Neighbourhood Planning – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan allows you – the local people – to have more say about the way your area develops in Planning terms: this means how land is used and what can be built on it. The most visible aspect is often housing, but it also includes land use for employment and business, retail, schooling, recreation, agriculture, healthcare and transport.

Within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), Maidenhead was for a long time the only area without any agreement to make a Neighbourhood Plan, but it is now formally designated and the plan is in development.

What is Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum?

Neighbourhood Plans are usually put forward by a town council or parish council, but Maidenhead doesn't have either. The 2011 Localism Act allow local groups to fill the gap where no town or parish council exists. So within Maidenhead a Neighbourhood Forum was formed by volunteers who care about the town – anyone can join if they live or work in the "designated area" (the seven electoral wards of the town, we plan: Oldfield, St Mary's, Furze Platt, Riverside, Boyn Hill, Belmont and Pinkney's Green). Local councillors in the area are also eligible to join.

I live in Cox Green/Bray/Cookham why are these areas, which are part of Maidenhead, not included?

These areas each have a Parish Council, which is either developing (or in the case of Bray), has decided not to create a Neighbourhood Plan. For this reason they are not included in the area covered by Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum. Some background to the choice of area is given in the Area designation letter and MNF survey results .pdf provided as part of the RBWM consultation.

Why is the Taplow Riverside area not included?

Taplow Riverside is located in Buckinghamshire and is part of the Buckinghamshire Council area. Taplow Parish Council could develop a Neighbourhood Plan if it so wished.

What policies would be in a Neighbourhood Plan for Maidenhead?

These have to be developed and agreed, through discussion with people like you: local residents and workers who take an interest in the future of the town. They could be about green spaces, transport links for cyclists and walkers, housing mix, biodiversity, heritage buildings, design features etc. Importantly, policies can only concern matters relating to Planning; other issues such as Council Tax, children's services etc are not included. The final plan must pass a referendum of local people.

But don't we already have a Borough Local Plan?

We do – since February 2022, when the BLP was officially adopted by RBWM, covering the whole borough. A Neighbourhood Plan can't contradict the policies in the BLP, but it can add local detail, and set planning policy for issues where the BLP is silent.

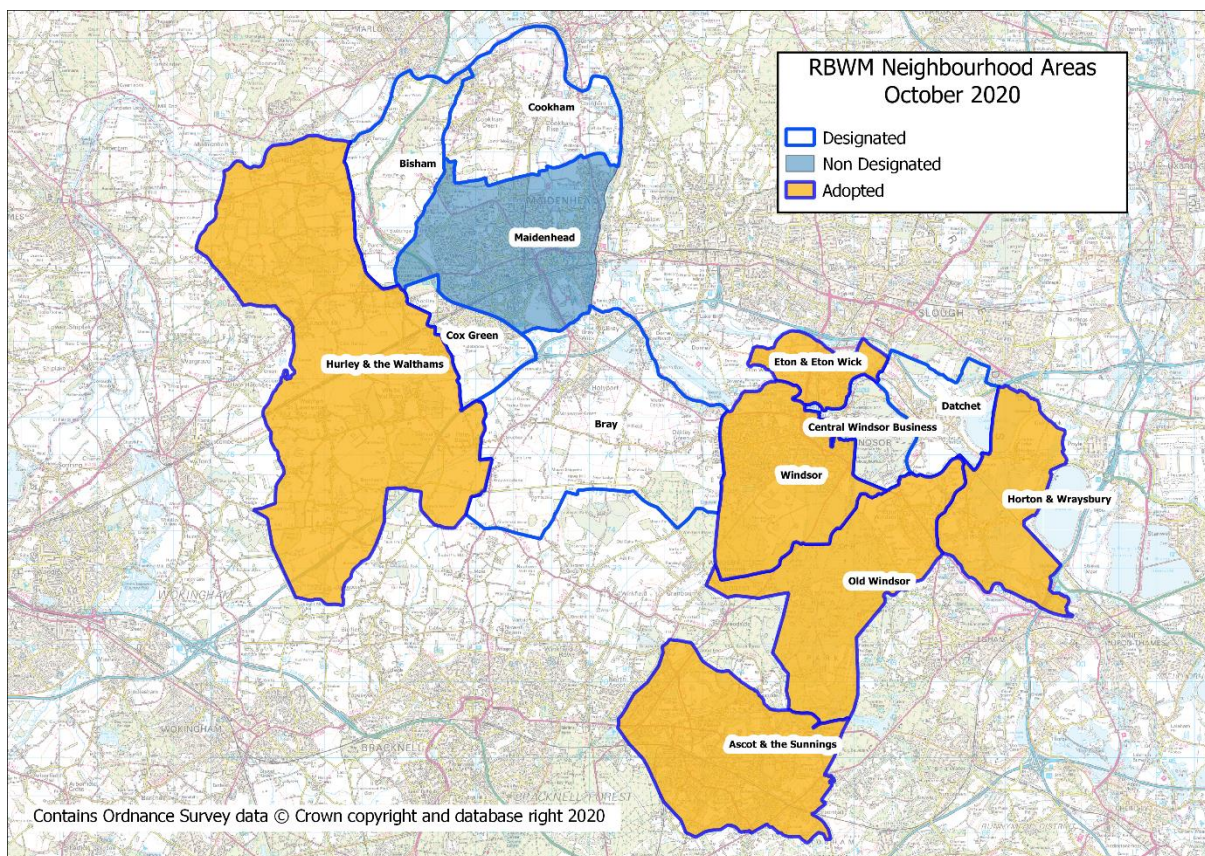**What difference would a Neighbourhood Plan make?**

Whenever someone wants to build on a piece of land, a Planning Application goes in to RBWM's Planning department, and it is judged according to the policies which are in force. Some of these policies are national (the National Planning Policy Framework), some are borough-wide (the BLP) and a Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan can add local policies which have been created and agreed by local people.

How can I support this project?

Please sign up at our website https://mnf.org.uk. Some volunteers get very actively involved (yes please – we need people) but others simply join as members to take an interest and show their support. Any questions – please email chair@mnf.org.uk

Will having a Neighbourhood Plan cause my Council Tax to increase?

No, unlike a town or parish council a Neighbourhood Forum does not receive any funding from the local authority (through a separate precept on the Council Tax). During the development of the Neighbourhood Plan the work of the Forum is funded by small grants from Central Government. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

Adopted Neighbourhood Plans can be found at: Adopted neighbourhood plans | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (rbwm.gov.uk)