

Sustainability Appraisal of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Borough Local Plan Submission Version - Proposed Changes

Volume 1 of 3: Non-Technical Summary

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LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



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Non-Technical Summary

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Photo: Fields in Maidenhead by Timo Newton-Syms

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction: the Borough Local Plan

- N1. This is a non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Borough Local Plan Submission Version – Proposed Changes (BLPSV-PC). This document presents an assessment of the likely sustainability impacts of proposals set out in the BLPSV-PC, as well as the potential impacts of reasonable alternative development sites.
- N2. The role of the BLPSV-PC is to set out the Council’s vision for the next 20 years and help to shape the future of the borough. The Plan does this by setting out policies that guide the development of homes and businesses, protect important biodiversity, landscapes and historic character, whilst also seeking to provide for the needs of all communities across RBWM.

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

- N3. Lepus Consulting is conducting an appraisal process for RBWM Council to assist in the preparation of the Local Plan. The appraisal process is known as Sustainability Appraisal. This SA report also includes the requirements of an Environmental Report as part of the SEA Directive¹.
- N4. SA is the process of informing and influencing the preparation of the Local Plan to optimise its sustainability performance. SA considers the social, economic and environmental performance of the Local Plan.
- N5. **Table N.1** below shows the stages of the Local Plan and SA process. The process is expanded in this Non-Technical Summary below.

¹ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32001L0042> [Date Accessed: 10/10/19]

Table N. 1: Stages of the Local Plan and SA process

Date	Local Plan process	Sustainability Appraisal
October 2016		SA Scoping Report This document sets out the key issues and opportunities within RBWM and presents the SA Framework for the future SA stages.
December 2016 – January 2017	Regulation 18 Consultation This consultation period allowed for comments on the draft Borough Local Plan Submission Version (BLPSV), and included details on the spatial portrait, vision and objectives, as well as 57 policies	Regulation 18 SA Report This SA Report appraised four strategic scenarios, 57 draft policies, five strategic locations and approximately 120 reasonable alternative sites.
June – September 2017	Regulation 19 Publication This consultation allowed comments to be received on the Council's preferred BLPSV.	Regulation 19 SA Report This report appraised 46 policies, 97 sites and assessed likely cumulative effects as well as setting out mitigation and monitoring recommendations. This document constitutes an Environmental Report under Article 5 of the SEA Directive.
January 2018	Submission Following the Regulation 19 publication stage, the BLPSV and supporting documents were submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent Inspector.	SA Addendum to the Regulation 19 SA Report This addendum appraised three housing number options, twelve broad spatial options, affordable housing policy and 15 sites. The document also contains the assessment of cumulative effects, mitigation and monitoring.
August – October 2019	Borough Local Plan Submission Version – Proposed Changes (2019) In response to issues raised during the examination hearings, the Council have updated the Local Plan. This updated document presents the Council's preferred approach for growth within RBWM.	SA Report of BLPSV-PC This report appraises the final policies and site allocations of the BLPSV-PC. This document constitutes an Environmental Report under Article 5 of the SEA Directive.

Evolution of the environment without the Plan

- N6. The SEA Directive requires *“information on the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”*.
- N7. In the absence of the Local Plan, no new Plan-led development would occur within the Plan area over and above that which is currently proposed

in the adopted Local Plan². In this scenario, an appeal-led system would predominate. The nature and scale of development that may come forward under an appeal led system would be uncertain. **Table N.2** below presents the likely evolution of the borough in the absence of the Plan.

Table N.2: *Likely evolution without the Plan*

Sustainability Topic	Likely evolution without the Plan
Accessibility and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road traffic congestion is expected to increase, especially along the motorways and through Maidenhead and Windsor. Road infrastructure improvements, such as smart motorways, are expected to continue in the absence of the Plan. Public rights of way are expected to be continually improved through the Public Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan and the Waterways Project. These positive effects are likely to mostly affect recreational users. The BLPSV-PC proposes several policies which would be likely to increase the uptake of sustainable transport use amongst residents, which would be likely to help reduce congestion of on local roads. In the absence of the Plan, it is uncertain the extent to which residents may opt to use sustainable transport modes. In the absence of the Plan, the borough's Local Transport Plan³ will still be implemented, which would be likely to have a positive impact on the local road network, relieving congestion and improving public transport across the Plan area.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary sources of air pollution in the UK include road transport, industry, imports and agriculture. These sources would not be expected to change, with or without the Plan. In the absence of the Plan, development could potentially be located in close proximity to primary sources of air pollution. However, national trends indicate improvements in air pollution due to advances in technology in the long term. The BLPSV-PC proposes several policies which would be likely to help increase the rate of sustainable transport uptake amongst residents. Without the Plan, it is uncertain the extent to which residents may opt for low emission or sustainable transport modes. National trends in the increasing uptake of lower emission vehicle types, such as electric cars, would be likely to help limit road transport associated emissions in the Plan area. In the absence of the Plan, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) would still be designated and air quality in these areas would continue to be monitored.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the Plan, sites designated for their national and international biodiversity and/or geodiversity value would continue to benefit from legislative protection. The Thames Basin Heaths SPD⁴ would remain a material consideration, setting out the strategy for the provision of SANGS as well as access management and monitoring at the SPA, which would be expected to help manage the designated site, with or without the Plan.

² Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council (2003) The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan: Incorporating alterations adopted June 2003. Available at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200209/planning_policy/1343/adopted_local_plan [Date Accessed: 02/10/19]

³ Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (2012) Local Transport Plan 2012 – 2026. Available at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/90/local_transport_plan_documents [Date Accessed: 02/10/19]

⁴ Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (2010) Thames Basin Heaths Special Protections Area: Supplementary Planning Document. Available at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201039/non-development_plan/458/biodiversity_and_thames_basin_heath_spa/2 [Date Accessed: 02/10/19]

Sustainability Topic	Likely evolution without the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy 2014 – 2020⁵ aims to increase the area of priority habitats in Berkshire, but trends in habitat creation are currently unknown. Biodiversity net gain at development sites would be expected, due to policies set out in the NPPF. In the absence of the Plan, the NPPF, and its policies relating to biodiversity, would continue to be material consideration in planning decisions. It is uncertain if development proposals would voluntarily adopt additional biodiversity enhancement measures. There could potentially be adverse impacts on local biodiversity features, in particular non-designated sites and priority habitats, due to development, including direct loss or damage, recreational disturbance and decreases in air quality.
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per capita CO₂ emissions in RBWM are expected to decrease in the future, based on previous trend data. International and national GHG emission reduction targets would continue to promote a reduction in carbon emissions in the absence of the Plan. Technological advances, which may include renewable energies, electric vehicles and efficient electricity supplies, would be expected to occur in the absence of the Plan. In the absence of the Plan, it is uncertain if new residents would be located in close proximity to essential services and if new residents would be encouraged to reduce reliance on personal car use.
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing transformation of existing employment land into high quality employment land would be expected in the absence of the Plan. The number of jobs in RBWM is expected to increase based on current trend data. The number of businesses in the borough is expected to increase.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of children in low income families is expected to decrease. In the absence of the Plan, it is uncertain if residents of new developments would be located in areas with poor access to essential health services. Without the Plan, it is uncertain if existing public green spaces would be maintained and enhanced, to encourage residents to live healthy and active lifestyles.
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the Plan, designated heritage assets would continue to benefit from legislative and policy protection. Heritage assets, including underground archaeological features, would be likely to be discovered in the future, with or without the Plan.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without the Plan, it is uncertain if future housing provision would satisfy local needs in terms of type, cost and location. In the absence of the Plan, there could potentially be the reduced ability to refine the housing stock to meet the changing demands of existing residents such as the provision of elderly specific housing accommodation. House prices are expected to increase within the borough.
Landscape and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the Plan, the London Metropolitan Green Belt would continue to benefit from policy protection set out in the NPPF. Pressure from development proposals located in the open countryside of RBWM would be likely to increase, which could potentially have negative impacts on the quality and distinctiveness of the Plan area. The Landscape Character Assessment SPD would still be a material consideration without the Plan in place. It is uncertain the extent to which development proposals would seek to conserve and enhance the local landscape character under an appeal-led system. The setting of the Chilterns AONB would still be protected by legislation, policies set out in the NPPF, the Chilterns AONB Management Plan and the PPG.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is thought likely that without the Plan, rates of recycling waste per capita will rise in the Plan area in line with national and international trends and targets.

⁵ Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (2014) The Natural Environment in Berkshire: Biodiversity Strategy 2014 – 2020. Available at: <https://berkshirelnp.org/index.php/what-we-do/strategy/biodiversity-action-plan> [Date Accessed: 02/10/19]

Sustainability Topic	Likely evolution without the Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which development may arise in the Plan area without the Plan is uncertain. However, an increase in the local population would be expected and it is therefore thought to be likely that without the Plan, net waste generation in the Plan area will rise to some extent. The emerging Joint Waste and Minerals Plan for Berkshire would be expected to control and manage waste and mineral extraction throughout RBWM in the absence of the Plan.
Population and Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population across the Plan area are expected to continue to increase. This is likely to place greater pressure on the capacity of key services and amenities, including health and leisure facilities, employment opportunities, educational establishments and housing. Notable offences recorded by the police is expected to decrease within the borough. Without the Plan, there could be less opportunity to enhance community benefits (such as community hubs) associated with Plan-led housing proposals. An appeal-led development scenario is unlikely to improve sustainable access routes to schools.
Water and Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of flooding is likely to be exacerbated in the Plan area as a result of climate change, but flood risk would be continued to be managed through policies and guidance within the NPPF, PPGs and River Basin Management Plans. The increased risk of surface water flooding would depend on the size, nature and extent of non-porous built surface cover in the Plan area in the future. The Plan area's population will rise, with or without the Plan, and net water demand in the Plan area would be likely to rise as a result. Water Resource Management Plans would continue to plan for future trends in water supply, demand and environmental quality. It is uncertain how water efficiency per capita may be affected in the absence of the Plan. Policies within the NPPF would also be expected to help protect against the worsening of water quality across the Plan area. Water abstraction, consumption and treatment in the local area will continue to be managed by the Environment Agency and water companies through the River Basin Management Plans, Water Resource Management Plans and Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy in line with the EU Water Framework Directive. Soil erosion and soil loss are occurring at significant rates throughout the country due to agriculture, climate change and urbanisation. Without the Plan, the extent of development on previously undeveloped greenfield land is uncertain. Without the Plan, it is uncertain what percentage of ecologically and agriculturally important soils would be lost to development across the Plan area.

The scoping stage

N8. The preparation of a Scoping Report was the first phase of the SA process. The scoping process set the criteria for assessment (including the SA Objectives) and established the baseline data and other information, including a review of relevant policies, programmes and plans (PPPs). The scoping process involved an overview of key issues, highlighting areas of potential conflict. The output of the scoping phase was the SA Scoping Report prepared by Lepus Consulting in 2016⁶.

⁶ Lepus Consulting (2016) Sustainability Appraisal of the Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan: Scoping Report

- N9. The borough is located in Berkshire, in the South East of England. RBWM is bordered by Slough Borough, South Bucks District and Wycombe District to the north; Wokingham Borough to the west; Bracknell Forest Borough and Surrey Heath Borough to the south; and Runnymede Borough and Spelthorne Borough to the east.
- N10. The borough boundary encompasses the two towns of Maidenhead and Windsor, along with a number of smaller settlements, including Ascot, Sunningdale and Eton. It is home to Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park, which are recognised as internationally significant heritage and environmental assets which attract high visitor numbers each year. The borough is also home to other popular visitor attractions such as Windsor and Ascot racecourses and Legoland Windsor. The borough had a resident population of 150,900 in 2018⁷.

Key sustainability issues and opportunities

- N11. Plans and programmes that could potentially affect the Local Plan have been reviewed and considered alongside the current characteristics of the Plan area. Key issues and opportunities identified within RBWM include:

Social

- The health of Windsor and Maidenhead residents is generally good.
- RBWM is well serviced by a range of transport modes.
- Congestion is associated with travel to work, tourist attractions and events.
- Reliance on personal car use is higher in rural areas.
- New development in RBWM has the potential to impact transport infrastructure.
- Public transport may be less affordable to households with income deprivation.
- The objectively assessed need for housing in 2013-36 was 712 dwellings a year.
- The high cost of housing in RBWM (compared to the national average) presents a barrier to first-time buyers.
- The number of households with dependent children in RBWM are higher than the national average.
- RBWM has less than 10% of households in fuel poverty.

⁷Office for National Statistics (2019) Labour Market Profile – Windsor and Maidenhead. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157289/report.aspx> [Date Accessed: 30/09/19]

- Overall, there is considered to be good access to green infrastructure for residents in RBWM.
- There is a need to increase the proportion of waste sent for reuse, recycling or compost and move away from the use of landfill for waste disposal.
- The proportion of Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally is 0 in RBWM.
- The most common types of crime in RBWM are vehicles offences and criminal damage and arson.

Economic

- New business start-ups should continue to be encouraged in RBWM.
- National Vocational Qualifications in RBWM are generally higher than regional and national percentages.
- The employment level for RBWM is higher than that for Great Britain overall.

Environmental

- Five AQMAs have been designated in RBWM due to excessive levels of NO₂ from transport.
- New housing, employment development areas, commercial and domestic sources, transport, and increasing visitor numbers in the area have the potential to lead to impacts on air quality.
- There are a number of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of biological and geological importance in the borough.
- Important sites and habitats may be affected by development through a number of pathways, including fragmentation, recreational pressure and/or noise and light pollution.
- There is one nationally designated geological site and six locally designated geological sites in the borough.
- Climate change has the potential to increase the risk of fluvial and surface water flooding.
- A range of further risks linked to climate change may affect RBWM. These include the following: an increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer; increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events and flooding; adverse effect on water quality from watercourse levels and turbulent flow after heavy rain and a reduction of water flow; a need to increase the capacity of sewers; loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution and spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution; an increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for local business; and

increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence.

- Total CO₂ emissions in RBWM have decreased from 2012 to 2017.
- Green infrastructure should be enhanced and expanded.
- New development needs to incorporate energy efficiency measures and climate change adaptive features in order to respond to predicted levels of climate change.
- Development in the RBWM may have the potential to lead to effects on historic landscapes and cause direct damage to archaeological sites, monuments and buildings and/ or their settings.
- Archaeological remains, both seen and unseen, have the potential to be affected by new development areas.
- Parts of RBWM lie within the London Metropolitan Green Belt.
- Key character features of the Chilterns National Character Area (NCA), Thames Valley NCA and Thames Basin Heaths NCA should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- Key character features of the Landscape Character Assessment for RBWM should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- Energy consumption from domestic sources in RBWM is higher than the average for the South East region.
- There is a need to identify and support opportunities for renewable energy provision locally.
- RBWM contains large Source Protection Zones.
- Some areas of high-grade quality agricultural land (Agricultural Land Class Grades 1, 2 and 3a) may be under threat from new growth areas and associated infrastructure.
- The development of new and improved infrastructure to accompany growth has the potential to lead to an increase in soil erosion and soil loss.

N12. There are a number of plans, policies and programmes that set out the environmental protection objectives which proposals within the Local Plan should adhere to. These are discussed within the SA Scoping report and are updated in **Appendix E** of the SA of the BLPSV-PC.

Methodology

N13. In light of the key issues and opportunities considered above, an SA Framework was established which includes SA Objectives, decision-making criteria and indicators. The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. SA Objectives and indicators can be revised as further baseline information is collected and sustainability issues and challenges are identified and are

used in monitoring the implementation of the BLPSV-PC. The 14 SA Objectives are as follows:

- **Climate change:** Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change and plan for the anticipated levels of climate change.
- **Water and Flooding:** Protect, enhance and manage RBWM's waterways and to sustainably manage water resources.
- **Air and noise pollution:** Manage and reduce the risk of pollution, including air and noise pollution.
- **Biodiversity and geodiversity:** Protect, enhance and manage the natural heritage of the borough.
- **Landscape quality:** Conserve, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening its distinctiveness.
- **Cultural heritage:** Conserve, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of historic and cultural importance.
- **Use of resources:** Ensure protection, conservation and efficient use of natural and man-made resources in the borough.
- **Housing:** Provide a range of housing to meet the needs of the community.
- **Health:** Safeguard and improve physical and mental health of residents.
- **Community safety and wellbeing:** Reduce poverty and social deprivation and increase community safety.
- **Transport and accessibility:** Improve choice and efficiency of sustainable transport in the borough and reduce the need to travel.
- **Education:** Improve education, skills and qualifications in the borough.
- **Waste:** Ensure the sustainable management of waste.
- **Economy and employment:** To support a strong, diverse, vibrant and sustainable local economy to foster balanced economic growth.

N14. Each section of the Local Plan process has been subject to SA. Using the SA Framework and professional judgement, the likely sustainability impacts of the Local Plan documents have been assessed. The SA has considered positive, negative, secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

Reasonable alternatives

N15. The SEA Directive states, in Article 5(1) as part of the requirements for preparing an Environmental Report, that the Local Plan making process must identify, describe and evaluate reasonable alternatives that have been considered as part of the plan making process.

N16. There is no precise guide as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative. The Local Plan has identified reasonable alternatives for the plan at different stages of the plan making process.

Housing Number

N17. At the Regulation 18 stage, the Council considered four housing options as part of the strategic scenarios. The four options were for 8,586 dwellings, 9,361 dwellings, 11,898 dwellings or 14,298 dwellings.

N18. In response to comments raised during the Regulation 19 consultation, RBWM identified three additional housing number options which were identified to consider meeting the unmet housing need of Slough Borough. These were presented and assessed in the SA Addendum. These three options were for: a revised OAN of 778dpa (approximately 15,560 dwellings); the original OAN plus the lower end of Slough's expected unmet housing need of 6,000 homes (approximately 20,000 dwellings); and the original OAN plus the higher end of Slough's expected unmet housing need of 11,000 homes (approximately 25,000 dwellings).

N19. Housing options 1 and 2 were identified as having a likely major negative impact on housing provision, as the options would be unlikely to satisfy the identified housing need. Options 4, 5 6 and 7 were identified as resulting in a major positive impact in regard to housing and employment provision. Uncertain impacts in regard to water and flooding, cultural heritage, health and education were identified for Options 5, 6 and 7. All options would be likely to have negative impacts on air and noise pollution.

Spatial Strategy

N20. As part of the Regulation 18 consultation, the Council considered four strategic scenarios:

- **Option 1** – Urban sites delivering 8,586 homes;
- **Option 2** – Urban sites and brownfield sites delivering 9,361 homes;
- **Option 3** – Urban sites and brownfield sites, and low-level Green Belt release, delivering 11,898 homes; and
- **Option 4** - Urban sites and brownfield sites, and moderate Green Belt release, delivering 14,298 homes.

N21. In response to comments raised during the Regulation 19 consultation, RBWM has identified twelve additional spatial distribution options:

- **Option 5A** - strong intensification of urban areas of Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot;
- **Option 5B** - new garden village/ settlement of around 1,320 units;
- **Option 5C** - intensification of sites proposed for release from Green Belt on the edge of existing excluded settlements;
- **Option 5D** - release of additional Green Belt sites on edge of existing excluded settlements, predominantly around Maidenhead;
- **Option 6A** - new garden village/ settlement of around 6,000 units;
- **Option 6B** - intensification across all sites plus new garden village/ settlement of 1,500-2,000 units;
- **Option 6C** - intensification across all sites, including around railway stations plus new garden village/settlement of 4,000- 5,000 units;
- **Option 6D** - release of a larger number of employment sites plus new garden village/ settlement of 4,000-5,000 units;
- **Option 6E** - intensification across all sites plus release of additional Green Belt sites on edge of existing excluded settlements;
- **Option 7A** - new garden village/ settlement of around 11,000 units;
- **Option 7B** - intensification across all sites plus release of additional Green Belt sites on edge of existing excluded settlements plus new garden village/settlement of 2,000- 4,000 units; and
- **Option 7C** - intensification across all sites plus new garden village/settlement of around 8,000 units.

N22. The majority of the spatial options were identified as performing poorly against the SA Objectives on climate change, air and noise pollution, biodiversity, landscape, use of resources and waste. All spatial options apart from Options 1 and 2, would be expected to have a positive impact on housing provision across the borough. All options apart from option 6D would be expected to have positive impacts on economy and employment. Mixed, and sometimes uncertain, sustainability impacts were identified for water and flooding, health, community, transport and education.

Policies

N23. The first assessment of policies took place in 2016 as part of the Regulation 18 consultation. The Regulation 18 SA report appraised 57 draft policies. Reflecting on comments received during this consultation period, the Council produced 46 final policies which were assessed in the Regulation 19 SA Report in 2017. One policy on affordable housing was assessed within the SA Addendum in 2018. In response to the Regulation 19 consultation and issues raised during the examination hearings, the Council have further revised existing policies and created new policies. The final 48 policies have been appraised within this SA of the BLPSV-PC (see **Appendix B**).

Sites

- N24. Numerous reasonable alternative sites have been considered by the Council throughout the Plan-making process. As the preparation of a Local Plan is an iterative process, the Council has undertaken several 'Call for Sites' as part of the process of updating the HELAA. As a result, sites are added and removed from the site selection process regularly. As a result of this, further site assessment work has been undertaken at intervals throughout the process which aim to consider new sites and discount sites that are no longer considered in the process.
- N25. In the 2016 Regulation 18 SA Report, approximately 120 reasonable alternative sites and five strategic locations were assessed. Of these sites, 97 were selected for inclusion within the BLPSV and were assessed within the 2017 Regulation 19 SA report. A total of 15 additional sites were assessed as part of the SA Addendum in 2018.
- N26. The Council identified 54 reasonable alternative development sites to be assessed within the latest stage of the SA process. These sites have been assessed for their sustainability performance. The assessment findings are presented in **Appendix D**. Following this, the Council selected 40 sites as the preferred approach to development within the borough. These 40 sites have been assessed in **Appendix C**.

Selected Housing and Spatial Option

- N27. The SA concluded that housing option 4 (for 14,298 dwellings) was the best performing option for housing growth, as this option meets the housing requirements of the borough. The BLPSV-PC allocates sites for 14,240 dwellings.
- N28. Following the assessment of the 16 spatial options, the SA concluded that option 4 (focusing development towards urban sites and brownfield sites, and moderate Green Belt release) was the best performing option. The Council has taken this approach for the spatial strategy of the BLPSV-PC. The majority of development is focussed towards three strategic growth areas; Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot, and development proposals shall be focused on urban and brownfield sites where possible, with some release of Green Belt where appropriate.

Selected Policies

N29. Following comments received during the Regulation 19 consultations and issues raised during the examination hearings, the Council has revisited the policies of the Local Plan. The final policies within the BLPSV-PC are listed in **Table N.3** below.

Table N.3: Policies within the BLPSV-PC

Policy ref.	Policy Name
Strategic	
SP1	Spatial Strategy for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
SP2	Climate Change
Quality of Place	
QP1	Sustainability and Placemaking
QP1a	Maidenhead Town Centre Strategic Placemaking Area
QP1b	South West Maidenhead Strategic Placemaking Area
QP1c	Ascot Centre Strategic Placemaking Area
QP2	Green and Blue Infrastructure
QP3	Character and Design of new Development
QP3a	Building Height and Tall Buildings
QP4	River Thames Corridor
QP5	Rural Development
Housing	
HO1	Housing Development Sites
HO2	Housing Mix and Type
HO3	Affordable Housing
HO4	Gypsies and Travellers
HO5	Loss and Subdivision of Dwellings
Economy	
ED1	Economic Development
ED2	Protected Employment Sites
ED3	Other Sites and Loss of Employment Floorspace
ED4	Farm Diversification
Town Centres and Retail	
TR1	Hierarchy of Centres
TR2	Windsor Town Centre
TR3	Maidenhead Retail Centre
TR4	District Centres
TR5	Local Centres
TR6	Strengthening the Role of Centres
TR7	Shops and Parades Outside Defined Centres
TR8	Markets
Visitor and Tourism	
VT1	Visitor Development

Policy ref.	Policy Name
Historic Environment	
HE1	Historic Environment
HE2	Windsor Castle and Great Park
Natural Resources	
NR1	Managing Flood Risk and Waterways
NR2	Nature Conservation & Biodiversity
NR3	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
NR4	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
NR5	Renewable Energy
Environmental Protection	
EP1	Environmental Protection
EP2	Air Pollution
EP3	Artificial Light Pollution
EP4	Noise
EP5	Contaminated Land and Water
Infrastructure	
IF1	Infrastructure and Developer Contributions
IF2	Sustainable Transport
IF3	Local Green Space
IF4	Open Space
IF5	Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside
IF6	Community Facilities
IF7	Utilities

Selected Housing Allocations

N30. The Council has selected the following development proposals from the assessment of reasonable alternatives. **Table N.4** below lists the 40 allocated sites and provides an explanation for the selection of the sites. **Table N.5** provides an outline explanation as to why reasonable alternative sites were rejected. This justification was provided by the Council.

Table N.4: Reasons for selecting the 40 allocated sites

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
AL1	Nicholsons Centre	High priority location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. Parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Large site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead.
AL2	Land between	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. Needs to be considered as part of a

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
	High Street and West Street, Maidenhead	wider Maidenhead Town Centre area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking.
AL3	St Mary's Walk, Maidenhead	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Key connectivity site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead.
AL4	York Road, Maidenhead	High priority location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. Planning permissions and design are not advanced far enough to negate effectiveness of allocation. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking.
AL5	West Street Opportunity Area, Maidenhead	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Prominent site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Ascot.
AL6	Methodist Church, High Street, Maidenhead	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Prominent site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead. The community facilities will either need to be retained or a site in the Town Centre for alternative facilities will need to be found.
AL7	Maidenhead Railway Station	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Key gateway site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead.
AL8	Employment Allocation - St Cloud Gate, Maidenhead	Town Centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. Currently in employment use. This has been a site identified in our Employment topic paper as a potential site to deliver additional employment floorspace.
AL9	St Cloud Way, Maidenhead	Town centre brownfield site in high priority growth location free of Green Belt constraints and largely flood risk free. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered in conjunction with adjoining St Cloud's Way

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
		site and as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead Town Centre.
AL10	Maidenhead Retail Park, Stafferton Way, Maidenhead, SL6 1AA	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location. Free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Large prominent site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead.
AL11	Employment Allocation - Crossrail West Outer Depot, Maidenhead	Town Centre PDL site in priority growth location. Free of flooding. Currently in employment use. The site is next to the rail station and line and more suited to employment uses to help meet the identified need for more employment floorspace.
AL12	Land to east of Braywick Gate, Braywick Road, Maidenhead	Town centre PDL site in high priority growth location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Prominent site that should make a significant contribution to regeneration of Maidenhead. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Maidenhead.
AL13	Desborough, Harvest Hill Road, South West Maidenhead	Very large Green Belt site almost completely free of flooding constraints in South West Maidenhead strategic location. Makes low to moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and that a comprehensive and placemaking approach is taken that takes account of wider South West Maidenhead area.
AL14	Employment Allocation - The Triangle Site (land south of the A308(M) west of Ascot Road and north of the M4), Maidenhead	The Triangle Site (land south of the A308(M) west of Ascot Road and north of the M4), Maidenhead. This was initially identified as a safeguarded employment site and has been suggested in the Employment topic paper as a site to deliver additional employment floorspace, which is needed in the current plan period. Not suitable for housing as 35% of the site is in Flood Zone 2 and 40% in Flood Zone 3. Site is in Green Belt and only makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.
AL15	Green Infrastructure Allocation - Braywick Park, Maidenhead	This site is allocated as a strategic site in the Green Belt. The new leisure centre replacing the Magnet leisure centre is currently in development in the west of the site. The site is allocated to be a multifunctional space providing a sports hub, public park, a school and enhancement of the local nature reserve and SSSI.
AL16	Ascot Centre, Ascot	High priority location free of flooding. Part of site in Green Belt but passed Edge of Settlement Study. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Ascot.

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
AL17	Shorts Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Facility, St Georges Lane, Ascot	High priority location free of flooding constraints adjacent to Ascot station. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking in Ascot. In Green Belt but passed Edge of Settlement Study (EoSS).
AL18	Ascot Station Car Park, Ascot	Priority location free of flooding constraints and part of Ascot placemaking area. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable effective placemaking in Ascot.
AL19	Englemere Lodge London Road Ascot	Small Green Belt site on edge of Ascot free of flooding constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release and delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL20	Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot	PDL Green Belt location free of flooding constraints. Planning permissions and design are not advanced far enough to negate effectiveness of allocation. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL21	Land west of Windsor, north and south of A308, Windsor	Large Green Belt site that makes only a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, largely free of flooding constraints (97% in Flood Zone 1), in Windsor growth location. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and that a comprehensive and placemaking approach is taken that takes account of wider Windsor growth area.
AL22	Squires Garden Centre Maidenhead Road Windsor	Growth location on edge of Windsor. When assessed in the EoSS, it was part of a large site that made a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Largely free of flooding constraints (92% in Flood Zone 1). Planning permissions and design are not advanced far enough to negate effectiveness of allocation. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable comprehensive development and effective placemaking for Windsor growth location.
AL23	St. Marks Hospital, Maidenhead	Small urban site based to the west outside of Maidenhead Town Centre. No planning permission in place. None of the site is located within the Green Belt. The site is also wholly within Flood Zone 1. The site would involve the relocation of existing community facilities before the current ones are redeveloped. There are no further absolute or essential constraints on the site.
AL24	Land east of Woodlands Park Avenue and north of Woodlands Business Park, Maidenhead (West)	Large Green Belt site free of flooding constraints on edge of Maidenhead offering low/moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Site a mix of Grades 2 and 3 agricultural land quality. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure that a comprehensive and placemaking approach is taken.
AL25	Spencer's Farm, Maidenhead	Large Green Belt site on edge of Maidenhead and only makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
		yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site. Largely free of flooding (84% in Flood Zone 1).
AL26	Land between Windsor Road and Bray Lake, south of Maidenhead	Small Green Belt site and makes low to moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Largely free of flood risk (79% in Flood Zone 1). No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release and delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL27	Green Infrastructure Allocation - Land south of Ray Mill Road East, Maidenhead	This site provides important visual amenity to the surrounding residential area and should be retained as a local green space (pocket park). The site was previously allocated for housing, but it has severe flood risk (parts in Flood Zone 3), and therefore the site is an important flood alleviation site. Due to proximity to river corridor and nearby lake the site is of high value to various wildlife including: birds, bats, frogs and hedgehogs.
AL28	Green Infrastructure Allocation - Land north of Lutman Lane, Spencer's Farm, Maidenhead	This area is connected to the green way, and the strand water (a Local Wildlife Site), towards the east. The site thrives in an existing network of green infrastructure which should be preserved and has potential to be enhanced. The site is also a flood risk area (Flood Zone 3) and so it is an important flood alleviation buffer to the proposed development in the west. There is an important habitat woodland area in the north and a sporting facility in the south east that should be retained. Originally this allocation was part of the housing allocation site (it would not have had housing on it) but added to the complexity of a mainly housing site. It was felt more appropriate to allocate this site as part of the GI network separately. Although this is the use the land was intended for.
AL29	Minton Place, Victoria St, Windsor	Brownfield town centre site free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. Large mixed-use site in Windsor town centre. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure it is considered as part of a wider area to enable effective placemaking in Windsor.
AL30	Windsor and Eton Riverside Station Car Park	Town centre location free of Green Belt constraints. Largely free of flood risk (72% in Flood Zone 1). No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and constraints are adequately dealt with.
AL31	King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor	Small urban site based to the eastern side of Windsor Town. No planning permission in place and no design seen through the development management process. None of site is located within the Green Belt. The site is also wholly within Flood Zone 1. The site would involve the relocation of existing community facilities before the current ones are redeveloped. There are no further absolute or essential constraints on the site.
AL32	Sandridge House, London Road, Ascot	Site is a small urban fringe site to the southern edge of north Ascot, opposite Englemere Lodge and Heatherwood Hospital. The site has an application currently pending consideration but has not yet been permitted. None of the site is located within the Green Belt. The site is also wholly within Flood Zone 1. There are no further absolute or essential constraints on the site.

Allocation Ref	Site Name	Reasons for selection (provided by RBWM Council)
AL33	Sunningdale Broomhall Centre	Small part urban/part Green Belt site free of flood risk. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release and delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL34	White House, London Road, Sunningdale	Settlement location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and supply of small sites for SME.
AL35	Sunningdale Park, Sunningdale	Large Green Belt site free of flooding constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site and to ensure that a comprehensive and placemaking approach is taken that incorporates the adjoining proposed green infrastructure site.
AL36	Gasholder Station Whyteladyes Lane, Cookham	Settlement location free of flooding and Green Belt constraints. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL37	Land north of Lower Mount Farm Long Lane Cookham	Large Green Belt site free of flooding constraints on edge of Cookham offering moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Site of a mix of Grades 2 and 3 agricultural land quality. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL38	Land East of Strande Park, Strande Lane, Cookham, Maidenhead	Small Green Belt site on edge of Cookham offering low contribution to Green Belt purposes. almost all of the site is in Flood Zone 1. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release and delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL39	Land at Riding Court Road and London Road Datchet	Small Green Belt site almost wholly in Flood Zone 2 on edge of Datchet offering moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Much of site is Grade 1 agricultural land. However, all of site is in Flood Zones 1 and 2 and site is currently being used as a construction site for smart motorway programme with significant areas of land clearance to allow for portacabin foundations and access routes. Land considered to be urbanised and agricultural land value likely to have been significantly diminished. No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release and delivery of specific objectives for site.
AL40	Land to East of Queen Mother Reservoir	Small Green Belt site making a lower contribution to Green Belt purposes. . The majority of site is in Flood Zone 1 (66%). No planning permission in place so parameters for development and design not yet set through the development management process. Allocation required to ensure Green Belt release, delivery of specific objectives for site and supply of sites suitable for delivery by Small or Medium Enterprises.

Table N.5: Outline of reasons for rejecting reasonable alternative sites

HELAA Ref	Site Name	Reasons for rejection (provided by RBWM Council)
0031a	Land Rear of 99 To 119 Whyteladyes Lane Cookham Maidenhead (Land West of Whyteladyes Lane)	Green Belt location rejected by EoSS. Greenfield site.
0095	Summerleaze Lake, Summerleaze Road, Maidenhead	None of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and 100% of site is in Flood Zone 3a. No justification given for floating residential development on the site.
0112	Maidenhead Lawn Tennis Club, All Saints Avenue, Maidenhead	Would result in loss of sporting facilities/community space
0115	School on College Avenue, Maidenhead	Would result in loss of community/education facilities.
0127	Land at Oakfield Farm, Ascot	Isolated Green Belt location. Not included in EoSS. Development would be contrary to spatial strategy. Also constrained by ancient woodland. Eastern parts of the site are located within the Wells LWS and the Windsor Great Park and Woodlands biodiversity opportunity area.
01299b	St Edmunds House, Ray Mill Road West, Maidenhead, SL6 8SB	Site too small for allocation and partly affected by 10m (Area Tree Preservation Order) buffer.
0132a	Land at Ascentia House, Lyndhurst Road, Ascot, SL5 9ED	Existing employment site that needs to be retained in employment use.
0146a	The Frith, Brockenhurst Road, South Ascot, SL5 9HA	Site too small for allocation
0222	Sawyers Close, Windsor	Promoted for housing but none of site is in Flood Zone 1, 11.9% in Flood Zone 3a.
0250a	Land at Water Oakley Farm	PDL in Green Belt where intensification of development proposed. Isolated part greenfield, part previously developed site in Green Belt.
0260	Land North and East of Tithe Barn Drive (Land Rear of 55 To 65 Windsor Road Maidenhead SL6 2DN)	Too small for allocation. Developable area too restricted by constraints such as flooding and TPO.
0297	Moorbridge Court, 29-41 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead	Loss of employment site. Site has prior approval granted for office to residential conversion.
0298	Liberty House, 43-53 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead	Loss of employment site. Site has prior approval granted for office to residential conversion.
030a	The Old Orchard, Dedworth Road, Windsor	Greenfield Green Belt with majority in priority habitats.
0320	Philo Field, Cookham	Isolated greenfield Green Belt location not included in EoSS. Development would be contrary to spatial strategy.
0356	32 Peascod Street Windsor SL4 1EA	Existing employment site that needs to be retained in employment use.

Purpose and content of the SA of the BLPSV-PC

- N31. The SA of the BLPSV-PC assesses the preferred approach to growth within the Plan area and summarises the process of SA undertaken to reach this point.
- N32. The purpose of this SA of the BLPSV-PC is to:
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely sustainability effects of the Local Plan proposals and their reasonable alternatives;
 - Inform the Council's decision making and preparation of the Local Plan; and
 - Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA.
- N33. The SA of the BLPSV-PC contains:
- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Local Plan and its relationship with other relevant plans, programmes and strategies;
 - Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the Plan area;
 - The SA Framework of objectives and indicators against which the Local Plan has been assessed;
 - The appraisal of reasonable alternatives identified during the plan making process to date, including an explanation about how they were identified, and either rejected or selected;
 - The likely effects of the Local Plan on sustainability;
 - Recommendations for measures to reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects which may arise as a result of the Local Plan; and
 - A description of relevant monitoring requirements.
- N34. **Appendix A** of this report sets out the SA Framework, which has been used as a basis for the assessment process.
- N35. **Appendix B** sets out the appraisal of policies in the BLPSV-PC.
- N36. **Appendix C** presents the appraisals of site allocations in the BLPSV-PC.
- N37. **Appendix D** sets out the appraisal of the reasonable alternative sites.
- N38. **Appendix E** presents a review of relevant plans and programmes.

Likely significant effects on the environment

N39. Development proposals in the BLPSV-PC have been assessed for their sustainability impacts, the results of which are presented in **Appendices B and C**. The assessment of the BLPSV-PC was undertaken using a combination of empirical evidence, and to a lesser extent, professional judgement. The findings are presented in matrix format and are accompanied by a commentary on identified effects. The matrix is not a conclusive tool. Its main function is to show visually the sustainability performance of the BLPSV-PC. The assessment commentary should be relied on to interpret the matrix findings.

N40. The paragraphs below provide a summary of the potential negative impacts of the BLPSV-PC.

Air

N41. The BLPSV-PC proposes the development of 14,240 dwellings, which would be expected to increase the local population by 33,606. This increase in population would be expected to result in an increase in traffic-related emissions and consequently, further decrease air quality within RBWM. This would be expected to have negative implications in terms of human and ecosystem health.

N42. Of the estimated population increase of 33,606, approximately half of new residents would be located within 200m of a main road, and 15 allocated sites are located within 200m of AQMAs. New residents in these locations could potentially be exposed to reduced air quality associated with nearby main roads and AQMAs.

N43. Although there are several policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC which aim to reduce air pollution in the Plan area, these would not be expected to fully mitigate the anticipated adverse impacts associate with air pollution.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

N44. There are several Natura 2000 sites located in and around the borough, namely; Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC, Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham SAC, Burnham Beeches SAC, Thames Basin Heaths SPA and South West London Waterbodies SPA and Ramsar site. In the absence of the completed HRA, it is uncertain if the

proposed development within the BLPSV-PC would result in adverse impacts on designated biodiversity sites in regard to public access and disturbance, hydrological change and air quality. On a precautionary basis, it has been assumed that there would be a residual adverse effect on surrounding internationally designated biodiversity sites.

- N45. The proposed development within the BLPSV-PC would be likely to result in the loss of approximately 176.5ha of previously undeveloped land. This could potentially result in the loss of priority habitats and increase the risk of fragmentation of the ecological network. Multiple policies and site proformas ensure development proposals incorporate provisions for green and blue infrastructure, which would be expected to help mitigate the loss of biodiversity associated with the proposed development of 14,240 dwellings.

Climatic factors

- N46. The development proposed within the BLPSV-PC would be likely to result in the loss of 176.5ha of previously undeveloped land. In addition, development proposals could potentially result in the loss of trees and hedgerows. Multiple policies and site proformas aim to ensure that development proposals incorporate provisions for green and blue infrastructure. Green infrastructure is vital in helping to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, with vegetation acting as a natural carbon sink.

- N47. The BLPSV-PC proposes the development of at least 14,240 dwellings. It is estimated that this would increase the local population by 33,606 residents, and subsequently, result in an increase in local carbon emissions by approximately 22.5%. The policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC aim to promote energy efficient buildings and the reduction of transport-related emissions. However, these policies would not be expected to fully mitigate the anticipated adverse impacts on the climate. However, it would be expected that over time, advances in technologies and alternative solutions to energy generation would help to reduce this adverse impact, to some extent.

Cultural heritage

- N48. The borough has a rich cultural heritage, with multiple landmarks of national significance, including Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park. There is a broad range of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments,

Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas throughout the borough. Several sites are coincident with heritage assets. In addition, there are numerous archaeological features that have been identified within the Plan area. Through the policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC, it would not be anticipated that the proposed development would result in adverse impacts on nearby heritage assets.

Health

N49. There are several hospitals located in and around the borough. All site allocations are located within a sustainable distance to one or more these hospitals. Several of the site allocations are located outside a sustainable distance to a GP surgery or leisure centre. Policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC aim to improve sustainable transport options within RBWM, which would in turn be expected to improve residents' access to these essential healthcare services. In addition, the BLPSV-PC aims to ensure that there is increased provision of green infrastructure and open space throughout the Plan area. This would be expected to ensure all residents have good access to outdoor space for physical exercise, which also has benefits for mental health and wellbeing. The BLPSV-PC includes site allocations which include the provision for community facilities. This would be expected to have benefits in relation to community cohesion, by facilitating interactive and vibrant communities.

N50. Nevertheless, the introduction of 33,606 new residents under the BLPSV-PC would be expected to increase vehicle emissions in the Plan area, with adverse implications for human health, in particular, increasing the risk of respiratory diseases. Policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC would not be expected to fully mitigate the adverse impacts associated with air pollution.

Landscape

N51. The majority of the development proposed within the BLPSV-PC is directed towards Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot. Therefore, the proposed development would be likely to be in-keeping with the local townscape and adverse impacts on the landscape would be expected to be minimal. Where development proposals could potentially result in adverse impacts, the policies and site proformas of the BLPSV-PC aim to mitigate some of these impacts through: ensuring development is of high-quality design; the incorporation of vegetation buffers; and, ensuring appropriate transition into the countryside. However, residual adverse

effects would still be expected in regard to landscape character and tranquillity.

Population and material assets

N52. The BLPSV-PC proposes the development of at least 14,240 homes and 11,200 new employment opportunities across the borough. This would be expected to satisfy the identified requirement for dwellings and employment floorspace across the Plan area.

N53. The development of 14,240 homes would be likely to increase the local population by 33,606. This would, in turn, be expected to increase capacity pressures on local services. Some site allocations within the BLPSV-PC are proposed for the development of new local services and facilities, which would be expected to help mitigate this increased demand. In addition, many of the policies and site proformas aim to ensure there is improved access to services and facilities, either via improved public transport or enhanced pedestrian and cycle networks.

N54. The proposed development within the BLPSV-PC would be likely to result in an increase in household waste generation in the Plan area. Policies and site proformas aim to encourage recycling, however, there is little scope for the Plan to reduce the volume of waste produced.

Soil

N55. The proposed development within the BLPSV-PC could potentially result in the development of 176.5ha of previously undeveloped land. This would be expected to result in the permanent and irreversible loss of soil resources, including best and most versatile (BMV) land. Soil provides essential services, including nutrient cycling, abating flood risk, filtering water and carbon storage. Direct loss of soil through construction would be expected to reduce these essential ecosystem services. Although the BLPSV-PC focuses development towards urban and brownfield sites and contains many policies which aim to reduce the quantity of development on previously undeveloped land, a residual adverse effect on local soil resources would be expected.

N56. Several site allocations are also located within Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs), where development could potentially prevent the extraction of sand and gravel resources. Site proformas within the BLPSV-PC would

aim to ensure development proposals within MSAs extract sand and gravel resources prior to development.

Water

N57. The majority of the site allocations are located within Flood Zone 1. However, eight of the sites are partially located within Flood Zones 2, 3a or 3b. In addition, approximately half of the sites are located in areas determined to be at low, medium or high risk of surface water flooding. Approximately 176.5ha of land proposed for development within the BLPSV-PC would be located on previously undeveloped land. This development would be expected to result in the loss of vegetation, which is known to help reduce surface water runoff, reduce the speed of flow and help reduce the risk of flooding. In addition, there would be an expected increase of 33,606 new residents across the borough, resulting in increased pressure on water resources.

N58. Policies and information within site proformas would be likely to help mitigate some of the identified adverse impacts in relation to water and flooding. Where a site allocation is located within Flood Zones 2, 3a or 3b, the associated site proforma specifies that development on site shall be directed to areas not at risk of fluvial flooding. The incorporation of SUDS and increased provision of green infrastructure would also be expected to help prevent the exacerbation of localised flooding and prevent a reduction of water quality.

Residual positive effects

N59. The SA has identified a range of positive and negative potential impacts of the BLPSV-PC on the objectives of the SA Framework, and consequently the topics in the SEA Directive.

N60. Some of the likely positive effects of the Local Plan are listed in **Table N.6** below.

Table N.6: Likely residual positive sustainability effects of the BLPSV-PC

Residual positive effects

Housing provision

1

The proposed development of 14,240 dwellings across the Plan area would be expected to make a significant and positive contribution towards meeting the identified local housing need. Policies within the BLPSV-PC would be expected to ensure that residential developments meet the needs of the local community, including affordable housing and gypsy and traveller accommodation.

Residual positive effects

	Employment opportunities
2	The proposed development of 11,200 new employment opportunities through development allocations within the BLPSV-PC, would be expected to make a significant and positive contribution to the employment needs of residents and to the local economy. Policies within the BLPSV-PC help to ensure that a range of types and sizes of employment land are available.
	Green Network
3	The BLPSV-PC aims to ensure that development proposals incorporate green infrastructure where possible. Although the proposed development would be expected to result in the loss of greenfield land and associated biodiversity to some extent, policies and site proforma information help to ensure that green and blue infrastructure provisions are retained and enhanced across the Plan area.
	Transport and Accessibility
4	Policies and site proforma information within the BLPSV-PC would be anticipated to improve residents' access to sustainable transport options, including frequent bus services and improved pedestrian and cycle networks. This would be likely to help improve access to local services and facilities and help reduce personal reliance on car use.
	Physical and Mental Health
5	Although some new residents within the borough could potentially be located outside a sustainable distance to healthcare facilities, policies within the BLPSV-PC would be likely to help improve access to these services via sustainable transport routes. In addition, the increased provision of open space and green infrastructure within the borough would be expected to help facilitate healthy and active lifestyles, increasing access to space for physical exercise as well as areas with mental wellbeing benefits.
	Community Cohesion
6	The site allocations and policies within the BLPSV-PC would be likely to increase the provision of community facilities within the Plan area. This would be expected to help facilitate vibrant and interactive communities, and lead to a greater sense of place within settlements.

Residual adverse effects

- N61. The Council have presented policies and site proformas in the BLPSV-PC which would be expected to help mitigate some of the adverse impacts of development on sustainability. However, there remain a number of residual adverse effects expected as a result of the Local Plan. These are presented in **Table N.7** below.

Table N.7: Likely residual adverse sustainability effects of the BLPSV-PC

Residual adverse effects

	Reduction in air quality with implications for human health and/or ecosystems
1	Due to the volume of development proposed, an increase in traffic flows and subsequent reduction of air quality would be expected to have residual adverse effects on human health. In addition, many new residents could potentially be located within 200m of a main road. Cumulatively, this would be expected to result in a reduction of local air quality, with implications for human and ecosystem health.

Residual adverse effects

2	<p>Increased pollutant emissions, including greenhouse gases</p> <p>An increase in pollutants including greenhouse gases would be expected following the development proposed within the BLPSV-PC. The introduction of 33,606 residents would be expected to increase traffic volumes and energy demand, which would be expected to result in an increase of pollutant emissions.</p>
3	<p>Threats and pressures to designated biodiversity sites</p> <p>In the absence of the completed HRA report, it is uncertain if the proposed development within the BLPSV-PC would result in adverse impacts on designated biodiversity sites in regard to public access and disturbance, hydrological change and air quality. As a precautionary approach, a residual adverse effect on surrounding internationally designated biodiversity sites would be likely as a result of the proposed development.</p>
4	<p>Increased greenhouse gas emissions</p> <p>The proposed development of 14,240 dwellings within the BLPSV-PC would be expected to increase carbon emissions in the Plan area by 22.5% (based on 2017 estimates). This increase would be expected to exacerbate the impacts of climate change within the borough.</p>
5	<p>Alteration of the landscape character</p> <p>The introduction of built form which does not compliment and respect the local distinctive character of existing landscapes and settlements would be likely to result in adverse impacts on the local landscape character. Some development proposals could potentially result in the loss of locally important landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows and walls.</p>
6	<p>Loss of tranquillity</p> <p>The majority of the proposed development within the BLPSV-PC is located within the urban settlements of Windsor, Maidenhead and Ascot. Development proposals could result in a loss of tranquillity of the surrounding landscape as a consequence of increases in noise and lighting.</p>
7	<p>Increased household waste generation</p> <p>The proposed development within the BLPSV-PC would be expected to increase household waste generation within the Plan area. Although policies and site proformas within the BLPSV-PC aim to increase recycling in the borough, there is little scope to reduce the quantity of waste generated per household.</p>
8	<p>Loss of soil resources, including BMV land</p> <p>Approximately 176.5ha of development allocated within the BLPSV-PC is located on previously undeveloped land. This would be expected to result in the permanent and irreversible loss of ecologically, and potentially agriculturally, important soil resources.</p>
9	<p>Impact on soil ecosystem services</p> <p>Soil provides a range of essential services to the local area, including nutrient cycling, abating flood risk, filtering water, filtering air, carbon storage and providing the basis for vegetation to flourish. The scale of development proposed within the BLPSV-PC would be expected to increase pressure on essential ecosystem services.</p>
10	<p>Increased demand for water</p> <p>In accordance with the 'Thames catchment abstraction licensing strategy'⁸, there is no water resource available for licensing in either the Thames catchment area. The introduction of 33,606 new residents would be expected to result in increased pressure on this already exhausted water resource.</p>

⁸ Environment Agency (2014) Thames catchment abstraction licensing strategy. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-catchment-abstraction-licensing-strategy> [Date Accessed: 03/10/19]

Monitoring

N62. The SA discusses the importance of a monitoring programme to help ensure that predicted adverse impacts of the BLPSV-PC are identified, investigated and potentially avoided, mitigated or compensated if prediction are incorrect. When opportunities for improving the sustainability performance of the BLPSV-PC and the Plan area arise over time, monitoring helps to ensure that these opportunities are recognised and taken advantage of.

N63. Monitoring has been prepared in relation to:

- Reduction in air quality;
- Increased emissions of greenhouse gases;
- Alteration of the landscape character
- Loss of tranquillity;
- Increased household waste generation;
- Loss of best and most versatile land;
- Loss of soil resource;
- Increased stress of water resources; and
- Increased pressure on ecosystem services.



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