

Foreword

South Bucks District is renowned for the character of its high quality environment and landscape. It is a great place to live and do business. Working closely with its partners, South Bucks District Council is committed to protecting the character of its towns, villages and countryside, whilst enabling appropriate new development to support its local communities.

The South Bucks Core Strategy has a fundamental role to play in managing the scale, form and broad location of future development in the District over the next twenty years. It addresses important local issues, including the ways in which the special character of our towns and villages can be maintained and enhanced, the need for more affordable housing and protection of the Green Belt. It also aims to make a positive contribution towards tackling climate change.

The broad policy framework established in this Core Strategy will be further developed through the preparation of other Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Development Briefs for individual sites. Together, these documents will provide an effective means of managing development in South Bucks District - ensuring that new housing and other forms of development are designed to a high standard, appropriate to their surroundings and maximise the benefit to their local community.



Councillor Roger Reed
Cabinet Member
Sustainable Development and Local Development Framework

3.6 DEVELOPMENT SITES

3.6.1 This Core Strategy identifies three significant development sites in the Green Belt, where comprehensive redevelopment would offer the potential to address existing planning problems:

- Wilton Park, Beaconsfield (Core Policy 14)
- Mill Lane, Taplow (Core Policy 15)
- Court Lane, Iver (Core Policy 16)

3.6.2 These sites are not strategic allocations, as although they are large in South Bucks terms (and their redevelopment would contribute towards meeting the Core Strategy objectives), they are not central to delivery of the Spatial Strategy. Furthermore, there is some uncertainty over the timing and availability of these sites for redevelopment. As a consequence, the sites have been termed "Opportunity Sites". This status recognises the

opportunities for improvement presented by the three sites, and sets the broad policy framework to inform their future redevelopment - ensuring the opportunities for improvement are maximised, if and when redevelopment occurs.

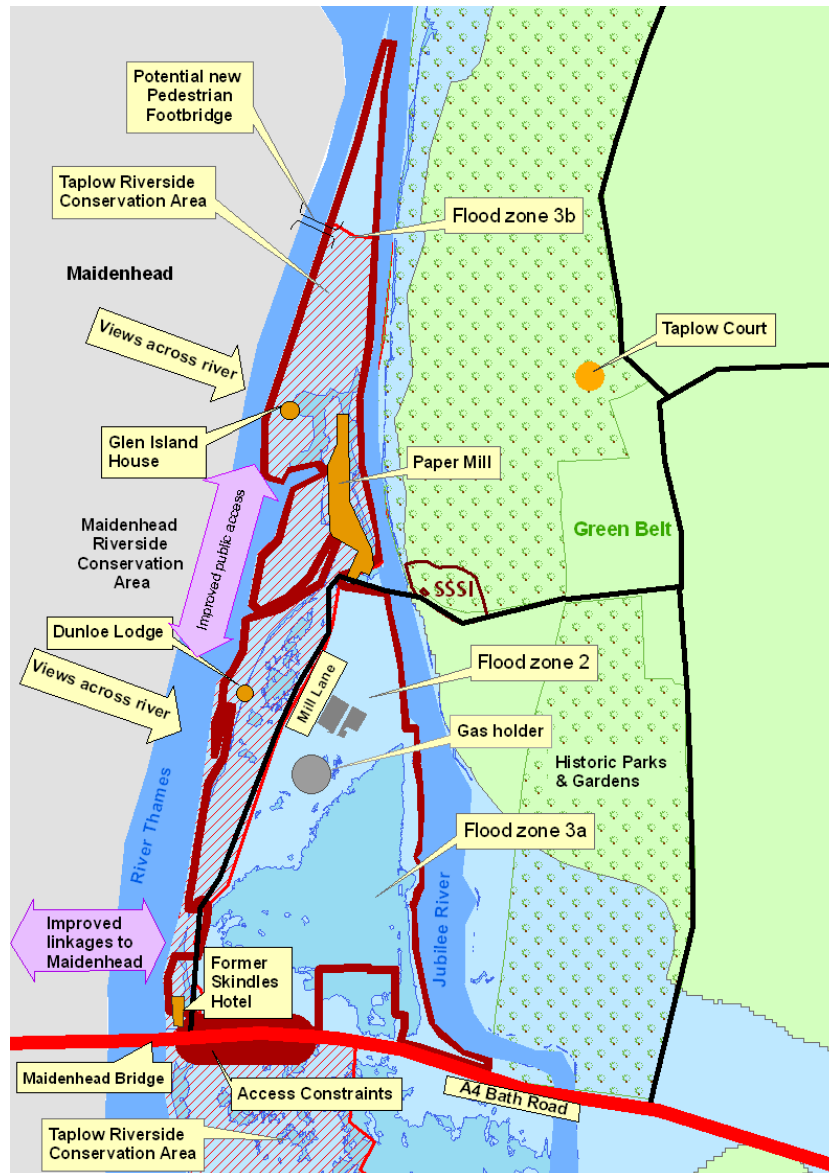
- 3.6.3 Having regard to their size and characteristics and to enable appropriate redevelopment on the Opportunity Sites, they have been designated as Major Developed Sites (MDS) in the Green Belt, in accordance with PPG2: Green Belts.
- 3.6.4 The Court Lane Opportunity Site sits within a wider Opportunity Area. The South of Iver Opportunity Area has been identified in this Core Strategy to recognise the need for a more comprehensive approach to tackling local planning problems (principally the impact of HGV movements through Iver Village and Richings Park).
- 3.6.5 There may well be other significant development proposals that come forward over the Plan period, on sites not identified in the Core Strategy (or in another Development Plan Document). Core Policy 17 provides the overarching framework for consideration of such schemes, and requires developers to prepare Development Briefs in consultation with key stakeholders and the local community, prior to submission of a planning application.

CORE POLICY 15 - MILL LANE (Opportunity Site)

- 3.6.15 The Mill Lane site comprises approximately 23 hectares of land in a Green Belt location at Taplow, between the Thames and Jubilee rivers. It sits in an important historic landscape, overlooked by Taplow Court and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with several Registered Parks and Gardens nearby. The site is adjacent to the Grade 1 listed Maidenhead Bridge, and much of it is within the Taplow Riverside Conservation Area⁸⁵, which includes the Grade II listed Glen Island House. The entire western boundary of the site adjoins the Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area. Within this important historic context, this site also has significant archaeological potential.
- 3.6.16 The site lies within a County Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Biological Notification Site. It is within an area of high pollution risk to controlled waters and has a history of contamination.
- 3.6.17 The site includes a range of established uses on previously developed land, including a former Paper Mill (which closed in 2006), a paper recycling depot, gas utilities, boatyards, the former Skindles Hotel and several Victorian buildings that were formerly used as 'Gentlemen's residences'. There are also significant areas of open land.

Map 5 - Mill Lane

⁸⁵ For further information, see The Taplow Riverside Conservation Area Character Appraisal, adopted 2007.



- 3.6.18 The site is in need of sensitive, comprehensive regeneration. Significant constraints include highway limitations (for example at the junction with the A4 Bath Road), flood risk concerns and the historic nature of the site. Flood risk concerns will limit the development potential of the site, particularly in the high flood risk areas⁸⁶.
- 3.6.19 In accordance with national guidance⁸⁷, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Levels 1 and 2) has been produced and the sequential and exception tests⁸⁸ have been applied to this site to assess its suitability for development. The site passes the

⁸⁶ Over half of the site is situated within Flood Zone 2 (medium probability) with some areas falling within Flood Zone 3a (high probability) and 3b (the functional floodplain), particularly at the northernmost part of the site.

⁸⁷ PPS25, Development and Flood Risk.

⁸⁸ See PPS25 paragraph 16 onwards and Annex D for explanations of the sequential and exception tests.

sequential test, as redevelopment is essential to deliver much needed regeneration and sustainable development for the benefit of the local community. It also passes parts a) and b) of the exceptions test. In order to pass part c), a site specific Flood Risk Assessment will need to be prepared by the developer, demonstrating, to the satisfaction of the Council and the Environment Agency, that the development will be safe and reduce flood risk overall, in line with the Level 2 SFRA criteria. More details on this justification are given in the Sustainability Appraisal report.

- 3.6.20 Redevelopment of the site would present an opportunity to enhance its ecological riverside setting and preserve the existing natural river banks to the Thames. In so doing, redevelopment must ensure retention and, where possible, an increase in biodiversity resources associated with the river environs (in accordance with Core Policy 9). There is also an opportunity to provide enhanced open space, recreation and public access to the rivers and improvements to public transport and pedestrian / cycling infrastructure.
- 3.6.21 Developers must clearly demonstrate that there is adequate infrastructure to serve the site, including water and sewerage capacity.

Core Policy 15: Mill Lane (Opportunity Site)

The Mill Lane Opportunity site as defined on the Proposals Map is identified as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt.

A comprehensive, conservation-led approach must be taken to the regeneration of the site, with a high-quality mix of development, watercourses and parkland. Suitable uses on the site would include residential, commercial development (for example B1 offices, a café/restaurant, a marina/boatyard), a hotel (broadly on the current Skindles site) and open space.

Any redevelopment proposals should:

- See the gasholder and sheds on the Severnside part of the site removed when possible.
- Result in no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and retain the largely open character of the site. On the former Mill site, a high quality design could result in development of a similar height to the existing building. Elsewhere, the height and massing of development should ensure a reduced visual impact.
- Be sympathetic to the historic nature of the site and its surroundings, including the Taplow Riverside and Maidenhead

Riverside Conservation Areas, and any remains of archaeological importance.

- Preserve, and where possible enhance, the character and appearance of the riverside setting, including views to and from the site.
- Protect, conserve and where possible enhance Maidenhead Bridge and Glen Island House, and their respective settings.
- Deliver a net gain in biodiversity resources and avoid unacceptable impacts on the nearby South Lodge Pit SSSI.
- Provide an acceptable means of access into the site, and minimise the impact of the new traffic generated on the A4 Bath Road.
- Improve public access to the River Thames through a new riverside walk with a new footbridge provided across the Thames to Maidenhead in the vicinity of Boulters Lock, unless demonstrated not to be feasible or viable.
- Ensure that there is no net loss of jobs, based upon the former range of activities on this Opportunity Site (circa 200 jobs).
- Guide new development towards areas of lowest flood risk within the site, with only water compatible development in Flood Zone 3b, with all other development in Flood Zone 2, with the exception of the redevelopment of the Skindles site (partly Flood Zone 3a) for a hotel.
- Adhere to the minimum requirements set out in the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk assessment for the site, which will include demonstrating a measurable reduction in the risk of flooding as a result of the development.
- Minimise the risk of groundwater pollution through the mitigation of the effects of historic contamination.
- Incorporate decentralised and renewable or low carbon technologies (for example, combined heat and power, or potentially water power), unless it is clearly demonstrated that this is not viable or feasible. This should ensure that at least 10% of the energy needs for the development are secured from these sources, in accordance with Core Policy 12.
- Demonstrate, prior to the granting of planning permission, that the necessary infrastructure can be put in place within agreed timescales.

A Development Brief must be produced for the site by the landowners / developers, in conjunction with the Council, prior to a planning application being submitted. The Development Brief will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.