

Contents

Qualifying statement	2
Qualifying criteria.....	2
Forum aims	3
The Plan Area	4
Population.....	5
Definition of “Neighbourhood”	5
Justification for the Plan Area	6
Historical alternatives	7
Contemporary alternatives	8
Business areas	9
Credentials of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum.....	11
Mobilisation	11
Forum membership	11
Diversity	11
Consultation.....	11
Deliverables.....	11
Structure	12
Forum member listing.....	13

Qualifying statement

This Qualifying Statement should be read in conjunction with MNF's application to be Designated as the group responsible for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the unparished wards of Maidenhead.

The Qualifying Statement explains:

- The Forum's aims;
- The definition of the Plan area and its demographic make-up;
- The reasoning underpinning selection of the Plan area;
- The credentials of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum for becoming the designated plan development group.

Qualifying criteria

There are four criteria to be met:

1. The Forum is established to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of its neighbourhood;

*Please refer to **Forum aims** in this document.*

2. The Forum's membership is open to everyone who lives, works and represents the area as an elected member;

*Please refer to **Forum membership** in this document and the accompanying Constitution.*

3. The Forum's membership includes a minimum of 21 people, each of whom lives, works or represents the area as an elected member;

*Please refer to **Forum member list** in this document and the accompanying Constitution.*

4. The Forum has a written constitution.

Please refer to accompanying Constitution.

Forum aims

The Forum has been formed to develop the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for unparished Maidenhead. The Forum will scope and prioritise how funds collected by the Borough through the Community Infrastructure Levy from developments within the NP area shall be applied, to the extent that is facilitated by having a NP in force.

The Forum will develop policies in the NP that supplement, and are consistent with, national planning guidelines and the Borough's adopted local plan. The Forum is supportive of sustainable development of dwellings, employment sites and community infrastructure, and aims to ensure that the interests of current and future residents and businesses are considered at every stage of the planning process.

By "sustainability", we mean:

- Taking practical steps towards carbon-neutral and carbon-negative solutions;
- Reducing pollution and waste through good design and behavioural nudges;
- Protecting and supporting the natural environment without over-managing it;
- Consideration of the lifetime costs of building from construction to demolition;
- Staying within the already-built footprint of Maidenhead wherever possible;
- Ensuring local employment opportunities can grow alongside the growing population;
- Ensuring that the proper maintenance of new developments and all existing and new public facilities, foot and cycle paths, public open spaces, suitable accessible natural greenspace (SANG) and the like is secured through the development process;
- Policies that encourage retention of a greater share of the retail and leisure spend of Maidenhead residents and businesses by better meeting their needs within the town as it grows, thereby reducing the need for travel to other centres.

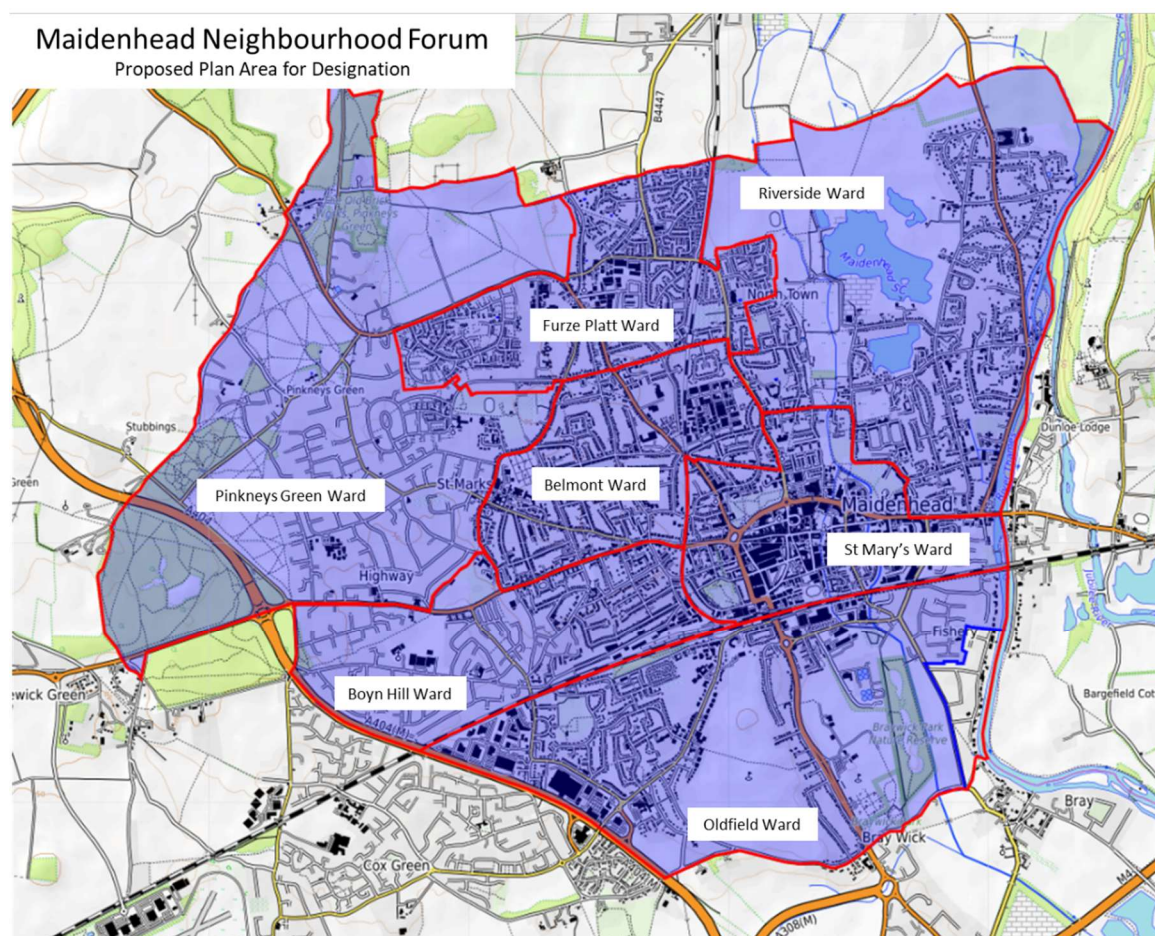
The Forum acknowledges that population densification will affect the town unevenly and will be promoting the importance of sustaining and improving quality of life for all residents. The provision of additional community infrastructure to support the growing population will be encouraged and prioritised through planning policies, community engagement and partnerships. Enhancement of the townscape, in terms of diversity of styles, human-scale buildings and overall build quality, will be promoted.

In undertaking its work, the Forum aims to develop a community consultation mechanism that is:

- Consistent, repeatable and re-usable in other contexts;
- Receptive to the full diversity of demographics, perspectives and opinions;
- Is analytical and data-driven when distilling consultations into planning policies;
- Is transparent in the evidence used and its decision-making and will adopt open data policies in as much as GDPR and licencing permits.

The Forum is not a campaigning organisation but is open to the views expressed by other campaigns.

The Plan Area



The Plan area (blue) coincides exactly with the unparished part of Maidenhead. The boundaries are defined by the boundaries of five parishes (Cookham CP, Bisham CP, White Waltham CP, Cox Green CP and Bray CP) and the eastern boundary of the Royal Borough at the river Thames. This also forms the boundary between the counties of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

The Plan area comprises seven wards, as follows:

- Belmont
- Boyn Hill
- Furze Platt
- Oldfield (excluding part of the Fisheries area located in Bray CP)
- Pinkneys Green
- Riverside
- St Mary's

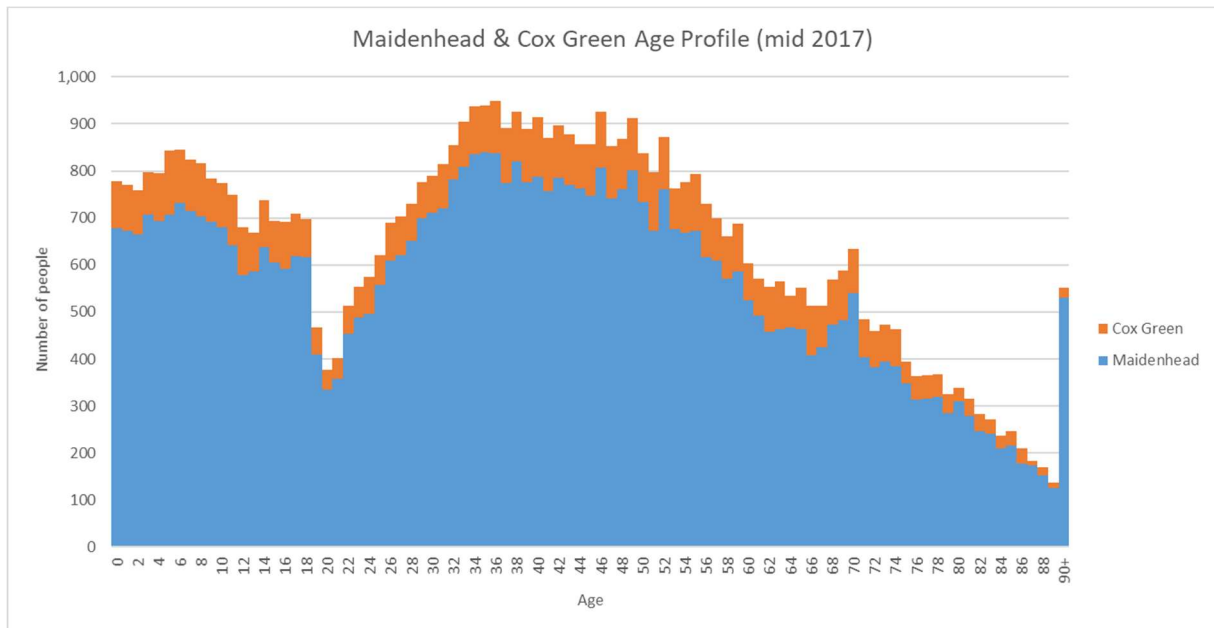
The only other unparished area in the Borough is Windsor.

An interactive map is available to view in more detail at <https://mnf.org.uk/mnf-plan-area-maps/>

Population

The estimated population (Source: ONS mid-2017 estimates) of the Plan area is **51,395**, which is **87.1%** of the conurbation of Maidenhead including Cox Green and **34.1%** of the entire Royal Borough. Ward-level population statistics are not available publicly for the post-May 2019 ward definitions directly from ONS, though RBWM has published derived profiles for the new wards.

The median age is 39, with a profile as follows:



Definition of “Neighbourhood”

A ‘community’ is not the same as a ‘neighbourhood’. A community is a group of people who interact relatively frequently, but geographical proximity is not a requirement. Examples include communities based on religious affiliation, personal characteristics, in cyberspace etc. By way of contrast, a neighbourhood must be physically rooted. The shape and size of the area is subjective but must be based on how well various interlocking communities relate to the physical area and the resulting sense of “belonging”.

For neighbourhood planning purposes, a population over 25,000 is considered to be “large”. In the following section, we explain why the whole of the unparished wards of Maidenhead should be considered as a single neighbourhood.

Justification for the Plan Area

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum proposes this plan area for the following reasons, which are expanded upon below:

1. The boundaries of the area are delineated on three sides by adjoining civil parishes representing neighbourhoods of great antiquity, and on the fourth side by the physical barrier of the river Thames, forming the eastern boundary of RBWM;
2. The area contains no alternative definitions of neighbourhood within the plan area that have any historical longevity;
3. The whole of the modern town of Maidenhead still looks to its old core for meeting, shopping and working; it is also the hub for transport links to and from the town;
4. No substantial part of the Plan area is sufficiently business in nature that it should be separated out for its own “business” plan. Business owners, managers and employees are amongst the stakeholders, with both residents and non-residents eligible for full forum membership.

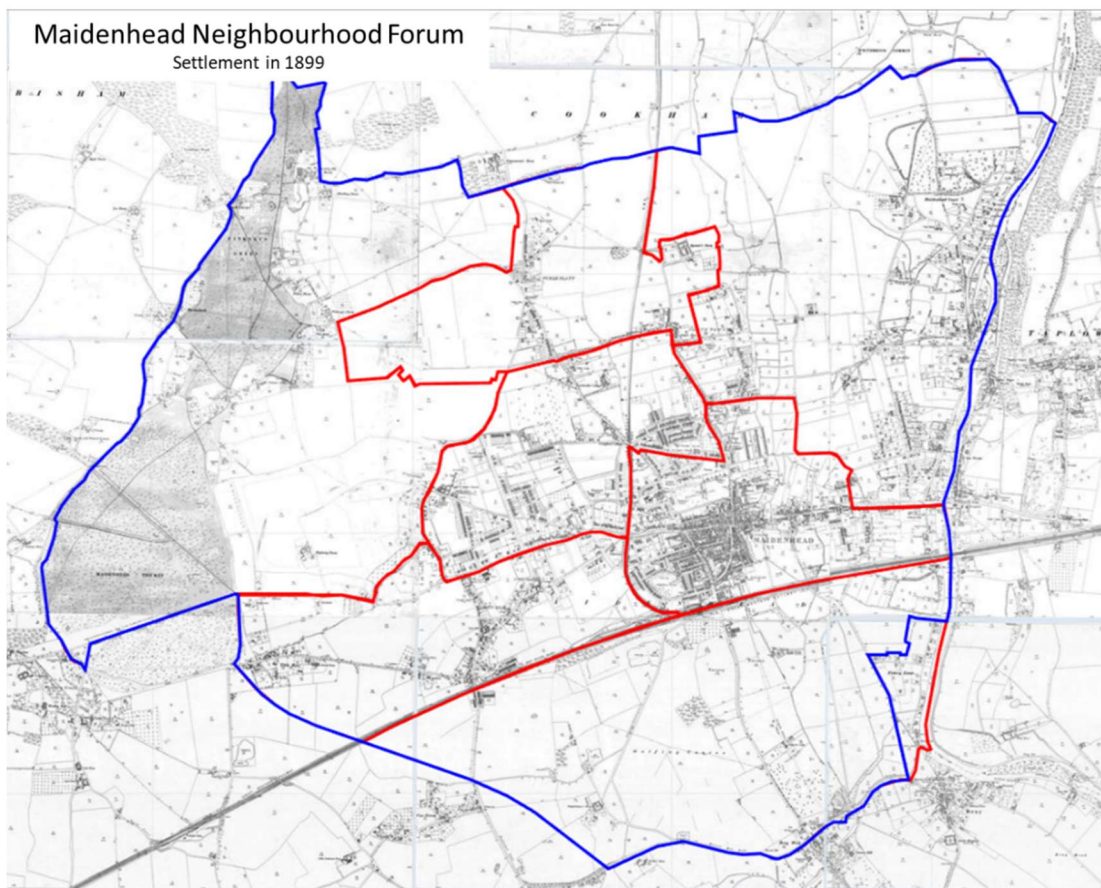
It should be noted that designation was awarded in 2013 to a predecessor forum for this entire area and Cox Green civil parish combined.

Historical alternatives

Maidenhead has grown outwards without absorbing significant prior historical settlements, meaning there are no obvious alternative definitions of “neighbourhood” based on long-standing settlement patterns. There are no historic villages with churches. Old Boyn Hill, Pinkneys Green, North Town and Furze Platt are older settlements with only pubs, rather than ancient churches, as community focal points.

The 1899 map below shows the older settlements before they were subsumed by more recent development. Most settlement outside the core town centre shown on the map is recent 19th-Century development of villas along the riverside and new streets around All Saints and St Luke’s churches. Maidenhead only became a riverside town through organic growth meeting a natural barrier.

The map is available to view in more detail at <https://mnf.org.uk/mnf-plan-area-maps/>. Growth of the town can be tracked over time from the menu, using out-of-copyright Ordnance Survey mapping from 1875, 1899, 1911, 1925, 1955 and 1968.



Contemporary alternatives

Neighbourhood focal points (“nodes”) should be diverse if they are to be presented as alternatives to a Maidenhead-wide definition e.g. a cluster of shops, pub, church, community hall etc in one place that is similarly prominent as Maidenhead town centre.

Potential nodes for neighbourhoods that are not necessarily rooted in history include:

- Retail hubs
- Transport hubs
- Employment hubs
- Education
- Social and leisure
- Religion

For such a large Plan area there are certainly some clusters away from the town centre but none that could claim pre-eminence.

Retail	The town centre triangle bounded by High Street, King Street and Queen Street remains the main hub, with Stafferton Way (close to the town centre) having emerged in recent years. Emerging plans for a major redevelopment of the Nicholson centre, together with the ongoing Chapel Arches, York Road and Landings developments are expected to consolidate the key role of the town centre. Clusters of local shops are to be found across the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area but none is sufficiently large or diverse to suggest an alternative centre
Transport	The road network is still centred on the historical town centre and Maidenhead railway station is central to the Plan area (and within 20 minutes’ walk of most of the town). The station handled 4.6m entries/exits in 2017-18, serves a wider catchment and is expected to further expand its role with the advent of Elizabeth Line services.
Employment	Unlike Windsor, employment in Maidenhead is dispersed across the town, with clusters in most wards.
Education	Maidenhead does not have a historical school at its heart; most are in suburban areas and do not act as major focal points themselves.
Social and leisure	Organised sport in being increasingly concentrated at Braywick. Regeneration of the town centre is beginning to attract an improved social and leisure offer. Community halls exist across the town, but the town centre ones are running at capacity and some risk displacement by development. Re-provision and expansion are needed as the residential population in the town centre increases.
Religion	Most places of worship, even newer ones, are based towards the town centre, and the mosque thrives in its town centre location.

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Business areas

Business premises are dispersed across the town, with an obvious concentration in the town centre (St Mary's ward). Based on business rateable values, Table 1 below shows that Offices are the dominant sector (54%), of which approximately half are outside the town centre. Retail is concentrated in St Mary's ward and, collectively, that town centre ward has about half of the town's business rateable value.

Table 2 shows that St Mary's has a greater share of rating points because Oldfield ward (Vanwall business park) and Riverside (Whitebrook Park - Hitachi) have some of the larger individual office premises.

Table 1: Business rates valuations by Ward and Sector

Sector	Pinkneys Green Ward	Boyn Hill Ward	Furze Platt Ward	Riverside Ward	Belmont Ward	Oldfield Ward	St. Mary's Ward	MNF Plan Area
Offices	0.0%	0.3%	1.1%	3.7%	2.8%	19.3%	26.5%	53.7%
Retail	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	0.4%	2.1%	13.9%	18.2%
Business Units	0.0%	0.6%	1.1%	1.0%	1.7%	0.8%	0.9%	6.1%
Warehouses	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.7%	5.1%
Education, Museums	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	4.3%
Restaurants & Licenced Premises	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	1.8%	2.6%
Leisure Facilities	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	1.5%	2.0%
Accommodation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	1.2%	1.7%
Other	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	1.7%
Car Parks	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.3%	1.6%
Health Facilities	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Filling Stations, Garages	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%
Quarrying, Waste Handling	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%
All sectors	1.5%	3.2%	4.6%	6.4%	8.3%	26.3%	49.6%	100.0%

Table 2: Business rates valuation points by Ward

Ward	Rating points	%
Belmont Ward	152	10.7%
Boyn Hill Ward	75	5.3%
Furze Platt Ward	101	7.1%
Oldfield Ward	126	8.9%
Pinkneys Green Ward	56	3.9%
Riverside Ward	83	5.8%
St. Mary's Ward	829	58.3%
Total	1,422	100.0%

Source for both tables: Valuation Office Agency (2017 rating valuations)

Credentials of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Mobilisation

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum has been meeting since May 2019. There is an agreed Constitution. Prior to making this application, the new Forum has been establishing its digital infrastructure and building awareness including articles in the local Maidenhead Advertiser newspaper and the use of social media. It has been awarded a technical support package from approved consultants (AECOM) and received an initial central government grant to fund the mobilisation phase.

Forum membership

Membership now stands at 34 people, which exceeds the statutory minimum of 21 but we acknowledge that the large population of the Plan area requires the Forum to grow further.

Membership is open to:

- Residents
- Workers in the Plan area
- Business owners
- Borough-level elected members serving the wards of the NP area
- Representatives of organisations operating in the Plan area.

Non-voting associate membership is available to under-18s, non-residents and organisations not currently active in the area.

A list of full members is provided below. 13 members were added in September and three dropped out. We expect the list to continue changing, typically after each Facebook post.

Additionally, 259 people are signed up to receive updates but are not active Forum members and have not all supplied address details.

Diversity

Forum membership is well distributed across the Plan area, with all wards represented.

Most members are aged 60+ and 75% are male. We are making strenuous efforts to recruit members that are more reflective of the town's demographic but still expect older, retired people will be heavily represented.

Members are mostly residents of the town, some of whom work in the proposed area, together with elected and former members of the RBWM Council. We aim and expect to recruit representatives of organisations and businesses. Our analysis shows that under 4% of local businesses are members of Maidenhead Chamber of Commerce, leaving the majority harder to reach.

Consultation

The new Forum will place great emphasis on community consultation during policy development. We expect the statutory consultation phases that come after the draft plan is complete will then run more smoothly. By adopting a mix of face-to-face and digital approaches, we aim to harvest the views of a more representative cross-section of the community than the membership.

Deliverables

The Forum has been constituted to deliver a draft neighbourhood plan. However, it is expected that public consultation will yield a broader set of issues and aspirations than can be incorporated in the

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Plan and supporting submission documents. The Forum expects to be able to produce additional deliverables arising from the “cutting-room floor” of plan development and the evidence base may have applicability elsewhere.

Additionally, the Forum members undertaking the work are likely to have, or will develop, considerable expertise in their subject area. Such people will be valuable contributors to other forums e.g. in site-specific consultations commissioned by developers or RBWM.

Structure

The Forum is in the process of setting up a structure appropriate for a large neighbourhood planning exercise. More detail is available on the Forum website at <https://mnf.org.uk/forum/> but in summary, the matrix structure is:

Five **topic groups** where the bulk of the plan development work is done:

- The Natural Environment
- The Built Environment
- Getting About
- Employment, Business and Retail
- Community Facilities

Six **special interest groups** to ensure that policies apply well in specific sensitive areas:

- Town centre
- Riverside / Thames Corridor
- Braywick
- Waterways
- Young Maidenhead
- Senior Maidenhead

Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum

Forum member listing

<This section is not public prior to Consultation commencing>