



## SURVEY RESULTS: MAIDENHEAD AS AN AREA FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



### **Is Maidenhead really not an "appropriate and logical" area for a Neighbourhood Plan?**

Dear Member/Supporter,

We were very disappointed to receive an email from RBWM Planning on November 24<sup>th</sup> (which you can read on this [link](#)) which expresses their view that the seven wards of Maidenhead (i.e. the whole town) is not an "appropriate or logical" area to have a Neighbourhood Plan. This was after 18 months of protracted discussion with them.

You can read our submission to RBWM on this [link](#).

February 2022

[mnf.org.uk](http://mnf.org.uk)

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## Introduction

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum (MNF) is an independent non-party-political group of local volunteers formed in 2019 to develop the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Maidenhead, in the hope of ensuring the best-planned future for the town. NPs are encouraged by central government and supported publicly by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. More details at [www.mnf.org.uk](http://www.mnf.org.uk)

To enable the creation of a NP, RBWM must designate (= accept) both the proposed Area and the make-up of the Forum.

Following very slow and protracted discussions with RBWM, MNF decided to first submit a [draft proposal](#) for the town of Maidenhead (the seven unparished electoral wards) to be the Designated Area.

In November 2021 we were disappointed to receive [an email](#) from RBWM which expresses their view that the town of Maidenhead is not an "appropriate or logical" area to have a Neighbourhood Plan.

RBWM's current Head of Planning's main concern has always been that for a town the size of Maidenhead, it's "a bit of a stretch" to call it a Neighbourhood. We keep pointing to the fact that many other similar towns (such as Bracknell) have a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole town, but their recommendation to us was *"to further consider splitting the area into at least 2, with 3 unparished areas in each, and to establish clear local connections supported by evidence"*.

MNF Management Committee decided, as part of its response to RBWM, to solicit views from our database of members and supporters about the subject:

- does Maidenhead make sense as a unified area, or is there perhaps a natural way to sub-divide it (leaving aside the practicalities of finding people to put together a plan in each sub-area)?

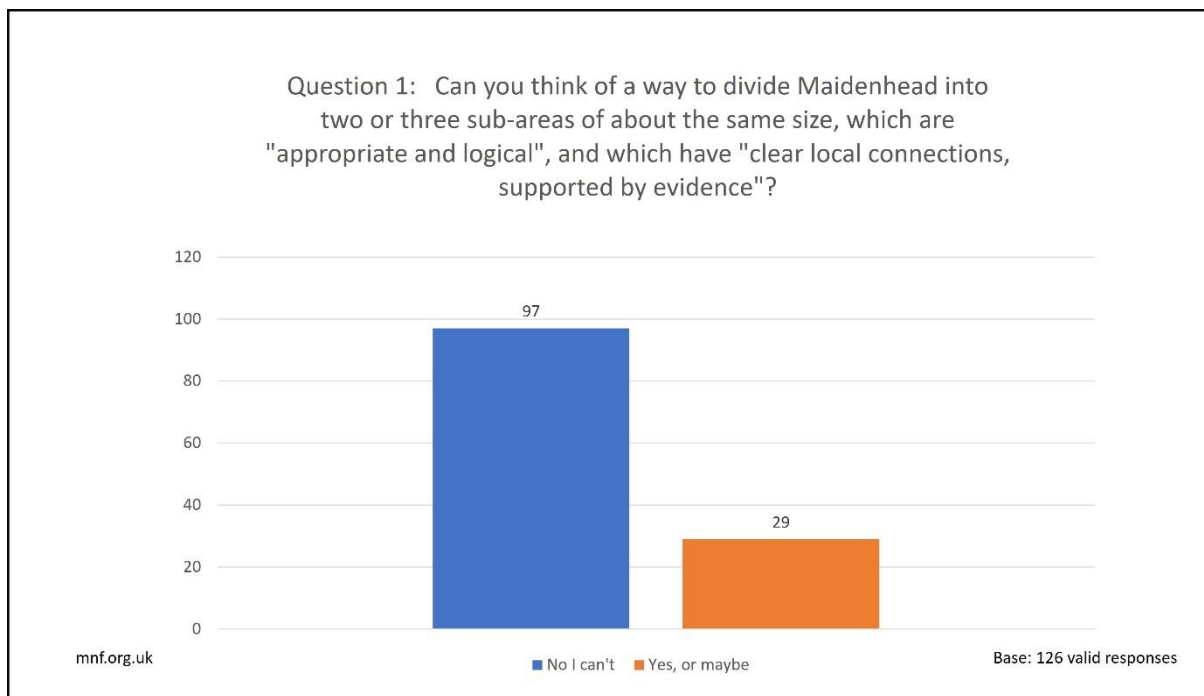
The survey ran from January 5<sup>th</sup> to January 30<sup>th</sup> (including a lengthy pause because of hacking activity on the MNF website – this is now resolved).

The survey was set to the c400 people who have signed up as supporters or members of MNF, so by definition these are people who are more engaged with local matters. About one-third responded although response levels to each question vary slightly depending on whether questions had complete answers.

## Executive Summary

- Most people in Maidenhead identify with the town rather than any sub-area, and they can't see the logic or benefit of creating a set of smaller sub-areas for planning purposes.
- They see the districts as interconnected with a shared town centre and many centralised/shared amenities.
- This suggests that to call Maidenhead "neither appropriate or logical" to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area is at odds with local opinion.
- The verbatim comments offer a useful summary of local attitudes to planning issues.

**Question 1: Can you think of a way to divide Maidenhead into two or three sub-areas of about the same size, which are "appropriate and logical", and which have "clear local connections, supported by evidence"?**



Three-quarters of people say they can't think of a way to sub-divide the town which meets these requirements.

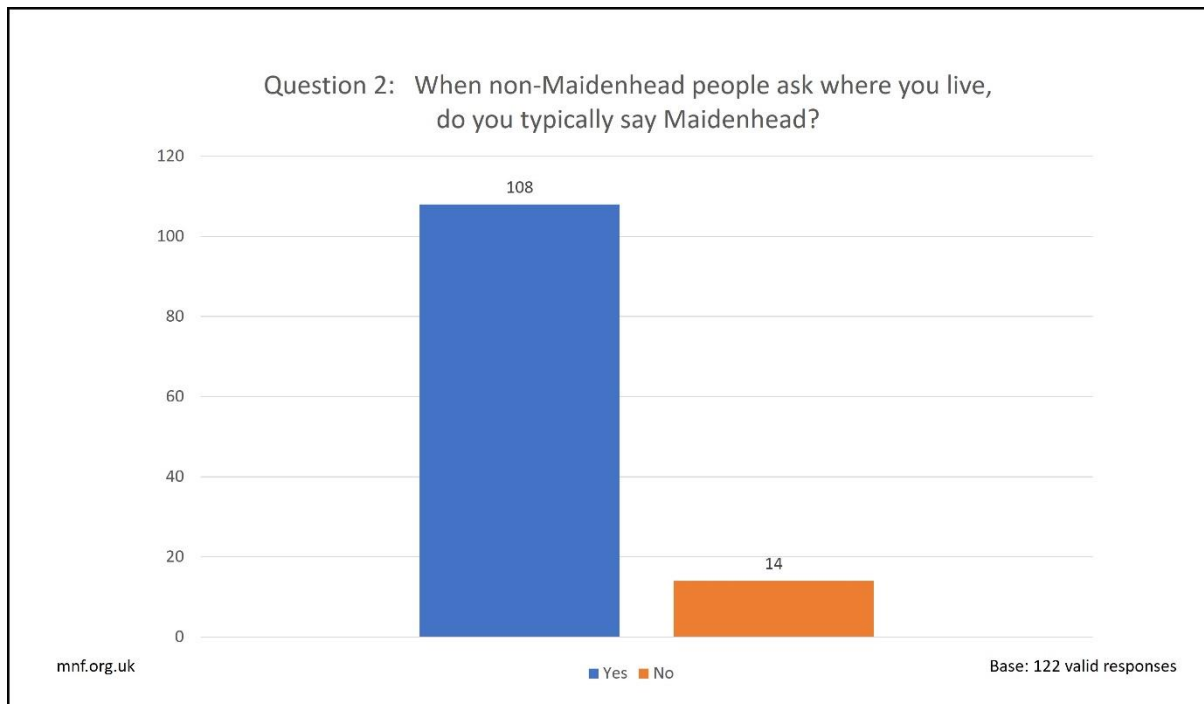
A quarter of the respondents tried to think of suggestions. These were mainly broad outlines (e.g. centre versus outskirts, an east-west divide along A308, or north and south divided by the A4 or GWR) with no supporting rationale.

Two people proposed quite detailed and lengthy suggestions, and these can be read in full in the comments section.

Illustrative comments:

- There is interdependence between the outlying areas and the centre
- I cannot see justification in dividing maidenhead into several parts with no apparent gain to us
- How about outer and inner Maidenhead. Typically the larger properties sit at the outer edges (Pinkney's Green + River) and are more expensive detached houses. Flats are concentrated centrally
- None of these wards is really a "community" - certainly no distinct community spirit.
- Maidenhead is very much one town, like Windsor. One river, one central shopping and entertainment area, one sport centre and pool and sports ground

## Question 2: When non-Maidenhead people ask where you live, do you typically say Maidenhead?



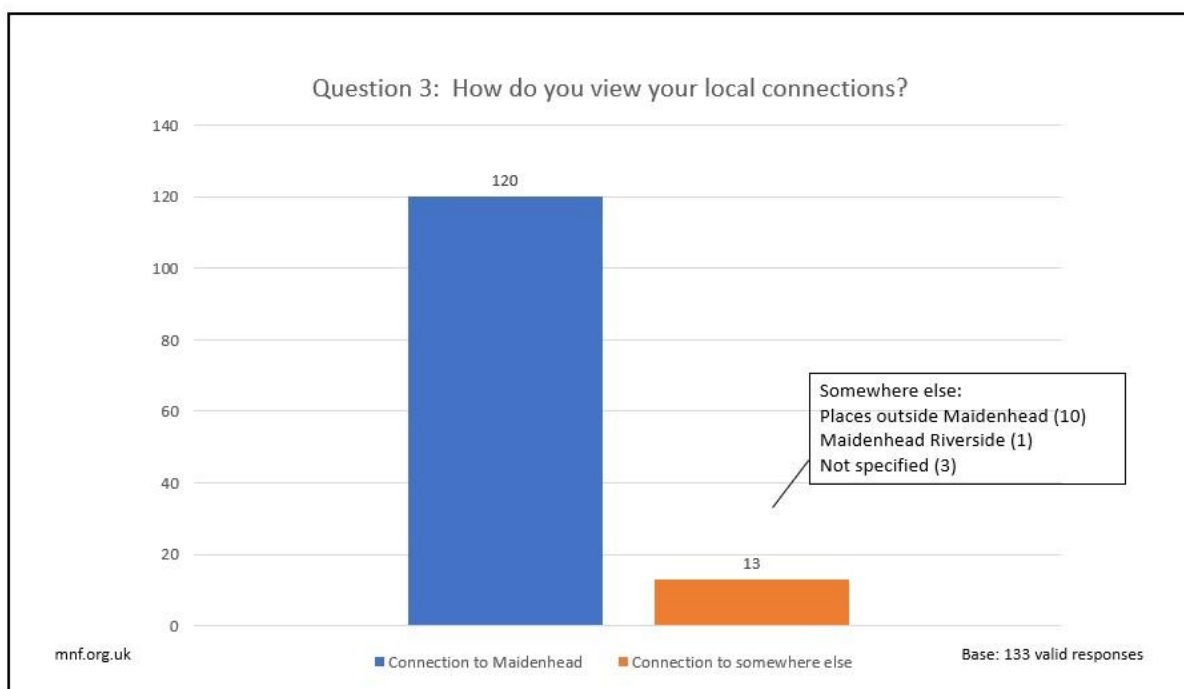
The vast majority of respondents here say that they live in Maidenhead.

Amongst the people who answered No, there was no consistent pattern – a few mentions of Cox Green, Cookham or Pinkney’s Green.

Illustrative comments:

- Would often add RBWM as people often get where Windsor is
- Lived in Maidenhead for 45 years and have never considered any other descriptor.
- Maidenhead Riverside
- I would either say Maidenhead to a non-Maidenhead person or riverside if they are from the town.
- Obviously Maidenhead. To be honest, I'd say that for anywhere I live, as you shouldn't be embarrassed by it.

### Question 3: How do you view your local connections?



People overwhelmingly see their connection as being to Maidenhead rather than any component part of it.

Of the people who felt their connection was to somewhere else, only one mentioned a sub-area of the town - Maidenhead Riverside. There were mentions of places just outside Maidenhead (Bray, Cookham) and several cited the place where they were from originally, e.g. London, Inverness etc.

Illustrative quotes:

- I am trying hard to feel connected to Maidenhead but its not a very loveable town. The surrounding area is, and in terms of getting elsewhere its a good spot, but the town itself is not appealing
- Cultural connections are across a far broader region (due to lack of facilities/ cultural and entertainment facilities in maidenhead).
- I work in London but when I think about my Neighbourhood it is Maidenhead
- Maidenhead is a natural place to talk about - as it has a boundary recognised since around 1582. The boundary walk carried out by locals every October, confirms the popularity of the location.

## COMMENTS ON NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA SURVEY (From Q1 and Any Other Comments)

MNF SURVEY JANUARY 2022

<p>Q1:</p> <p>Can you think of a way to divide Maidenhead into two or three sub-areas of about the same size, which are "appropriate and logical", and which have "clear local connections, supported by evidence"?</p>
<p>The three areas I'd suggest are: Riverside Core (St Mary's, Belmont, Eastern Boyn Hill) Outer (Furze Platt, Pinkneys Green, western Boyn Hill, Oldfield) Not as good a a single area, but maybe more achievable</p>
<p>Possibly not at Alltwn, but then perhaps in 2 parts only: the town centre high density area bounded by then 'the rest. Which on the whole is housing with small retail and more spread out office/light industrial.</p>
<p>Splitting Maidenhead into sub-areas will surely split through community and also not look at what is best for Maidenhead as a whole</p>
<p>Ridiculous idea - just hoping we'll drop the whole idea</p>
<p>There is interdependence between the outlying areas and the centre (St Mary's) - the facilities (e.g. Town Hall, police, St mark's, sports centre, road connections to motorways, railways) are shared by all. Cox Green is an anomaly to me as I would consider that part of Maidenhead.</p>
<p>Maidenhead is a fairly uniform town. It's layout is diverse and does not lend itself to a natural centre, or natural subdivisions.</p>
<p>Maidenhead seems to work as a single community/town. We know &amp; mix with people from most of the wards and consider that we tend to have the same feelings towards our sad town</p>
<p>Area A: Riverside Ward + Olfield South of Braywick Road + St Mary's South of Oldfield Road. Area B: Pinkney's Green + Western half of Boyn Hill + remainder of Oldfield Ward Area C: the rest</p>
<p>I cannot see justification in dividing maidenhead into several parts with no apparent gain to us</p>
<p>1 Pinkneys Green, Boyn Hill, and Oldfield 2 Belmont and Furze Platt 3 Riverside and St Mary'</p>
<p>I see the councils point but the town centre is the hub for the entire community so splitting the plan in two or more means you are catering for the same community sharing transport links, amenities, open spaces etc with two separate forums with is illogical.</p>
<p>None of these wards is really a "community" - certainly no distinct community spirit. But they all are integrated with and affected by developments in the town centre - St Mary's ward. What affects one affects the other.</p>
<p>Furze platt, Belmont and Pinkneys Green experience many of the same issues, such as lack of public transport, In the past these wards have all been lumped together and designated policing areas that do not make sense except to keep crime figures down</p>
<p>Maidenhead needs to be considered as a whole not divided up into small areas by artificial boundaries.</p>
<p>FP, PG &amp; R in one neighbourhood and the rest in another</p>
<p>Along the A308?</p>
<p>North and south of A4 is only real idea I have</p>



I don't see the need to split, if towns such as Bracknell can have a single plan so should Maidenhead. We should have a joined up/ efficient approach that a single neighbourhood can achieve.
The original designation comprised the whole conurbation of Maidenhead (including Cox Green), which would have been the 'most logical' area for an NP. With Cox Green now forcibly separated out by Planners - simply because it is parished area - designation of the remaining unparished areas of Maidenhead into one NP is the 'next most logical' option. Further fragmentation would undermine the benefits of having an NP and be impossible to resource.
Into 4 using A4 (East/West) and A308(North/South)
Use the compass north/south of A4 East west of Cookham Road
Furze Platt and Riverside Pinkneys and Belmont The rest
Use the A308 as a divide, East Maidenhead and West Maidenhead.
As suggested divide along A4,,, though I don't agree that Maidenhead as a whole does not constitute neighbourhood,,
Does this new to be physical locations, or can the town be split into demographics. E.g young professionals, families, retired... Residents use resources all over the town, and not just in their local area. Where if split into demographics, then if give them a larger physical area.
St Mary's central as one Riverside, Furze Platt and Belmont as two Pinkneys, Boyn Hill and Oldfield as three
How about outer and inner Maidenhead. Typically the larger properties sit at the outer edges (Pinkneys Green + River) and are more expensive detached houses. Flats are concentrated centrally, therefore having an outer ring and central area, may better reflect the differing needs of the centre dwellers vs those on the outer ring.
Have two areas,the inner made up of Furze Platt,Belmont & St. Mary's Ward. Outer area consisting of the remaining areas.
On examining the map you provided, it seems that Pinkneys Green is predominantly rural, and might readily be omitted (although highly unlikely to be a viable in its own right). Riverside too seems lightly populated. Perhaps both could be omitted from 'your' Neighbourhood. But perhaps we are victims of electoral boundaries selected for reasons other than identifying a 'community'.
It seems to me entirely logical to have one area because the town centre has services / amenity for all those surrounding wards
If a Plan were to be established the Borough would need convincing that more than a minority of residents are behind it's proposals and work. The more the areas the less the democratic headcount. People are more likely to become involved at the town level than at the small area basis.
I propose the dividing line to be north vs south of the railway
The town centre cannot be split nor belong to only one area. Furthermore, people on a zone boundary would have no say in what is happening on the other side of their road. Decisions about Maidenhead do affect the entire population of Maidenhead.
The Bath Road, Castle Hill, Bad godesburg Way, Bridge Road and Bath Road.
East: Castle Hill Roundabout to river Thames West: Castle Hill to Thicket North: Castle Hill to Furze Platt South: Castle Hill to Braywick, Holly port etc
White Waltham , Knowl Hill, Cookham

The centre of town and the outlying areas. Not great but can be done
As this question relates to redevelopment. Possibly consider aligning the areas around planning constraints. I.e. River area (flood plain), Pinkneys Green (Greenbelt) and Central
The implied suggestion that Maidenhead should be split up for neighbourhood planning purposes begs the question of what is my community? Is it where I shop and where my friends live? I use a supermarket to the east, Italian deli to the north, butchers to the west and greengrocers to the south, and my friends are similarly spread around the town. Clearly my community is the whole town. Dividing it with the A4 or A308 is surely arbitrary!
Braywick & Bray - Town Center/Boulters Lock - Furze Platt , Highway
North of bath road, up to Gringer Hill South of bath rd up to braywick rd Everything east of Gringer hill and braywick rd
Maidenhead is very much one town, like Windsor. One river, one central shopping and entertainment area, one sport centre and pool and sports ground (Braywick), one single sex senior school for girls, one for boys, one mainline train station, one golf course, one hospital
Why do we need to reinvent the wheel when there is already a logical set of divisions in place
<p>Whilst I disagree with the position of the Planning Officers that the whole of the Maidenhead town unparished area cannot be considered as a single neighbourhood, in order to move forward from this impasse, I do have a suggestion that I believe might adhere to the criteria set out above. Rather than a North-South division, I actually feel a more appropriate logical separation of the town into two neighbourhoods of East and West. This is largely with reference to the historic development of the town with the oldest parts of the settlement in the East (town centre, riverside and North Town) and the later growth in the West.</p> <p>My suggestion in terms of defining a boundary whereby the individual neighbourhoods have clear logical connections, supported by evidence is actually to use the Anglican Church parishes that make up the town as a basis for subdivision. These can be viewed on a map here:  <a href="https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a">https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a</a></p> <p>The East Maidenhead neighbourhood would consist of the parishes of St Andrew and St Luke together with the part of Bray with Braywood parish that sits within Oldfield ward (including the new Southwest Maidenhead Placemaking Area) and the part of Cookham parish that sits within Furze Platt ward.</p> <p>The West Maidenhead neighbourhood would consist of the parishes of Boyne Hill and Furze Platt together with the part of Burchetts Green parish that sits within Pinkneys Green ward.</p> <p>Generally, the boundary would follow the Marlow branch line in the North and Shoppenhangers Road in the South. There would be some anomalies in the central region that would need to be thought through and, if necessary, refined. These are the part of St Luke parish that juts out into Belmont ward up to All Saints Avenue and the boundary that runs down Kings Street from Castle Hill to Shoppenhangers so chops off a bit of the town centre from the East.</p> <p>It's not perfect, but to my mind is less arbitrary than the other suggestions that have been floated.</p>
<p>Maybe.</p> <p>As a strategic planner with 15 years' experience working at the heart of spatial strategy-making for scores of Local and Neighbourhood Plans I cannot see any planning justification for splitting the town into sub-areas, for the purposes of neighbourhood planning (leaving aside the question of establishing one or more suitably representative groups to lead the process).</p> <p>We should be guided by the NPPF, including paragraph 15, which begins: "Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area." The simple fact that people identify as being from Maidenhead, as opposed to a part of Maidenhead (contrast this</p>

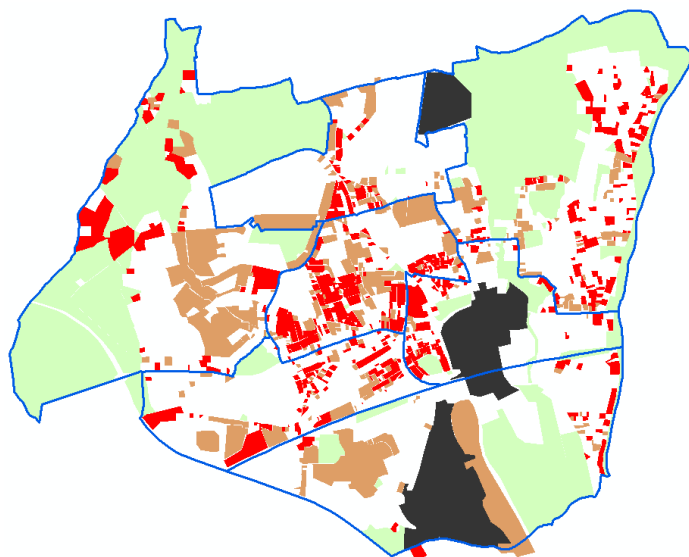
to a city), is an immediate barrier to developing shared visions for sub-areas, and there are others. There is a need to consider the geography of spatial issues and opportunities, again guided by the NPPF. Taking each of the thematic sections of the NPPF in turn – and particularly mindful of the opening statements at the start of each - it is clear that sub-dividing the town would risk sub-optimal outcomes. For example, sub-dividing the town would not be conducive to creating “the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt” (paragraph 81).

There could be the potential for further detailed work to define detailed character areas in Maidenhead, and then explore ways of combining these into sub-areas for neighbourhood planning. However, any such work would delay realising neighbourhood planning aspirations for Maidenhead, and I envisage would lead to a conclusion that there are not any ‘appropriate or logical’ sub-areas.

One matter for consideration, amongst many, is the historic environment / heritage, which links very closely to townscape, character and sense of place. A primary matter for consideration is Maidenhead’s Victorian and early 20th heritage – see **Figure A**, which shows pre-WWI (red) and pre-1955 (orange) built form alongside greenspace (light green), ward boundaries (blue) and the BLP strategic growth areas (black). It is clear that the historic built form radiates from the town centre in all directions, and taken as a whole contributes to a local sense of time-depth etc.

The only option, as I see it, would be to separate-out the town centre (also potentially one or both of the other strategic growth areas) from the rest of the town. I suggest mindful of variance between the scope of planning issues and opportunities for the town centre versus the rest of the town, and mindful of NPPF paragraph 10: “Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies”. The town centre is of strategic importance to the Borough (and more widely), hence the process of ensuring a “genuinely plan-led approach” (NPPF paragraph 15) should and presumably can (subject to resourcing) be led by RBWM . There could be a role for neighbourhood planning in respect of the town centre, but any such exercise would need to be very tightly scoped, hence a dedicated plan could be appropriate.

Figure A



## ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

The 7 wards form a cohesive whole, it makes no sense to fragment the town.
Protect the green belt, ensure that the new planning reflects the increased traffic on / off the main roads. We must have more doctors & dentist practices
I feel that there is no logical explanation for wanting to split up Maidenhead for the purposes of a Neighbourhood Plan. There are no easy or straight forward ways to do this and I find the response from RBWM just an exercise in control and yet another example of their current obsession with flouting the spirit of democracy.
I would really like to see a town-wide plan. It is challenging to get residents to engage, but doing so is crucial if the town is going to evolve in a more positive direction. It would be lovely to feel there were more pride in the area.
I very much believe that the people of Maidenhead should have representation when dealing with the totally pertinent planning matters being proposed by our council leaders.
Have you noticed that Planning permission is only given on sites that RBWM have a financial interest mainly as the "Land" owner Raymill Rd East (old school field site), Magnet Leisure Centre, Braywick Sports Centre & of course the Golf Course. Where they have no financial interest like Ockwells/Treesmill Drive 2nd phase, Priors land adjacent to Holyport FC, Land opposite Furze Platt senior school, Switchback Rd North all applications are refused. Some of these sites are more appropriate for development than the Golf Course.
Proposed area is logical and appropriate. The whole area is likely to be known reasonably well to someone living in any part of it and inhabitants of the whole area have an interest in being town centre (for example see letters published in Maidenhead Advertiser)
It's time we had a unified Maidenhead - not little groups with their own agenda who don't care about anything but their own back yard.
Given the council propose maybe two or three areas - can they put forward a counter proposal detailing the type of evidence they require to back up such an assertion (or an example from elsewhere showing the level of evidence required) rather than issue a blanket rejection. Can it be shown that the membership of MNF is representative of the 7 areas?
I just live where I live Maidenhead no longer has any identity It has been destroyed by mercenary builders and planners
You can't divide the area up as no matter where you live you use services all over town
RBWM pride themselves on their level of consultation with the population - but in reality the attempt has been sporadic and managed to minis any impact on what the council want to do.
To say Maidenhead is anything but an interconnected entity is utter madness or worse a plot by the Council to divide and sell off even more of our heritage for short term gain, with no consideration for the quality of life for existing residents or the long term consequences of their actions.
I see no logic in RBWM's suggestion of splitting Maidenhead into 2 or 3 arbitrary areas.
The 7 unparished wards make up the most logical area for a neighbourhood plan. There are no other clearly identifiable areas within the town.
The Fisheries are in Oldfield Ward but Bray Parish. Apologies if I have misinterpreted the instructions.
I don't enjoy visiting Maidenhead as I feel the heart has gone out of it. Parking is not attractive and there are so few shops to browse to give the place atmosphere.

<p>I come from an outer Borough of London, and Maidenhead would be considered a reasonably sized both by population and area. It seems to me that the officers and/or members responsible for the demand are possibly playing politics or are deliberately being obstructive.</p>
<p>Keep fighting. RBWM council appears to operate with impunity</p>
<p>One plan for Maidenhead separated from Bray Cookhsm etc makes the most sense to me.</p>
<p>Does the Head of Planning live in Maidenhead? Do they have any sense of community? Is this a blocking approach? Is there a right of appeal or an adjudicator? Councils don't like 'amateurs' on Neighbourhood Planning groups as they threaten their power. Local people need to be galvanised to react and respond but getting the message out is the challenge- most local people I know aren't on Facebook forums, rarely read the Advertiser any longer but are really furious about the state of the town (yet would probably vote Tory again if there was an election next week!!) A house to house leaflet campaign is the only way to engage people into caring about the town planning and realising they can have a say.</p>
<p>I live in Cox Green and was very dismayed to find it was excluded from Maidenhead town - I would view the town as part of my neighbourhood - its within 15 minutes walk. Can see no logic to seperating the areas except to avoid public engagement. Can definitely see no logic in dividing into further neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>At the risk of being cynical, the overriding impression I have from reading all of the material is that RBWM just DO NOT WANT a Neighbourhood Plan for this area: it might constrain their thinking!!!!</p>
<p>A single Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan would serve the community best; and the planners. There is no logic to the arbitrary sub-division they propose. The only sensible alternative would be a series of NPs based on local communities, e.g. North Town, St Marks, Furze Platt, Riverside, etc. but that would even more difficult to initiate, support and administer.</p>
<p>I feel that the suggestion by RBWM to divide Maidenhead into areas is a subversive act to lessen the power of residents to influence the evolution and development of their town. The RBWM's lack of a neighbourhood plan thus far and their track history for lip service consultations and decisions against the wishes of the majority of residents are the basis for this feeling.</p>
<p>RMBW council seem to drive a lot for the decision making from councilors who live in Windsor and elsewhere. A local borough plan with inputs from local residents is needed to ensure local interests are best served</p>
<p>Maidenhead is large and made up of distinct areas however it does need and deserve a holistic planning approach to ensure that the vision is unified and consistent. Maidenhead deserves to have full recognition and remain one unified entity to ensure its future survival</p>
<p>With the BLP targeting over 70% of the brough's planned housing growth at Maidenhead, and the existing Town Centre Area Action Plan to be extinguished by the BLP, Maidenhead needs an Neighbourhood Plan MORE THAN any other area of the borough - whether they be parished or unparished - to help avoid a developer free-for-all that disregards residents' views. The NPPF (nationally) requires planning authorities to adopt a presumption of approving applications - unless there is a clear conflict with adopted policy. A Neighbourhood Plan must not conflict with the BLP or national policy, but offers the potential for Maidenhead-centric local policies that genuine reflect residents' views and which would carry weight in planning decisions alongside BLP and national policies.</p>

I think it is absurd that Bracknell can be a Neighbourhood but Maidenhead cannot. The town is quite compact, and mostly densely populated, and almost impossible to sensibly divide. A Neighbourhood plan for Maidenhead seems a totally logical approach, and would be easily understood across the town.
Maidenhead is not a huge town. There is little outside of the town centre, so I would suggest that the 'community assets' serve everyone equally.
Maidenhead needs bringing back to what it was...
What area does Maidenhead Town Council cover? Exclude that area from NPF
If Maidenhead is to grow by 40% how can you not have a plan. Failure to plan is planning to fail. Surely we want Maidenhead to be the best it can be not the result of random acts.
I do think it makes sense for Maidenhead to be separated from Windsor, in relation to neighbourhood planning. Maidenhead may have the most millionaires in UK, but it also has a working town feel, vs Windsor and Eton, which seem more touristic.
I live in Cookham Dean and all the people in Cookham dread going to Maidenhead. It has no green open space. Look at places like London that have city parks. No one wants to just go into a dark, overbuilt area shadowed by high rise buildings when they can go to Marlow High Street. Maidenhead is shooting itself in the foot with over development. When I was a child and living in Cookham, we went to Maidenhead all the time to shop. It's a shame that the journey from the train station to the town is so depressing and cold. The best thing they could do is make that area opposite the Odeon into a park with a cafe. The town needs this desperately to breathe life back into it.
It seems to me entirely logical to have one area because the town centre has services / amenity for all those surrounding wards