



Maidenhead Waterways Framework June 2009

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Contents

Foreword	i
Glossary	ii
Executive Summary	iv
1 Introduction	1
Maidenhead Waterway Project	1
How to use this document	1
2 The Maidenhead Waterway Project	3
Route Details	3
Phases and Priorities	4
Assumptions and Feasibility	5
3 Policy Context	6
Waterway Corridor Context	6
Other Considerations	9
4 Development and Design Principles	11
Provide And Enhance The Waterside Setting	11
Provide High Quality Buildings And Spaces	12
Respond To The Risk Of Flooding	13
Conserve And Enhance Biodiversity	13
Respond To Historical Features And Their Setting	14
Allow For Continuous Walking And Cycling	15
Provide And Enhance Accessibility To And From The Waterside	16
Improve Provision And Quality Of Public Spaces	17
Allow For The Continuous Navigation By Craft	17
Provide And Contribute To The Provision Of Waterway Infrastructure	18
Provide For Maintenance Of The Waterway And Associated Infrastructure	19
5 Implementation	20
Planning Benefits and Infrastructure Provision	20
Planning Application Requirements	21
Consultation Strategy	21

Contents

Appendices

A Planning Policy Context	22
National Context	22
Regional Context	24
Local Context	25

Figures

Figure 1 - The Maidenhead Waterways Project Route (Source: Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group)	2
Figure 2 - Strategic Constraints	6
Figure 3 - Strategic Constraints for Maidenhead Town Centre	7
Figure 4 - Local Plan Context for Maidenhead Town Centre	8

Foreword

Foreword

The plans promoted by the Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group to restore the waterway which flows from the River Thames at Cookham, through Maidenhead to rejoin the river at Bray are ambitious and could result in something of real value for Maidenhead.

The council believes that the Waterways Project is an excellent opportunity to provide a valuable amenity which brings community activity to the fore in the restoration project itself, but also as an ongoing contribution to the vibrancy and sustainability of Maidenhead town centre as well as to the surrounding Green Belt countryside.

Cllr Alison Knight

***Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for
Planning and Development, including Property
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Cllr David Burbage

***Leader of the Council and Lead Member for
Maidenhead***

Glossary

Glossary

Glossary

Area Action Plan (AAP)	An area specific Development Plan Document.
Development	The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations, in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of a building or other land.
Development Plan	Consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Development Plan Documents contained within a council's Local Development Framework. Until the LDF is fully in place it will also include "saved" policies from the council's Local Plan.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A spatial planning document within a council's Local Development Framework which sets out policies for development and the use of land. They are subject to independent examination. Together with the Regional Spatial Strategy they form the development plan for the area.
Local Development Document (LDD)	The generic term given to documents within the council's Local Development Framework.
Local Development Framework (LDF)	Consists of a number of Local Development Documents which together form the spatial strategy for development and the use of land. Documents containing planning policy may be Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents.
Local Plan	A borough-wide planning document setting out policies for development and the use of land. It will be replaced by the Local Development Framework
Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group (MWRG)	A voluntary group and registered charity committed to progressing the restoration of the waterway through Maidenhead.
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)	A series of notes issued by the government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. They will be replaced by Planning Policy Statements.
Planning Policy Statement (PPS)	A series of statements issued by the government, setting out policy guidance on different aspects of planning. They will replace Planning Policy Guidance notes.
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	A long-term plan for the region which sets out strategic policies for development and the use of land. The development plan for the area comprises the RSS together with Development Plan Documents within a council's Local Development Framework.
South East Plan	The Regional Planning Strategy for the South East.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A spatial planning document within a council's Local Development Framework which provides supplementary guidance to policies and proposals contained within

Glossary

	Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the development plan, nor are they subject to independent examination.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	The appraisal of plans, strategies and proposals to test them against broad sustainability objectives.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Introduction

This planning brief provides a framework for future planning decisions along the waterway corridor stretching from the Cliveden Reach of the River Thames near Cookham, through Maidenhead, to Bray Marina. Its purpose is to aid the restoration of the waterway including the achievement of the emerging Maidenhead Waterway Project. It will help ensure that future policy and the design of development proposals contribute to the overall aim of restoring the waterway and avoid obstacles to the delivery of the Maidenhead Waterway Project.

This document does not assess the feasibility or acceptability of the Maidenhead Waterway Project itself. Nor does it promote development. It provides a framework for assessing the impact of developments on the aim to restore the waterway and on the delivery of the Maidenhead Waterway Project.

The Maidenhead Waterway Project

The emerging Maidenhead Waterway Project is an ambitious plan that aims to transform the waterway into a valuable amenity, for the benefit of all those who live, work or spend their leisure time in Maidenhead. It will create an attractive green corridor through the heart of the town with a stable and navigable waterway. The project is expected to be achieved in stages with the first stage being to raise and stabilise water levels within the town centre area to support small boats. It is a long-term aspiration that the waterway be navigable by narrow boats.

Policy Context

This document has been prepared in the context of national, regional and local planning policy, and has been informed by a sustainability appraisal. Particular regard has been made to *A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre*, the vision and action plan commissioned by the Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM) and adopted by the council. The vision and action plan identifies the waterway restoration as a key priority regeneration project that will enhance the town centre.

Part of the vision set out in the emerging Local Development Framework states that *Maidenhead's historical connection with the River Thames and its amenity and biodiversity of its connecting waterways will be enhanced. The protection of local character will be reinforced through the delivery of high quality design in buildings and spaces, improving and greening links to the river and the wider waterways.*

Development and Design Principles

Eleven general development and design principles for the waterway corridor have been identified, namely:

Development along the waterway corridor should:

1. provide and enhance the waterway setting.
2. provide quality buildings and spaces.
3. respond to the risk of flooding.
4. conserve and enhance biodiversity.
5. respond to historical features and their setting.
6. allow for or improve continuous walking and cycling.
7. provide and enhance accessibility to and from the waterside.
8. improve the provision and quality of public spaces.
9. allow for the continuous navigation by craft.
10. provide or contribute to the provision of waterway infrastructure.
11. provide for the maintenance of the waterway and associated infrastructure.

The application of these principles over time will result in the incremental improvement of the waterway and the opportunity it affords.

Executive Summary

Implementation

The guidance set out in this planning brief extends to all forms of development along the waterway corridor whether it involved the change of use of an existing building, the extension of an existing building or the construction of a new building. However the response will vary depending on the location, type and scale of development. The waterway corridor includes the surrounding landscape and townscape where change could have a significant impact on views towards and from the waterway or are related to its historical context.

Town centre redevelopments close to the waterway are expected to maximise opportunities to contribute to the overall achievement of the Waterway Project and wider rejuvenation. Within the wider town centre, developments will be assessed to see whether a financial contribution towards the project would be appropriate.

Executive Summary

Introduction

1

1 Introduction

1.1 This planning brief provides a framework for future planning decisions along the waterway corridor stretching from the Cliveden Reach of the River Thames near Cookham, through Maidenhead, to Bray Marina (see Figure 1). Its purpose is to aid the restoration of the waterway, including the achievement of the emerging Maidenhead Waterway Project. The planning brief will help ensure that both the preparation of future planning policy and the design of development proposals along the length of the waterway corridor contribute to the overall aim of restoring the waterway and avoid obstacles to the delivery of the Maidenhead Waterway Project.

1.2 For the avoidance of doubt, this document does not assess the feasibility or acceptability of the Maidenhead Waterway Project itself. Nor does it promote development. This document provides a framework for assessing the impact of development proposals that come forward along the waterway corridor on the aim to restore the waterway and the Maidenhead Waterway Project. The document does not support any development which is not acceptable in principle by wider planning policy.

1.3 The guidance set out in this planning brief extends to all forms of development, whether it involves the change of use of an existing building or land, the extension of an existing building or the construction of a new building. However, in line with the principles of reasonableness and proportionality the required response will vary depending on the location, type and scale of development.

1.4 This planning brief is not part of the Local Development Framework but has been prepared in the context of key national, regional and local planning policy, and has been informed by a sustainability appraisal. In particular, this document has regard to *A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre*, the vision and action plan commissioned by the Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM) and subsequently adopted by the council as a long-term strategy for the town centre. The vision and action plan identifies the waterways restoration and enhancement as one of five key priority regeneration projects that will help transform the perceptions of the town, improve accessibility, enhance the retail shopping experience, improve the quality of the physical environment and make the town centre a people place, where both residents and visitors wish to spend time in safety.

Maidenhead Waterway Project

1.5 Maidenhead grew up around its river crossings and the trade and travel which came as a result. The main River Thames lies to the east of the town centre. Smaller channels ran from the main river into the town centre, however over time these have become neglected and today are overgrown, silted up and are a shadow of their former selves.

1.6 The Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group (MWRG) was established in 2006 with the aim of restoring and enhancing the old waterways that still run through Maidenhead town centre into a valuable amenity. This work, known as the Maidenhead Waterways Project would create an accessible green corridor where everyone can enjoy boat and water related activities, walking and cycling, increasing the attraction of Maidenhead and helping to stimulate much needed regeneration.

1.7 All references to the Maidenhead Waterways Project and associated infrastructure within this document refer to the most up-to-date long-term position promoted by the MWRG. The council will consider the need to update this planning brief as more certainty over the form of the restoration emerges.

How to use this document

1.8 This document is divided into the following sections.

Section 2: Maidenhead Waterway Project - this section provides an overview of the Waterway Project including information on the route and phasing.

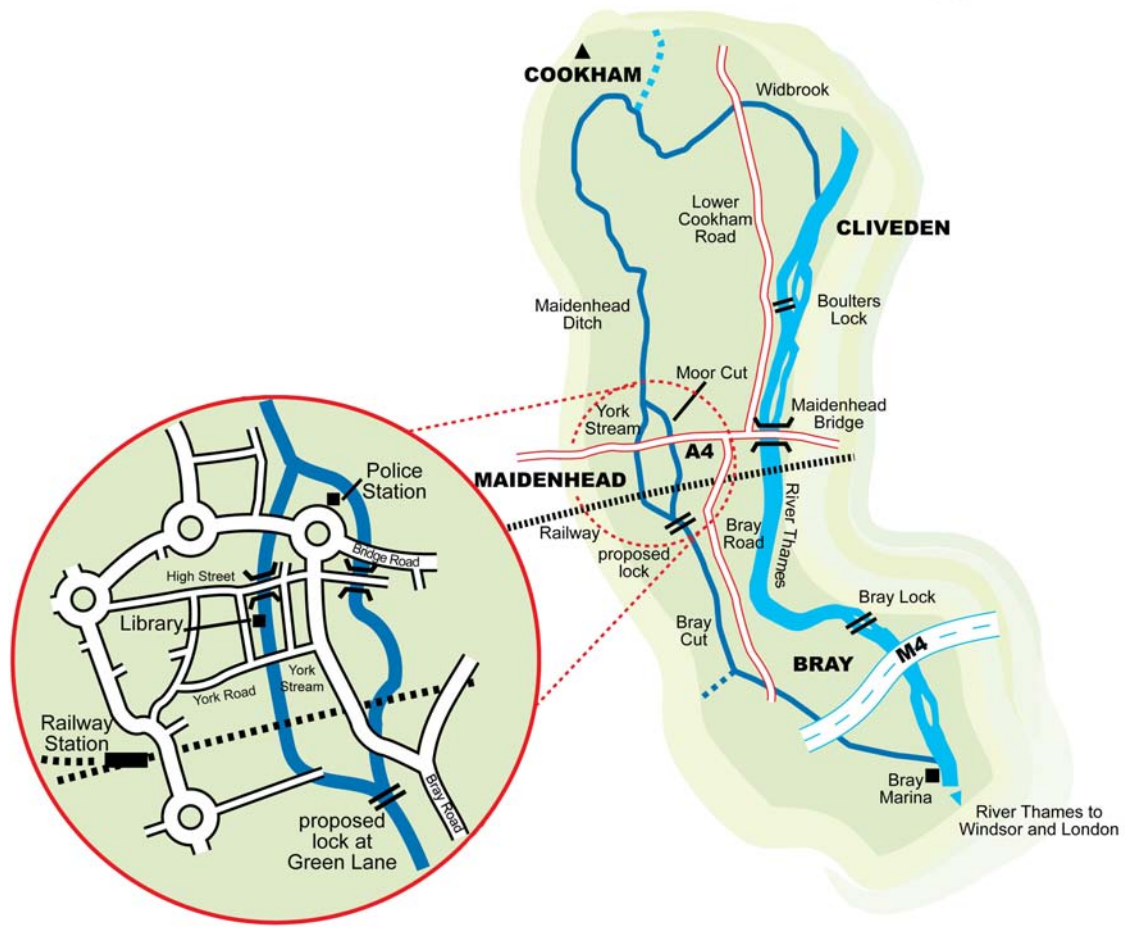
Section 3: Planning Context - this section outlines key information which will influence the achievement of the Waterway Project and help to control development along the waterway corridor.

Section 4: Development and Design Principles - this section defines eleven development and design principles which will be applied to developments permitted along the waterway corridor.

Section 5: Implementation - this section provides an overview of how this guidance will be applied including the information required to support planning applications.

1 Introduction

Figure 1 The Maidenhead Waterways Project Route (Source: Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group)



The Maidenhead Waterway Project

2 The Maidenhead Waterway Project

2.1 Maidenhead's waterways have become neglected over time. Old maps and paintings confirm the presence of a large body of water in the town centre and the scale of structures that remain suggest the waterway was once much larger than today. While not conclusive, there is some evidence that boats used parts of the waterway in the past.

Picture 1 Ives Place in a painting c1823 by William Pocock (1783-1836) (Print courtesy of Mr Patrick Bryan and Maidenhead Heritage Centre)



IVES PLACE
From the Ten Acre Meadow

2.2 The emerging Maidenhead Waterway Project is an ambitious plan that aims to transform the waterways that runs from the Cliveden Reach of the River Thames near Cookham, through central Maidenhead to Bray Marina. While the project detail is still emerging with no permission or consents being in place, it has a clear objective of restoring the waterway into a valuable amenity, for the benefit of all those who live, work or spend their leisure time in Maidenhead. It does not seek to replicate the past but to create an attractive green corridor through the heart of the town, with a stable waterway through and around the town centre – in effect bringing the River Thames into the town.

2.3 The project is aimed at benefiting the maximum possible number of potential user groups, whether they are walkers, cyclists, fishermen, birdwatchers, boaters or those who simply want to enjoy the calm or reflective feeling of being near water. It is a long-term aspiration that the waterway be navigable by narrow boats. In addition to creating a stable and possibly navigable waterway, the project would improve and extend the Green Way recreational route south to the River Thames.

Route Details

2.4 The detailed route for the Maidenhead Waterway Project is still being finalised, taking into account historic maps and studies looking at technical aspects of the scheme. It is generally the intention to follow the existing route of the waterway, making variations only when needed for technical or economic reasons.

2.5 The provisional route for the complete waterway (see Figure 1) would start at the River Thames near the Cliveden reach, running via the White Brook crossing Widbrook Common, up to the junction with Strand Water. The waterway would then run southwards via an enlarged Maidenhead Ditch until splitting at Town Moor into the

The Maidenhead Waterway Project

York Stream and the Moor Cut branches. The Moor Cut was enlarged in the 1960s as part of a flood defence⁽¹⁾ for the town but today is generally dry with water diverted down the York Stream branch by means of a small weir. Thereafter the York Stream branch of the waterway would run southwards past the Hines Meadow car park, underneath the shops at the Colonnade and out at Chapel Arches. The channel then continues down behind the library and under the York Road and the railway embankment into Stafferton Way. From the junction at Town Moor, the Moor Cut branch of the waterway would run southwards across the moor, passing underneath Bridge Road and the balustraded bridge at Moorbridge Road. The Moor Cut channel continues down between Waitrose and the Waldeck Road Industrial Area and under the railway embankment into Stafferton Way.

2.6 The two channels rejoin above Green Lane and widen out becoming Bray Cut which continues southwards past Braywick Park and under the M4 motorway until it rejoins the River Thames alongside Bray Marina. The channels involved in the project are side channels of the River Thames with statutory right of public navigation.

Picture 2 Rejoining the River Thames at Bray Marina (Source: Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group)



Phases and Priorities

2.7 The technical design for the transformation of the waterway is being undertaken by the MWRG in conjunction with expert consultants Black and Veatch and with pre-application advice from the Environment Agency.

2.8 While an overall objective is the restoration of the entire length of the waterway into a valuable amenity, the project is expected to be achieved in stages, as funding allows. The MWRG have prioritised the southern part of the waterway restoration since it poses the fewest technical challenges and will have the largest beneficial impact on Maidenhead town centre.

2.9 The anticipated first stage is to raise and stabilise water levels within the town centre area. This would involve the installation of a lock and weir system in proximity to Green Lane, raising the water level of the York Stream and permanently filling the Moor Cut channel across Town Moor, creating a ring around the town centre. The cost and disruption of raising road bridges would be avoided. As a consequence the first stage will only support small boats such as canoes, punts and open launches capable of operating within the minimum water depth of 0.4m and the 1.4m clearance which would be created within the town centre at this time.

2.10 Some dredging and widening of the upper channels will be required to provide a consistent water depth and support through navigation. The baseline plan will not change water levels below Green Lane, where clearance may already be adequate for up to narrow boat usage. Nor will it require channel widening below Green Lane, since the 1960s flood works created a channel 13-15m wide. The channel is currently suitable for navigation by

1 Maidenhead Flood Relief Channel.

The Maidenhead Waterway Project

small unpowered craft to reach Green Lane from Bray Marina. The channel would, however, require increased maintenance to allow narrow boat, including the clearance of fallen trees and other obstructions, plus some skimming of the silted-up bed.⁽²⁾

2.11 In light of the long-term aspiration that the waterway be navigable by narrow boats, the structures in the first stage plan will be designed, and where practical, built to accommodate craft the size of narrow boats, to avoid repeated disruption or replacement of facilities.

Assumptions and Feasibility

2.12 This document provides framework for future planning decisions along the waterway corridor to contribute to the overall aim of restoring the waterway. While seeking to support the achievement of the Waterway Project, the document does not consider alternative technical approaches,⁽³⁾ the feasibility or impacts arising from the detailed technical design. For the avoidance of doubt, this document does not assess potential impacts on flood risk or ecology. These are matters which will be considered through the planning application process.

2.13 Notwithstanding the above, the MWRG have already progressed a number of supporting studies. These will need to be supplemented and expanded as the scheme progresses in technical design and stages of delivery. Those studies completed to date are:

Waterway Resource Study - this study, completed in 2007 investigated the adequacy of water sources. It concluded that sources are adequate to support the Waterway Project, without compromising water quality. There may be a need for pumping on a few days a year to top up and maintain adequate water levels to support navigation. The study was endorsed by the Environment Agency who subsequently confirmed their support for the project in principle.

York Stream Silt Test Results⁽⁴⁾ - a baseline survey of the waterway corridor.

River Corridor Survey⁽⁵⁾ - a baseline ecological survey of the immediate waterway corridor.

Tree Survey⁽⁶⁾ - a baseline tree survey of the immediate waterway corridor.

Bat Survey⁽⁷⁾ - bat roosts are protected under international and national law. This study used bat emergency surveys to investigate the presence of bats along Maidenhead Ditch, Moor Cut, York Stream and Bray Cut. The presence of four species was confirmed.

2.14 Studies currently underway include:

Flood Risk Assessment - an assessment has been commissioned using Environment Agency modelling. The design objective for the Waterway Project is for no increase in flood risk.

Moor Cut Silt Test Results - a baseline survey of the Moor Cut waterway has been commissioned.

2.15 Any future planning application for works to achieve the Maidenhead Waterway Project will need to be supported by all necessary information to allow the feasibility and any impacts to be fully understood and assessed. The MWRG has been advised that the anticipated first stage plan will require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

2 The channel is maintained by the Environment Agency for flood relief purposes. The MWRG are in discussions with the Environment Agency regarding the commissioning of environmentally acceptable channel dredging.

3 The Maidenhead Waterway Project currently envisages a single lock and weir system in proximity to Green Lane. While not opposing this approach, the Environment Agency has put forward an alternative multiple lock and weir approach.

4 York Stream Silt Test Results, November 2007

5 River Corridor Survey of Maidenhead Flood Relief Channel and York Stream, Black and Veatch October 2008

6 Trees surveyed by Vivien Hodge, Arboricultural Consultant on 12-14, 27 and 29 August 2008.

7 Bat survey along the Maidenhead Flood Relief Channel and the York Stream, Furesfen September 2008.

3 Policy Context

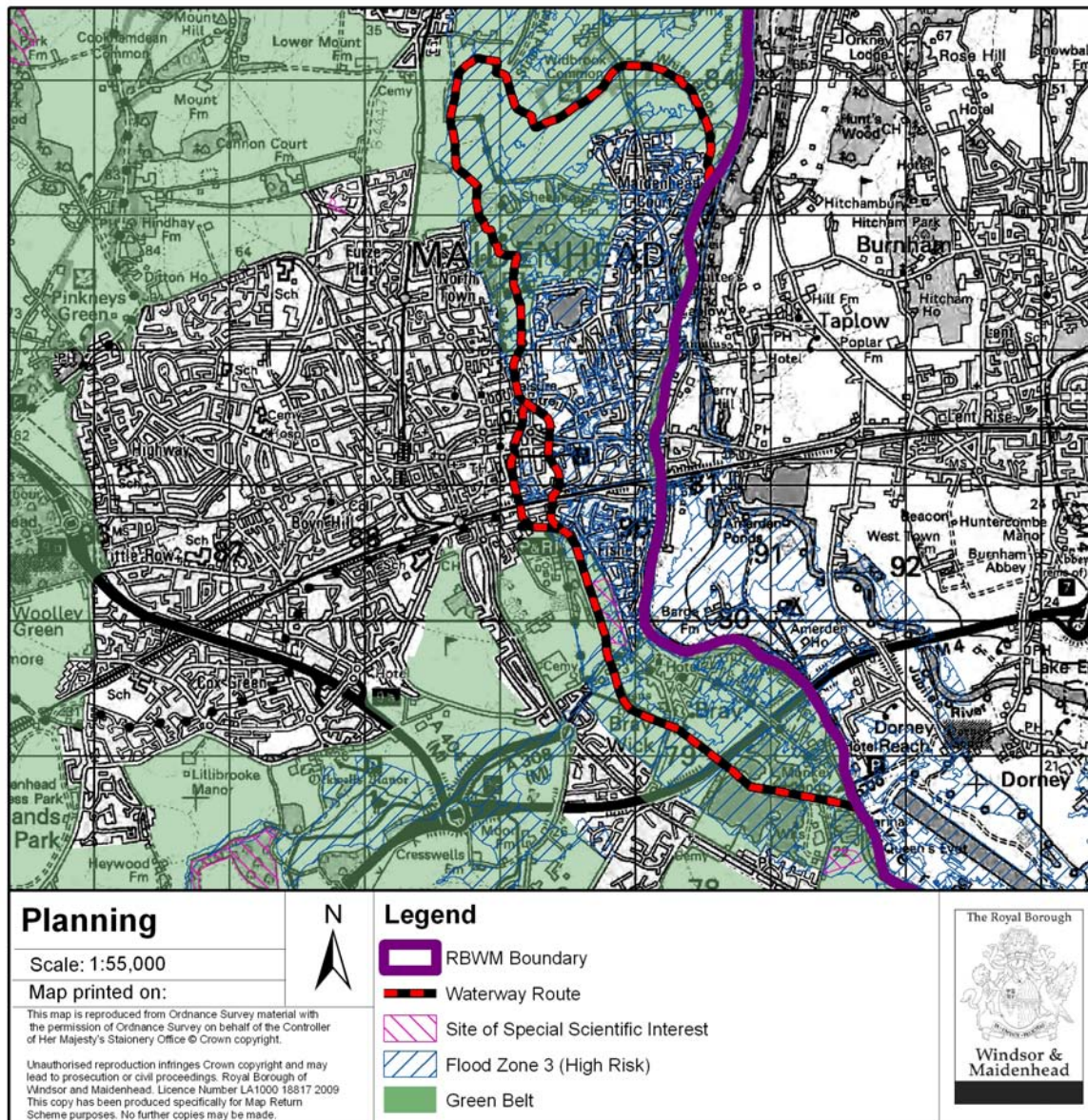
3 Policy Context

3.1 This planning brief has been prepared in the context of national, regional and local planning policy, and has been informed by a sustainability appraisal. Summary information on key national, regional and local policy is provided in Appendix A: Planning Policy Context. Information on planning designations that could affect the waterway corridor is provided below.

Waterway Corridor Context

3.2 The geographical extent of the Waterway Project is shown on Figure 1. The waterway corridor passes through the countryside and both suburban and central Maidenhead. Information on constraints and opportunities is provided below for the corridor and, in particular Maidenhead town centre.

Figure 2 Strategic Constraints



3.3 Figure 2 shows the route of the waterway as it relates to sites of national nature conservation interest, flood risk and Green Belt. To the north and south of Maidenhead, the route passes through the Green Belt. Related planning policy tightly controls the type and visual impact of development. The town of Maidenhead is excluded from the Green Belt. The overall approach of planning policy is urban focus and renaissance. Maidenhead is the principal town within the Royal Borough and is a focus for development. The town centre provides both shopping

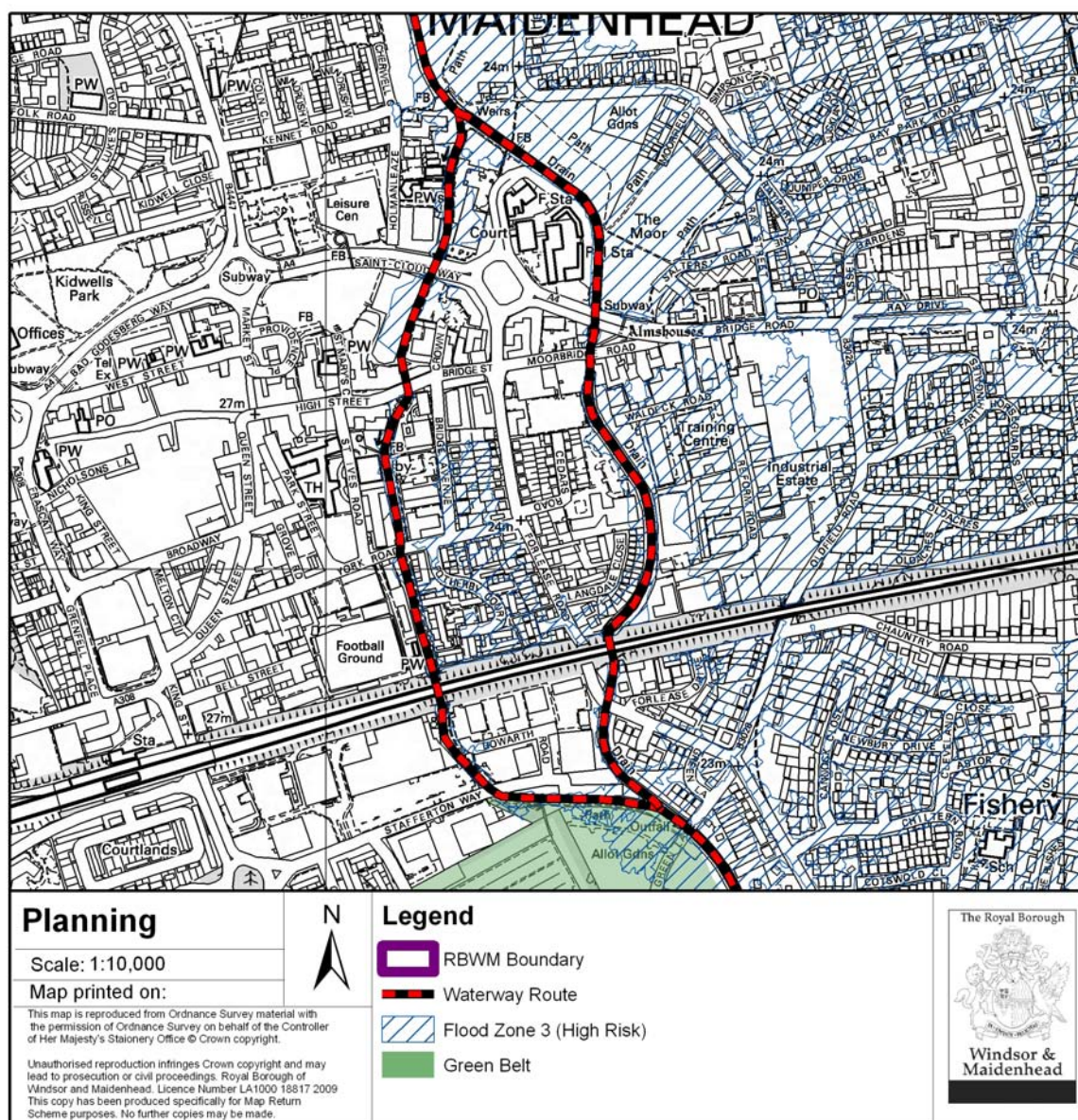
Policy Context

and office development. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the full route of the waterway, both within the countryside and the urban area, is considered to be at high risk of flooding.⁸ Planning policy generally guides development away from areas considered to be at risk of flooding.

3.4 The route of the waterway passes near two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Bray Meadows SSSI which lies adjacent to the route of the waterway is a series of species rich, agriculturally unimproved meadows. The meadows support a very uncommon type of grassland with a distinctive flora which is particularly characteristic of the calcareous alluvium of the lower Thames floodplain. The waterside vegetation along the western margin of the fields includes nationally scarce species. Bray Pennyroyal Field SSSI is situated to the south of the waterway. It comprises a single field adjoining the River Thames and represents the sole Berkshire example locality for the nationally rare pennyroyal, a creeping perennial of pond and lake margins and damp depressions.

3.5 The waterway itself is a designated Wildlife Heritage Site.⁹ The waterway and its surrounding land supports a number of nationally and locally important species and habitats. Species include those with protected status and those considered to be rare. Species of note along the waterway corridor include Soprano Pipistrelle and Notcule bats, Grass Snakes and Water Voles. There is also a wide range of species rich wet grasslands, birds, invertebrates and areas of mature trees.

Figure 3 Strategic Constraints for Maidenhead Town Centre



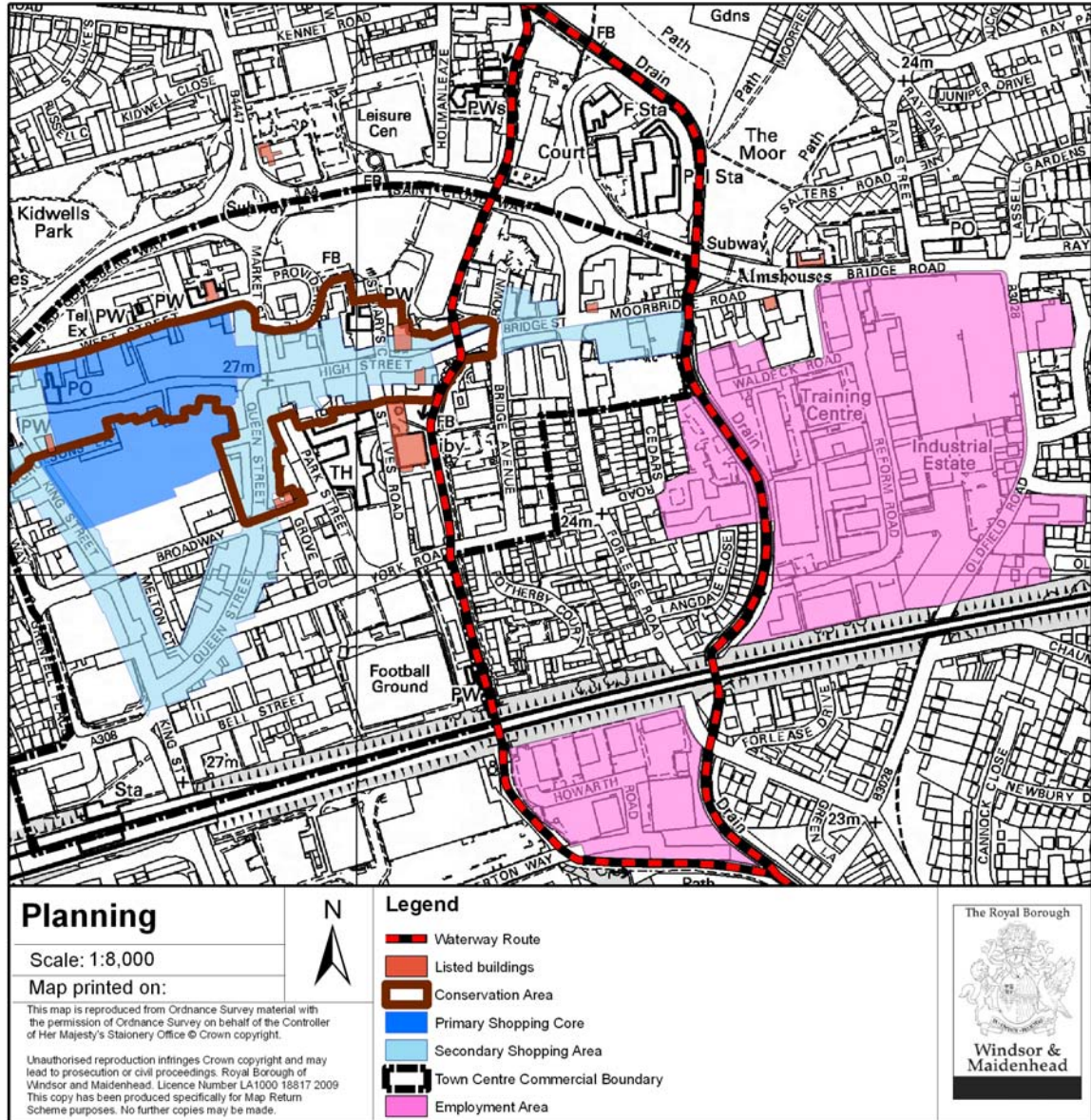
8 Flood Zone 3: High Risk is defined as having an annual probability of flood of 1 in 100 years or greater.

9 The Berkshire local authorities have agreed in future policy wording to change the term Wildlife Heritage Site to Local Wildlife Site.

3 Policy Context

3.6 According to the latest information from the Environment Agency, the risk of flooding to central Maidenhead extends east of the waterway towards the River Thames but is of only a limited extent to its west. Figure 3 is a more detailed map of the town centre.

Figure 4 Local Plan Context for Maidenhead Town Centre



3.7 Within central Maidenhead the waterway passes a variety of land use designations (See Figure 4). The York Stream branch passes directly through the Secondary Shopping Area (the Primary Retail Core is further west) and the Maidenhead High Street Conservation Area.⁽¹⁰⁾ It also passes close to several listed buildings and an employment area. The Moor Cut branch passes adjacent to the Secondary Shopping Area and between two employment areas⁽¹¹⁾ before rejoining with the York Stream by a third employment area.

10 The Maidenhead Town Centre Conservation Area Statement (October 1995) provides detailed advice regarding the historic environment in this area.

11 The figure shows the adopted Local Plan designations. Since the time of adoption some parts of the Oldfield Road Employment Area have been subject to residential led redevelopment.

Other Considerations

A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre

3.8 The Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM), established in 2007, represents a joint partnership of town centre interests with membership drawn from local organisations, business interests, and cross party council representation together with professional officer support.

3.9 In early 2008 PRoM commissioned the preparation of a vision and action plan to provide the basis for future strategies and a framework within which the town centre could prosper and develop. The plan, *A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre* was presented to PRoM in August 2008. All representatives of PRoM were supportive and agreed for the vision to be made available for public comment and feed back from September to November 2008.

3.10 The vision identified ten strategic objectives considered to be the priority in regenerating the town centre and articulating and delivering the vision. These are:

1. Improve the quality of and provision of public space.
2. Enhance and introduce the use of water.
3. Introduce greenery into the town centre to reflect its Thames Valley setting.
4. Promote high quality built form.
5. Optimise town centre accessibility.
6. Reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, and promote a people-friendly town.
7. Promote mixed use development.
8. Quicken the pace of urban development and promote economic growth.
9. Foster greater civic pride.
10. Improve the identity and image of the town centre.

3.11 The restoration and enhancement of the waterways to create a feature in the town centre was identified as one of five key priority regeneration projects. The vision was subsequently endorsed and adopted by the council as providing a strategy for further work on the town centre.

Local Development Framework

3.12 The Local Development Framework is in active preparation. The council intends to produce three Development Plan Documents as part of the LDF, namely:

1. Core Strategy DPD.
2. Delivery and Development Principles DPD.
3. Maidenhead Town Centre AAP.

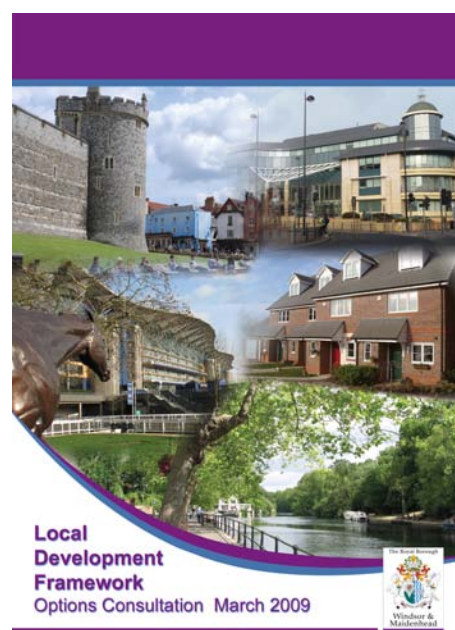
3.13 The Core Strategy is at the heart of the LDF. It sets out the long-term vision for how the area and places within it should develop. It will contain a set of strategic policies focusing on key issues and provide a delivery strategy for addressing these, such as how much development is intended to happen where, when and by what means.

3.14 Part of the vision set out within the emerging LDF includes the following reference to Maidenhead:

“Maidenhead’s historic connection with the River Thames and the amenity and biodiversity of its connecting waterways will be enhanced... The protection of local character will be reinforced through the delivery of high quality design in buildings and spaces, improving and greening linkages to the River Thames and wider waterways”

3.15 The Core Strategy will be prepared in detail throughout 2009 and submitted to the government for examination in 2010.

Picture 3 LDF Options Paper March 2009



3 Policy Context

Design Guidance

3.16 There are a number of government backed guides, manuals and handbooks that promote best practice on good design. The following publications provide additional context for development proposals.

- 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).
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (2007).
- Cycle Infrastructure Design (2008).
- Safer Places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004).
- Secure by Design (various publications).
- Accessibility by Design (2007).
- By All Reasonable Means: inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people.

Development and Design Principles

4 Development and Design Principles

4.1 From a review of existing planning policy, the *Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre* and from the Waterway Project itself, eleven general development and design principles have been identified. These principles, if applied consistently over time, will result in incremental improvement of the waterway and the opportunity it affords. Each principle is supported by a number of illustrations to demonstrate the issue and the effect that could be achieved.

Development along the waterway corridor should:

1. provide and enhance the waterside setting.
2. provide high quality buildings and spaces.
3. respond to the risk of flooding.
4. conserve and enhance biodiversity.
5. respond to historical features and their setting.
6. allow for or improve continuous walking and cycling.
7. provide and enhance accessibility to and from the waterside.
8. improve the provision and quality of public spaces.
9. allow for the continuous navigation by craft.
10. provide or contribute to the provision of waterway infrastructure.
11. provide for the maintenance of the waterway and associated infrastructure.

Provide And Enhance The Waterside Setting

4.2 Landscaping not only enhances the setting of a development, increasing its value, but it is an amenity expected by occupants and users of buildings and spaces. Landscaping can also reinforce the heritage and character of the area. Almost all development sites will have some existing landscaping and amenity value. Good design identifies and incorporates these existing values and opportunities into new buildings and their grounds.

4.3 The waterway channels are heavily silted up, overgrown and generally neglected. Within the built up area, the watercourse has often been disregarded by past development. Objectives of the *Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre* and the Waterway Project include the introduction of greenery into the town centre to reflect its Thames Valley setting, enhance and introduce the use of water within the town centre and the creation of an attractive green corridor through the heart of the town - in effect bringing the River Thames into the town. While urban landscapes may differ from those in the open countryside, the plans provide an opportunity to incorporate the waterway and its setting into developments.

4.4 Development along the waterway is expected to embrace its waterside setting. The design of buildings and spaces should provide a clear margin between new buildings, hard landscaping and the top of the riverbank. Walls and fences on both sides of the bank should be *open* in style and durable, for example low or capable of being seen through, to allow longer views and enhance the green setting, and generally be resistant to damage through antisocial behaviour or flooding. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to using robust sculptural designs for walls and fences using high quality materials that complement the waterside setting. Consideration should be given to whether walls would provide informal seating or, if inappropriate designed to incorporate castellated or dragon tooth features to discourage their use.

4.5 Site layout and landscaping should seek to provide an open aspect towards the riverbank with particular attention being paid to maximising views of the waterway and the amount of natural sunlight reaching it and public spaces. Planting on the immediate riverbank should generally be low in height with occasional higher planting and trees to provide shade and a mix of habitat. Trees with significant amenity and biodiversity value should be retained wherever possible and incorporated into any landscaping design. Within built up areas the aim should be to keep one side of the waterway more natural. Where feasible the reinstatement of a natural bank should be investigated.

4.6 The aim of landscaping should be to create a green corridor. In designing planting schemes consideration should be given to the nature of the subsoil, particularly clay sub-soils which naturally swell and shrink with seasonal variations, and the use of locally native and wildlife friendly species to maximise biodiversity benefit.

Development and Design Principles

Provide High Quality Buildings And Spaces

4.7 High quality design is essential to the delivery of attractive and usable environments. Poor design may result in buildings and spaces that appear hostile, are unattractive to use and create a fear of crime.

4.8 Within the built up area, the watercourse has often been disregarded by past development with many buildings presenting their backs to the waterway or closing it off with high fencing. As part of their proposals, developments should deliver a step change in improving the quality of buildings and spaces along the waterway. Key to this is developments embracing their waterside setting. A central objective of the *Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre* is to promote higher quality built form.

Picture 4 Past development has often disregarded the waterway



4.9 Buildings and structures should be designed to present a public, active face towards the waterway to give natural surveillance and a pleasing relationship with the waterway. Plain or featureless walls and service areas should in general be avoided. Where service areas are unavoidable, they should be enclosed using quality materials and landscaping. This requirement does not imply reduced standards for other public frontages and may require buildings to be multi-fronted. In considering site layout and building heights, particular attention should be paid to the amount of natural light reaching the waterway and public spaces. Buildings and structures which dominate the waterway corridor should be avoided. Where taller buildings are acceptable, the impact of upper floors may need to be reduced by being stepped back.

4.10 A quality design process considers not only the appearance of buildings and structures but the spaces around them and how people move through the site. Public and private spaces within a development are expected to contribute fully to achieving an attractive and usable environment. They should provide new opportunities for walking and cycling and be well connected to existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes; where possible they should embrace the waterway as an integral element of their design.

4.11 Water quality should not be harmed as a result of buildings and spaces. This includes both impacts during their construction and subsequent use. Without control measures, the volume and speed of surface water run-off can overwhelm drainage systems, endangering sewerage systems and watercourses, increasing the risk of flooding and pollution. As part of their proposals, developers should demonstrate the effective management of surface water, including the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems for example rainwater harvesting / recycling systems. Further information on managing water resources and flood risk is provided within the council's *Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document*.

Development and Design Principles

Respond To The Risk Of Flooding

4.12 Flooding can occur from rivers and streams, directly from rainfall on the ground surface and from rising groundwater, overwhelming sewers and drainage systems. Climate change is anticipated to increase the frequency, pattern and severity of flooding making flood risk management and increasingly important fact in deciding where to locate development and how to design it. The route of the waterway, both within the countryside and the urban areas, is considered to be at high risk of flooding.⁽¹²⁾

4.13 The effect of development is generally to reduce the permeability of at least part of the site, markedly changing the sites response to rainfall. Without specific measures, the volume and speed of surface water run-off can overwhelm drainage systems, threatening the development itself and land elsewhere, and increase the risk of water pollution and the depreciation of groundwater.

4.14 As part of their proposals, developers should ensure there would be no increase in flood risk as a result of the development, and where possible reduce risk overall. Buildings and structures should be designed to effective management of surface water. This may include the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).⁽¹³⁾

4.15 While the risk of flooding cannot be wholly prevented, careful building design and the use of certain construction techniques can reduce the overall impact of flooding. Flood resilient buildings are designed to reduce the consequences of flooding and facilitate recovery from the effects of flooding sooner than conventional buildings. Flood resistant construction can prevent entry of water or minimise the amount of water that may enter a building where there is flooding outside it.

4.16 Further information on flood risk management is available within the council's *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* and the *Sustainable Design and Constriction Supplementary Planning Document*.

Conserve And Enhance Biodiversity

4.17 Landscaping and high quality building design not only provides attractive environments but provides habitat for wildlife and opportunities for people to engage with it. Over its length, the waterway provides a rich diversity of habitat supporting a range of plants, invertebrates, birds, fish and mammals both in countryside and built up areas. The waterway itself is a green corridor, allowing wildlife to move freely along its length. Taken together, habitats associated with buildings can similarly act as "stepping stones" in a wider network of green spaces.

Picture 5 Swans on the waterway (Source: Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group)



12 Flood Zone 3: High Risk is defined as having an annual probability of flood of 1 in 100 years or greater.

13 The term SUDS is frequently used to cover a range of measures which can be taken to effectively manage surface water drainage. SUDS generally fall into three groups: source control techniques, permeable conveyance systems and passive treatment systems. It is important that SUDS have clear long-term maintenance arrangements.

Development and Design Principles

4.18 The route of the waterway passes close to two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Paragraph 3.4 provides further information on these designations. Natural England's consent is required for development and management operations where alterations to water levels and tables could result in proximity to the SSSIs. This includes modifications to watercourses, the abstraction of water, the removal of minerals, and changes in drainage arrangements.

4.19 The waterway itself is a designated Wildlife Heritage Site⁽¹⁴⁾ and supports a number of nationally and locally important species. Additionally, almost all development sites will have some existing biodiversity value. This should be identified and opportunities taken for integrating suitable on-site habitats at an early stage in the design process.

4.20 Where the location and type of development is such that significant impacts on biodiversity may be expected, developers should provide an ecological report to aid the assessment of the proposal. Such reports might include details of alternative sites, and any proposals for mitigation or compensatory measures necessary to ensure overall biodiversity enhancements. Habitat and species records can be obtained from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre⁽¹⁵⁾ which collate, manage and disseminate ecological records for the Royal Borough. Local biodiversity information may also be gained from the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).⁽¹⁶⁾

4.21 In line with national policy development should avoid any adverse effect on the notified features of SSSI. Additionally, the council will seek to protect and enhance habitats and species which are of local importance to nature conservation. When assessing impacts, regard will be given to the importance of sites as themselves and as part of any wider network.

4.22 As part of their proposals, developers should consider opportunities to create habitats and incorporate beneficial biodiversity features as part of good design, for example by creating or extending habitats associated with important species, including green and brown roofs, nest and bat boxes, window boxes and enhanced landscaping. Planting schemes should use locally native and wildlife friendly species to maximise biodiversity benefit. Further information on biodiversity and development is provided within the council's *Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document*.

Respond To Historical Features And Their Setting

4.23 The route of the waterway cuts through a variety of landscape types and a variety of building styles which reflect the historic, social and economic evolution of the town. Within Maidenhead town centre the waterway passes through a Conservation Area and close to a number of listed buildings and important non-listed buildings. Further downstream, the waterway passes close to the Bray Village Conservation Area. Further details of historic designations can be found in Chapter 3 under Waterway Corridor Context.

4.24 The essential character and special interest of historic designations should be conserved and enhanced. However, in addition to these the waterway passes a number of attractive features which should be enhanced through restoration and sensitive development. Within Maidenhead town centre, these include Chapel Arches, the signs of the former Willow Wharf at Grace's Yard on Town Moor, the balustraded bridge at Moorbridge Road and the two sets of Brunel's brick built arched tunnels through the embankment where the waterway passes under the former Great Western Railway.

14 The Berkshire local authorities have agreed in future policy wording to change the term Wildlife Heritage Sites to Local Wildlife Site.

15 www.tverc.org

16 www.bbowl.org.uk

Development and Design Principles

Picture 6 Chapel Arches viewed from the north in an 1883 etching by Henry W Taunt (Print courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive)



4.25 Good design responds to the local context, supporting and enhancing it rather than detracting from it. Development proposals along the waterway should respond to the waterway and its history by incorporating the waterway setting and features as an integral element of design. This includes archaeological features which may be uncovered through the construction process. Where feasible, the restoration or reinstatement of historic features should be investigated and secured.

Allow For Continuous Walking And Cycling

4.26 The Green Way recreational route forms a continuous footpath link between Cookham and Bray. Within the stretch from north Maidenhead to Braywick, the route closely follows the banks of the York Stream branch of the waterway. The Waterway Project proposes the extension of the Green Way south of Maidenhead right through to the River Thames, as well as upgrading some existing town centre sections that are liable to flooding. The council supports initiatives to extend and improve the Green Way to form a continuous walking route and, where safe, a cycle route alongside the waterway.

4.27 As part of their proposals, developers should include safer and more attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Where existing pedestrian and cycle access to and along the waterway is deficient, development proposals will be expected to make provision for a dual use pedestrian and cycle route alongside the waterway. Where feasible all dual use paths should be a minimum of 3.5m wide excluding any safety borders to the waterway or walls and fences. In locations with an existing access, financial contributions will be sought to upgrade and improve the route. This may include the provision of safe road crossings, new foot bridges and flood proofing measures.

4.28 Secure cycle storage should be provided at destinations along the route to allow cyclists convenient opportunities to access services and facilities. Developments will be expected to provide appropriate provision for both occupiers and visitors. The design should allow the bicycle to be supported by the frame, for example a Sheffield stand, and be positioned where it would be overlooked by the public or staff.⁽¹⁷⁾ Example destinations include public open spaces and sporting facilities, cafes and picnic areas and access points to the town centre.

17 Further information on cyclists facilities is provided within the council's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Development and Design Principles

Picture 7 A current pedestrian / cycle route alongside the waterway



Provide And Enhance Accessibility To And From The Waterside

4.29 Maidenhead has a broad existing network of routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. To ensure the widest use and greatest benefit, it is essential the waterway links into the wider town and countryside. A key objective of *A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre* is to optimise town centre accessibility and reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. The High Street area, including Crown Lane and St Ives Road, is regarded as key in helping to promote stronger links between the waterway and the town centre. The importance of creating strong links to and from the waterway and the town centre, so bringing the River Thames into the town, cannot be over emphasised.

4.30 The existing pedestrian and cycle links to and from the waterway are poorly signposted, unattractive and uninviting. However, the areas viability and links to historic features provide an ideal opportunity to create a focus or gateway. The Waterway Project proposes a basin and day moorings within this central area, allowing visitors by boat to access town centre facilities and creating a destination for users of the town centre to appreciate river-related activity.

4.31 The layout of development should be designed to create greater pedestrian and cyclist permeability between the town and the waterway. Where appropriate, opportunities should also be taken outside the town to foster links between the waterway and the existing rights of way network, and in particular the Thames Path National Trail. This may include the provision of limited visitor car parking.

4.32 Developments facing on to the waterway and along key access routes should be designed so that their key frontages and entrances embrace the waterway and/or the street. This can help contribute towards creating a more animated and secure pedestrian environment, particularly through optimising natural surveillance. Proposals for town centre redevelopments should promote better access, greater activity and increased use of the waterway and adjoining area. Appropriate use of lighting in public spaces should also be considered.

4.33 Where possible, public paths and spaces should be designed to provide safe access for people with disabilities and those with children. This consideration includes surfaces treatments, the use of slopes, seating and new access points. When considering the siting and design of formal and informal seating regard should be given to how the area is likely to be used and any potential conflict with nearby properties. Where congregation is considered inappropriate, walls can be designed to incorporate castellated or dragon tooth features to discourage their use, while single space seating or widely spaced seating can discourage larger groups.

Development and Design Principles

Improve Provision And Quality Of Public Spaces

4.34 Networks of high quality and well managed public open space, sports and recreational facilities help create environments that are attractive and safe. Green spaces in urban areas also provide opportunity for wildlife and for people to engage with it.

4.35 In areas where existing public spaces are deficient, development proposals will be expected to make on-site provision for new or improved public areas.⁽¹⁸⁾ Public spaces should be engaging, and where possible contribute to the attraction of the waterway.

4.36 The greatest opportunity to create new or improved public spaces is within the town centre where they can contribute to the attractiveness of the centre as a shopping and leisure destination, and as a place to live and work. Public spaces should be pedestrian dominated and provide frequent seating opportunities, public art and, where appropriate, opportunities for cultural entertainment and activity.

Picture 8 The Maudsley Memorial Garden next to Maidenhead Library



4.37 In all instances public spaces should be well connected to existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes. New development, including all public spaces, should be designed in accordance with the principles set out in *Secure By Design* so that opportunities for crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour are reduced and a safe living environment promoted.

Allow For The Continuous Navigation By Craft

4.38 While it is a long-term aspiration of the Waterway Project is to create a navigable waterway capable of supporting narrow boats, the project is expected to be achieved in stages with the initial stage seeking to create raise and stabilise the water level within the town centre. In recognition of the long-term aspiration and to avoid unnecessary repeated disruption or replacement of facilities over time, all aspects of the technical design and associated infrastructure should be capable of supporting narrow boats.

18 The council's Open Space Study (December 2008) found the Maidenhead area to be deficient against recommended standards in a variety of open space types.

Development and Design Principles

4.39 In locations where new waterway infrastructure may be necessary, development proposals will be required to safeguard the necessary land to enable provision for long-term use by narrow boats. The safeguarded land should be capable of supporting craft of up to 21.2m (72 feet) in the case of narrow boats. Bridges and infrastructure passing over the waterway should generally provide a clearance of 2.4m and allow for a minimum navigational depth of 1.2m.

4.40 Services passing over or under the waterway should be installed so as not to hinder navigation. Services passing under the waterway should assume a final water depth of 2m below the final water level and provide additional allowance for over excavation to allow the installation of a lining below the finished bed level.

Picture 9 Canoeists on The Cut (Source: Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group)



Provide And Contribute To The Provision Of Waterway Infrastructure

4.41 The creation of a stable and navigable waterway requires physical infrastructure to be provided at key locations. While the technical design of the waterway has not been finalised, the design is well advanced.

4.42 To raise and stabilise water levels within the town centre ring, a lock and weir system will be required including a lock to the south of the town centre at Green Lane. To enable small boats to pass through individually without the water loss caused by opening the lock, boat rollers should be included within any design. To allow the movement of fish and other invertebrates through the waterway a fish pass would also need to be provided in conjunction with any system.

4.43 The limited channel width requires the provision of winding holes to allow boats to turn and pass back along the waterway. The MWRG's emerging technical design envisages two winding holes, the first below the Green Lane lock and the second within the town centre ring. Width limitations also require the provision of passing places. Opportunities should be sought for day moorings close to the town centre along with the installation of slipways and/or landing stages at various points along the waterway corridor.

4.44 In locations where waterway infrastructure is required, there is a need to safeguard the necessary land to enable provision. In accordance with the principle of providing and enhancing the waterside setting, the layout and form of any development should embrace the infrastructure as an integral element of design.

4.45 The achievement of the Waterway Project is an important element of the agreed approach to rejuvenating Maidenhead town centre. All developments along the waterway will be assessed to see whether a financial contribution towards the costs of its delivery is appropriate (please refer to Section 5: Implementation for further information).

Development and Design Principles

Provide For Maintenance Of The Waterway And Associated Infrastructure

4.46 Moving water wears away riverbanks, depositing the material as silt elsewhere in the river system. This natural process requires the ongoing maintenance of all watercourses to ensure the correct flow of water⁽¹⁹⁾ and protect biodiversity. Additional boating and public access infrastructure will require maintenance to ensure their quality and safety.⁽²⁰⁾

4.47 As part of any development that lies close to a main river (such as those in Maidenhead) it is standard Environment Agency practice to seek the inclusion of a minimum 8m green buffer strip alongside the watercourse. The buffer strip enables access for maintenance and promotes the ecological and landscape value of the watercourse. In addition, and in line with the objectives of enhancing the waterway setting and allowing for continuous walking and cycling, the council will generally oppose any reduction in this buffer strip.

4.48 Any proposed works and structures in, under or within 8m of the watercourse require the consent of the Environment Agency.⁽²¹⁾ Unless agreement has been reached with the Environment Agency and the council, planning permission will not be granted for hard development within this strip. Where a buffer strip does not exist, the council will seek its establishment as part of any development proposal. In assessing the suitability of buffer strips, regard will be had to the Waterway Project including any proposed channel widening.

4.49 Landowners adjoining a watercourse are responsible for maintaining the bed and banks of a watercourse, and the trees and shrubs growing on the banks. Landowners are also responsible for clearing any debris,⁽²²⁾ even if it did not originate from their land. Information on riparian rights and responsibilities is provided in the Environment Agency publication *Living on the Edge*.⁽²³⁾

19 The waterway is currently maintained by the Environment Agency for flood relief purposes.

20 Arrangements for ongoing maintenance would need to be established prior to the implementation of any improvements to the waterway.

21 See the Thames Region Land Drainage Byelaws.

22 Debris may be natural or man-made, and include litter and animal carcasses.

23 *Living on the Edge* (Environment Agency, 2007).

5 Implementation

5 Implementation

Planning Benefits and Infrastructure Provision

5.1 The council has embarked upon a programme to secure the rejuvenation of Maidenhead's town centre along the lines set out in *A Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre*, copies of which can be obtained from the council's Planning and Development Unit. The vision and action plan covers a range of projects from redevelopment to improvement in the public realm. The restoration and enhancement of the waterway was identified as one of five key priority regeneration projects.

5.2 The recommendations of the vision and action plan are being implemented on a progressive basis. Overall, it will:

- Give a clear spatial strategy for the future regeneration and development of the centre.
- Promote retail / leisure growth and improvement, enabling claw-back of leakage to neighbouring towns.
- Take advantage of commercial opportunities.
- Reflect the town's affinity with the Thames and surrounding countryside, using water and landscaping.
- Focus transport priorities so that walking, cycling and public transport are the most attractive modes and in ensuring that Maidenhead makes better use of its proximity to London and transport networks.
- Ensure better connections of different uses within the centre.
- Encourage a greater pace of change that will have wide spread regeneration benefits for the town centre and promote economic prosperity.
- Encourage innovative town centre living.
- Ensure that the centre is a vibrant and attractive destination for all.
- Transform the perceptions of the town centre.

5.3 The guidance set out in this planning brief extends to all forms of development along the waterway corridor, whether it involved the change of use of an existing building or land, the extension of an existing building or the construction of a new building. The waterway corridor includes the surrounding landscape and townscape where change could have a significant impact on views towards and from the waterway or are related to its historical context. In built up areas, the setting may in places be defined by the line or area of buildings closest to the waterway. Outside built up areas, the setting is likely to comprise a wider area. The response required to meet the development and design principles will vary depending on the location, type and scale of development.

5.4 The waterways restoration and enhancement is a key priority in the strategy for Maidenhead town centre. Town centre redevelopments close to the waterway are expected to maximise the opportunities to contribute to restoration of the waterway, the overall achievement of the Waterway Project and wider rejuvenation aims. A particular focus for physical improvement will be expected where development sites have are adjacent to the waterway or where linkages to and from it could be created or improved. Within the wider town centre, developments are considered to benefit from delivery of the Waterway Project and will be assessed to see whether a financial contribution, secured by a planning obligation, towards the project would be appropriate.

5.5 The council is able to advise on the relevant costs and requirements of the planning obligation, in conjunction with the appropriate agency where necessary. Developers are advised to initiate negotiations at an early stage with officers of the council to allow planning obligations to be taken into account in their calculations of the development value of a site. Further information on planning obligations is provided within the council's *Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document*, which identifies the waterways and other town centre projects as schemes where funds can, and indeed have been, collected in association with appropriate development.

5.6 The technical design for the transformation of the waterway is being undertaken by the MWRG in conjunction with expert consultants Black and Veatch, and with pre-application advice from the Environment Agency. Financial contributions from development will be used to fund some aspects of the Waterway Project. Where appropriate,

Implementation

funding will be passed to the MWRG in line with a strict protocol to ensure transparency. The criteria for funding ensure that each project or activity must be able to stand on its own and deliver elements that benefit the Maidenhead area.

Planning Application Requirements

5.7 Applications for planning permission should be supported by evidence demonstrating how the proposed development meets the requirements set out in this document. Information as set out in the National Validation Requirements will need to be submitted with any planning application. This may include floor plans, site sections, street scene elevations, photomontages and existing and proposed ground levels. Further advice on the level of detail required to support a specific development proposal may be gained through the council's pre-application advice service.

5.8 Design and Access Statements will be expected to provide details of how the proposal has responded to embracing the waterway, associated infrastructure and future works.⁽²⁴⁾ Where appropriate, this should be supplemented by dedicated statements which may include:

- Noise.
- Air quality.
- Daylight and sunlight.
- Conservation and listed buildings.
- Archaeology.
- Contaminated land.
- Ecology.
- Tree survey.
- Landscape /visual assessment.
- Flood risk assessment.

Consultation Strategy

5.9 Stakeholder and community consultation in the preparation of this document is in accordance with the requirements set out in the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

²⁴ The council has produced a customer guide on design and access statements which provides information on how to write one and the information which should be included. The guide and a template statement can both be downloaded from the council's website at http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/dc_design_and_access_statements.htm

Planning Policy Context

A Planning Policy Context

This appendix provides an overview of national, regional and local policy and guidance which are relevant to the Maidenhead Waterway Framework.

National Context

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that local planning authorities exercise their functions with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS1 sets out the government's vision for the planning system. Plans should be drawn up with community involvement and present a shared vision and strategy for how the area should develop to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. Local planning authorities should facilitate and promote the implementation of good quality development.

The general approach to delivering sustainable development includes promoting more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development. Developments which attract a large number of people should be focuses in existing centres to promote the vitality and viability.

Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.⁽²⁵⁾

Planning Policy Guidance 2 Green Belts

PPG2 provides advice on defining and the control of development with Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. There are five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, namely: to check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another, as assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Green Belts have a positive role to play in fulfilling the objectives of:

1. providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
2. to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;
3. to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
4. to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
5. to secure nature conservation interest; and
6. to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.⁽²⁶⁾

Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing

PPS3 outlines the governments approach to housing delivery. Amongst other matters, good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing. Matters to consider when assessing design quality includes the extent which it provides or enables good access to green and recreational spaces, and creates or enhances a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings and supports a sense of local pride and civic identity.

25 PPS1, paragraph 13.

26 PPG2, paragraphs 1.5 - 1.6.

Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning for Town Centres

PPS6 promotes the vitality and viability of town centres by planning for growth and development of existing centres and encouraging a wide range of services in an attractive and accessible environment.⁽²⁷⁾ Town centre strategies can play an important and complementary role in ensuring the continued vitality and viability of centres. Well-designed public spaces and buildings, which fit are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town.⁽²⁸⁾

Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPS7 outlines the governments approach to development within the countryside. New building in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. Where development does occur it should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.⁽²⁹⁾

Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS9 seeks to ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of development. Decisions should be consistent with national, regional and local biodiversity priorities and objectives. When considering planning applications, local planning authorities should maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement as part of good design, and where appropriate, planning obligations.⁽³⁰⁾

Planning Policy Guidance 13 Transport

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 cyclists and users of public transport over the private car. It promotes the focusing of activities which are high generators of travel demand within town centres.

Planning Policy Guidance 15 Planning and the Historic Environment

PPG15 outlines national policy on protecting the historic environment. Historic buildings and structures should be valued and protected for their own sake. New developments should be carefully designed to respect the historic environment and its wider setting.

Planning Policy Guidance 16 Archaeology and Planning

PPG16 sets out the government's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

PPG17 aims to ensure appropriate provision is made for open spaces, sport and recreation in recognition that these can underpin people's quality of life. Well designed and implemented policies contribute towards supporting an urban renaissance, supporting a rural renewal, promoting of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development.

Developments are expected to make necessary provisions for new or improved open spaces, sports and recreational provision. Where appropriate, planning obligations can be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of provision.

Planning Policy Statement 23 Planning and Pollution Control

PPS23 requires local planning authorities to play a key role in determining the location of development which may give rise to unacceptable pollution, either directly or indirectly, and in ensuring that other uses and development are not as far as possible, affected by existing or potential sources of pollution.

27 PPS6, paragraph 1.3.
 28 PPS6, paragraph 2.19.
 29 PPS7, paragraph 1.
 30 PPS9, paragraph 14.

Planning Policy Context

The design of developments are expected to minimise the emission of pollutants, including light, air, noise, soil and water, and make suitable provision for drainage of surface water through Sustainable Drainage Systems. Redevelopment of contaminated sites presents an opportunity to deal with the risks they present.

Planning Policy Statement 25 Development and Flood Risk

PPS25 aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process. It addresses both the risk of flooding to the site and the risk of flooding arising from development, and where possible reduce flood risk overall.

Larger developments and proposals in areas at risk of flooding are required to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to inform the overall acceptability of the use, location and design of development.⁽³¹⁾ Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) are encouraged to manage surface water to mimic the sites performance prior to development.⁽³²⁾

Regional Context

South East Plan

The South East Plan was approved in May 2009. It replaces the earlier Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) and the Berkshire Structure Plan.

Principal policies relevant to development along the waterway corridor are listed below. The summary concerns only those aspects of the policy relevant to this document and is not necessarily a complete summary of the policy.

South East Plan Policy Links	
Policy	Summary
CC6 Sustainable Communities and Character of the Environment	Development should respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes. High quality environments should promote a sense of place.
CC8 Green Infrastructure	Local authorities will plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of accessible green space.
NRM1 Sustainable Water Resources and Groundwater	Development will avoid adverse effects if development on the water environment.
NRM2 Water Quality	Water quality will be maintained and enhanced through avoiding adverse effects of development on the water environment.
NRM4 Sustainable Flood Risk Management	Inappropriate development should not be allocated or permitted in flood zones 2 and 3, areas at risk of surface water flooding and areas with a history of groundwater flooding, or where it would increase flood risk elsewhere.
NRM5 Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity	The net loss of biodiversity should be avoided and opportunities for net gain pursued. High protection should be given to nationally designated sites.
C7 River Thames Corridor	Local authorities should work together and with other stakeholders to maintain and enhance the landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames Corridor.
BE1 Management for an Urban Renaissance	Development should be used to help provide significant improvements to the built environment, including the

31 PPS25 requires planning applications for development proposals of 1 ha or greater in Flood Zone 1 and all proposals for new development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to be accompanied by a FRA. Further information is available in PPS25, Appendix E.

32 PPS25, paragraph F6.

Planning Policy Context

A

South East Plan Policy Links	
Policy	Summary
	implementation of public realm and open space strategies.
TC2 New Development and Redevelopment in Town Centres	Plans and strategies need to respect the historic character, environment and cultural values of existing town centres, the need to ensure safe, secure and attractive environments, the need to promote investment, and the potential impact on the vitality and viability of town centres.

Local Context

RBWM Local Plan

The Local Plan was adopted in July 1999 with further amendments being adopted in June 2003. Following the changes to the planning system, a direction issued by the Government Office for the South East on 25 September 2007 confirmed policies which continued to be applicable.

Current principal policies relevant to development along the waterway corridor are listed below. The summary concerns only those aspects of the policy relevant to this document and is not necessarily a complete summary of the policy.

RBWM Local Plan Policy Links	
Policy	Summary
GB1 Green Belt	Planning permission will not be given except in very special circumstances, for new buildings unless for specifically defined purposes including essential outdoor sport and recreation, and uses, engineering and other operations which preserve the openness and do not conflict with the purposes of Green Belt.
GB2 Green Belt	Planning permission will not be granted for development where it would have greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and/or harm the character of the countryside.
N1 Area of Special Landscape Importance	Within areas of special landscape importance development will not be permitted which detracts from the special qualities. Where development is permitted it should respect the surrounding landscape.
N2 Setting of the Thames	Development should not adversely affect the character and setting of the River Thames.
N6 Trees and Development	Development should retain existing suitable trees and include tree planting and landscaping schemes.
N7 Hedgerows	Development should retain existing hedgerows. Where unavoidable replacement planting and improved planting is required.
N9 Wildlife Heritage Sites	Particular regard will be had to protecting natural features of Local Nature Reserves and Wildlife Heritage Sites. Measures to safeguard and enhance such sites within any development proposals.

Planning Policy Context

RBWM Local Plan Policy Links	
Policy	Summary
DG1 Design Guidance	Development should reduce the opportunities for crime, be compatible with the established street facade and character, have regard to historic townscape and important views, utilise existing vegetation in landscaping and not result in the loss of important features.
CA2 Guidelines on Development Affecting Conservation Areas	Development should enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and retain buildings and views that contribute to the distinctiveness of the conservation area.
LB2 Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings or their Setting	Listed buildings and the setting will be preserved.
F1 Development within Areas Liable to Flood	Development in itself, or cumulatively with other developments, should not impede the flow of flood water, reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store flood water or increase the number of people or properties at risk of flooding.
NAP4 Pollution of Ground Water and Surface Water	Developments will not be permitted which pose an unacceptable risk to the quality of groundwater or surface water.
R3 Public Open Space Provision in New Developments	Residential development should make appropriate provision for public open space.
R4 Public Open Space Provision in New Developments	Larger residential development will be required to allocate a minimum provision for public open space on-site.
R14 Rights of Way and Countryside Recreation	The public rights of way network and recreational cycle routes will be safeguarded and enhanced.
E10 Design and Development Guidelines	Development for business and industrial use should be designed to be neighbourly and provide on site environmental improvements.
H10 Housing Layout and Design	Residential development should make arrangements for the maintenance of open spaces and landscaping, and provide for safe movement.
T7 Cycling	Provision should be made for cyclists, including secure parking.
T8 Pedestrian Environment	Development schemes will be expected to include appropriate provision for pedestrian access and routes.
MTC5 Townscape and Redevelopment	Redevelopment schemes should provide townscape and other environmental improvements.
MTC9 Secondary Shopping Area	The change of use at ground floor level from shops to professional services or food and drink will be controlled to specified levels.
IMP1 Associated Infrastructure, Facilities, Amenities	Development will only be permitted where infrastructure, services, facilities and amenities made necessary by that development are provided, or will be provided at the appropriate time.