWS	
	Priority habitat	
	Protected species	
	TPO	
	Hedgerows	

Landscape and townscape		
Landscape and townscape	Character	
	Topography	
	Eyesores	
	River Thames Corridor	

Heritage		
Heritage	Conservation areas	
	Registered parks and gardens	
	Local listed parks and gardens	
	SAM	
	Listed buildings	
	Locally listed buildings	
	Archaeology	

Land use compatibility		
Land use compatibility	Noise	
	Contamination	

Assessment pro-forma

C

Land use compatibility		
	Air quality	
	Public rights of way	
	Common land	
	Visitor attractions	

Resources		
Previously developed land	PDL	
	Greenfield	
Agricultural land quality	Best and most versatile Grade 1, 2 and 3a	
	Grade 3b, 4 and 5	
Water	SPZ	
	Water stress	
Minerals	Safeguarded area	
	Preferred area	
	Existing site / facility	
	Safeguarded site	
Waste	Safeguarded site	
	Preferred area	
	Existing site / facility	

Access and highways		
Access and highways	Accessibility (to jobs, services and facilities)	
	Site access	

Assessment pro-forma

Access and highways		
	Road network	

Regeneration and economy		
Employment	Proximity to existing employment locations	
Mixed use	Potential for mixed use development	
Regeneration	Maidenhead town centre	
	Ascot High Street	

Infrastructure		
Utilities	Electricity	
	Gas	
	Water	
	Sewerage	
Health	GP Surgeries	
Schools	Schools	
Open space	Play facility	
	Sports facility	
	Parks and gardens	
	Amenity space	
	Allotments	
	Cemetery	
Community facility	Community facility	

Assessment pro-forma

Summary of constraints, opportunities and deliverability

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Map of area considered more suitable for development (where applicable)

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