

Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036

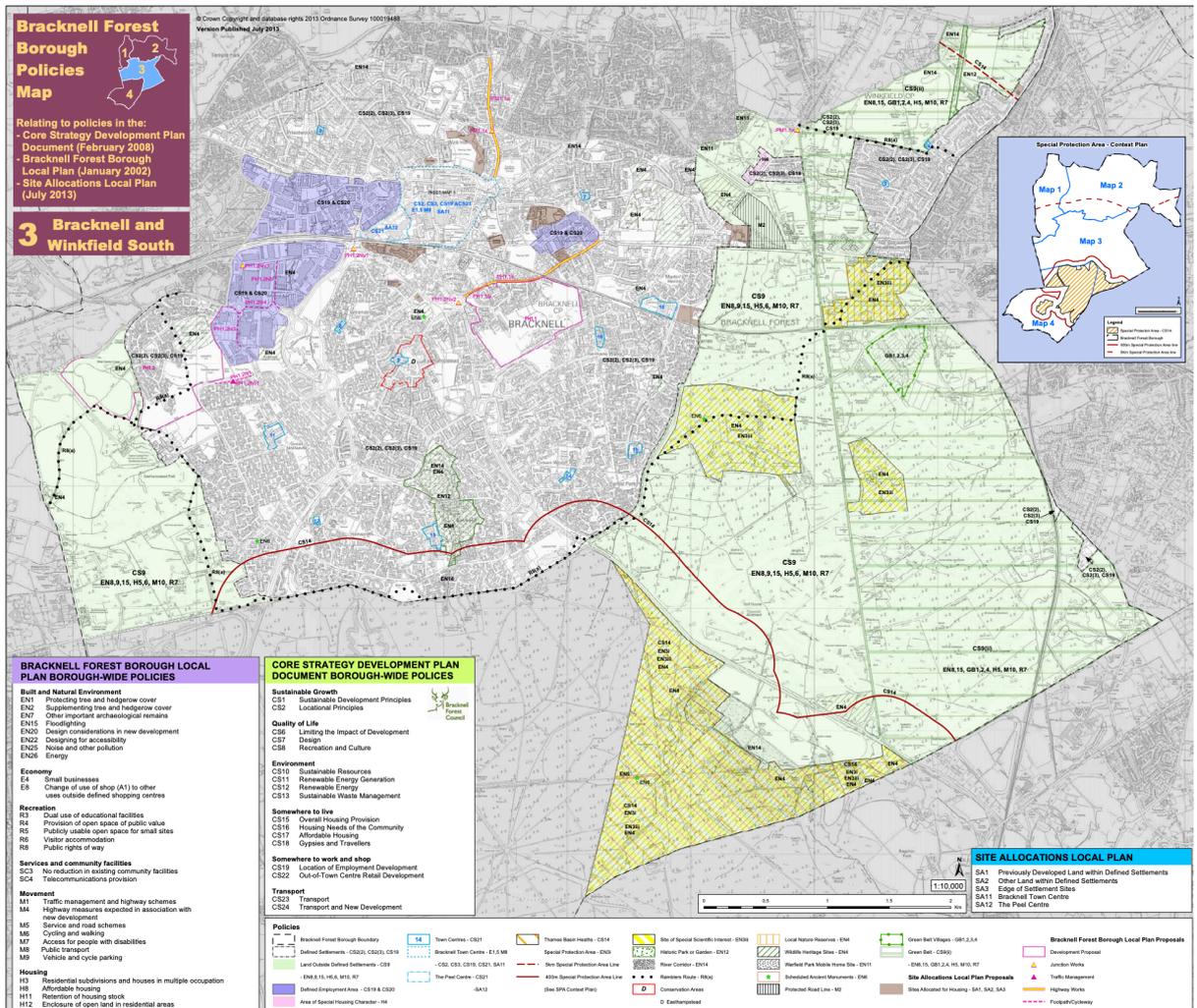
Mapping and Document Issues

Prepared by the Independent Examiner

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- 1) Following the public hearing, which I held on 14th May 2019, the Town Council opted for Option 1 of my suggestion for taking the examination forward, which I set out in the subsequent note, Interim Conclusions of the Independent Examiner. It has produced an Interim Report Version of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan which has removed much of the extraneous material from the plan document. This was sent to me on 24th October 2019.
- 2) This has enabled me to resume my examination of the Bracknell town neighbourhood plan, which is now based on this revised version of the document. The interim report version retains all the planning policies that were originally submitted, along with sections on policy context, policy intent and justification sections.
- 3) I have now been able to prepare an initial draft version of my report which is allowing me to come to firm conclusions. However, before I can finalise and submit my final report and recommendations, I need to address with the Town Council, the issue of the mapping.
- 4) Before addressing specific mapping requirements, I will make some general recommendations with regard to the document. Due to the size of the plan area, there are challenges in showing the whole of the town on an A4 page at a meaningful scale, maintaining sufficient clarity as to the spatial extent of the policies, so that the plan document, and the policies in particular, can be used with confidence, not least by decision-makers. The printing quality of the maps in the Interim Version is a significant improvement from the original submission, however, I remain unconvinced that showing plans at an A4 page is a practical basis for identifying exactly where policies will apply. To give one example, the open spaces map has a number of designations which are so small that it is impossible to accurately identify the extent of the proposed open space designations, even with the benefit of a magnifying glass!
- 5) I do not propose to recommend the removal of all the A4 plans from the document, as they have a value in showing the relative distribution of designated sites across the town. But these plans should not be relied upon as the accurate designation of the sites which are the subject of particular planning policy.
- 6) I now set out two suggestions as to how the mapping could be improved to a level that will allow me to recommend the plan to proceed.
 - a) The neighbourhood plan could be accompanied with a larger scale map which could accompany the plan at a larger scale than can be achieved on an A4 plan. Such a solution is common across local plans and has been used successfully with neighbourhood plans covering a large area. I have in mind that Bracknell and Winkfield South covers a similar area in Map 3 of the Bracknell Forest Policies Map, which was adopted in 2013. I attach a screenshot and it does allow sites to be defined with precision and for their relationship with adjacent buildings to be understood, even when viewed on a computer monitor.



b) An alternative solution and one that I would express a preference for, not least because it retains the A4 format of the plan, is to use the building blocks of the town's Character Areas and in particular their maps, which already appear in the document to show boundaries and viewpoints and photo positions. I am working on the basis that these Character Area collectively cover the entire plan area. My preferred suggestion is that all the proposed policy designations are shown on OS Base of the character area maps for that neighbourhood. These will define the extent of the areas covered by policies, with a high degree of accuracy, such as the protected open spaces, the Local Green Spaces, air quality management areas, neighbourhood shopping area etc. I envisage that the respective maps would sit together in the document and would be separate from the Character Assessment section of the plan. I would also request that the plans are numbered in a coherent basis so that they can be referred to in the wording of the individual policy. For example, the areas of Local Green Space "as shown on Plans 3, 6 and 8" (*number as appropriate*)

7) My ideal solution would be for all the policy designations to be shown on a single map for either the whole town or for each of the Character Areas so as to limit the number of separate policy maps in the plan. However, I do not wish to be too

prescriptive, as the primary objective is to clearly show the designations with clarity and avoiding clutter, so that householders, decision makers or land owners will be able to see what designations will be relevant to proposals in the immediate vicinity of their location that they are interested in.

- 8) Whatever solution the Town Council and the GIS team which assists it with the mapping, arrives at, I would wish to be consistent in the use of the term “Policy Map(s)” as I will be using that term in my report and recommendations on the wording of individual policies.
- 9) Moving away from the mapping issues, I readily acknowledge the lengths that the Town Council has gone to eliminate extraneous material from the plan document. The Interim Report Version is now entirely focussed on land use planning matters. I would hope that the Town Council considers that this would be an appropriate time to consolidate the sections into a single document, inserting page numbers and paragraph numbers. I cannot insist on it at this stage, as it is not a matter that affects my decisions regarding compliance with the basic conditions. However, if the plan is to proceed to a Referendum Version, which will be the version used by the public to vote upon at referendum, then it should be done at that stage, so any work at this stage, is unlikely to be abortive.

Mapping Requirements

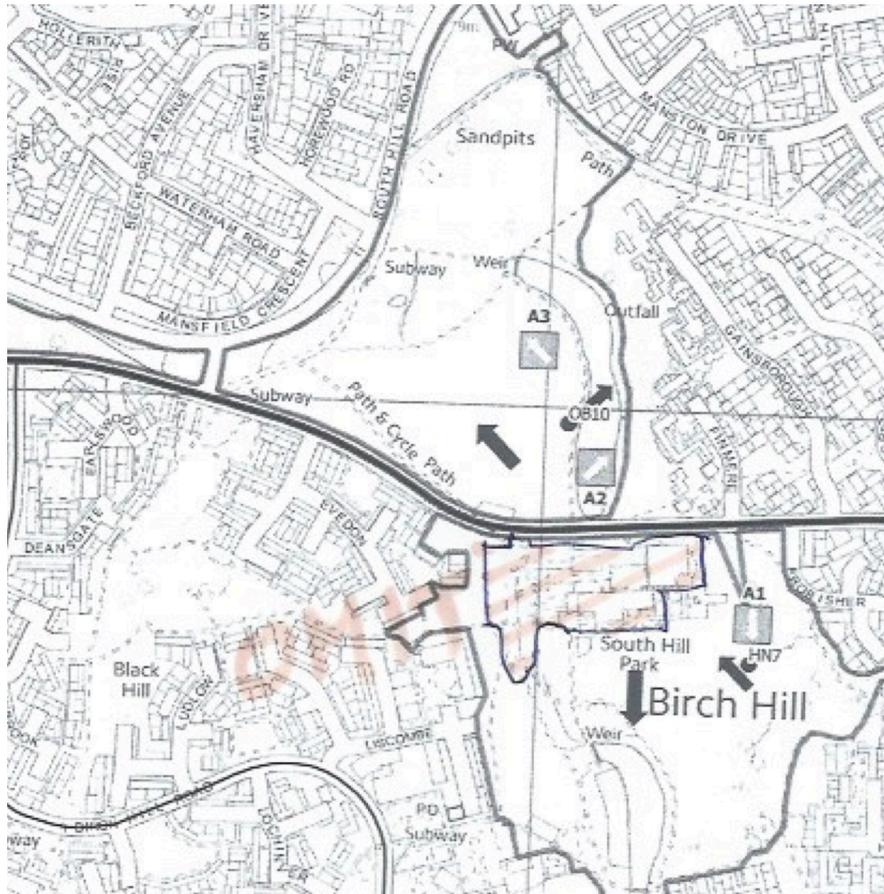
Policy ENV 1 and 2

- 10) My final report will be making a recommendation that the two polices covering active open space and passive open space are amalgamated, so there is a single designation of “Open Space of Public Value” (OSPV). Consequently I would request that the Policy Map, identifies the same green spaces shown collectively on the Map on page 2 of 34 of the Environment and Community section, but with the following exceptions.
 - a) I have reflected on the Bracknell Forest Council’s objections to the designation of Jubilee Gardens in the town centre and I will be recommending that it no longer be protected as OSPV so should be omitted. I will set out my reasons in my final report.
 - b) Similarly, the designations shown on the map include areas that are also proposed to be designated as Local Green Space (LGS), which is a higher level of green space protection as they are subject to Policy ENV 3.
 - c) The existing plan includes land beyond the Town Council’s boundary. These should not be included on the map as the neighbourhood plan is not legally able to designate land outside the plan area.

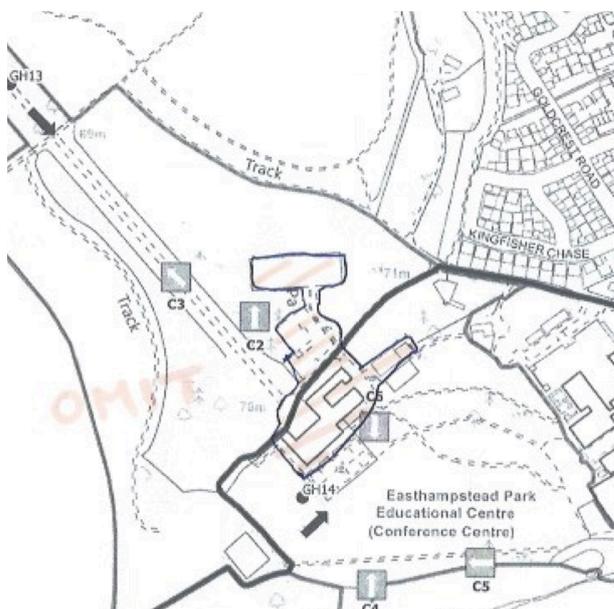
Policy ENV 3

- 11)The LGS areas should be shown in a different colour on the Policies Map to the OSPV. I will require amendments to the extent of the LGS as shown on Map A to

omit the buildings and car parking areas at South Hill Park, as per the attached sketch.



12) For the same reasons, the LGS at Easthampstead Park shown on Map C should also exclude the buildings and car parks as they are not green spaces.



Policy ENV4

13)I would like the avenue of trees to be marked on the Policies Map, but only to the extent that the trees form “an avenue”. The plans shown in the Appendix do not just show trees that constitute an avenue but also all other trees, and also whether or not they are covered by a TPO. Policy ENV 4 only offers protection to the trees that form an avenue, so it is important that a decision maker is clear as to which trees are covered by its protection.

Policy ENV 8

14)It would be helpful if the allotments were to be included on the Policies Map to show the full extent of the designated area rather than just its general location.

Policy ENV 10

15)The route of the watercourses and the culverted section to which Policy ENV 10 applies need to be shown on the Policies Map. As with the open spaces map, the watercourses, river corridors etc. outside the Town Council’s boundary should not be shown.

Policy ENV 11

16)The detailed boundaries of the two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) need to be defined on the Policies Map. The locations of the Air Monitoring Sites do not need to be shown as it is the extent of the zones that are important, as that is where Policy ENV11 applies.

Policy ENV 12

17)I will be recommending that the policy where development of South Hill Park Arts Centre is supported be reduced from that shown so that it should refer to the areas that are excluded from the Local Green Space allocation in Policy ENV3 as shown in the paragraph 11 above.

Policy ENV 14

18)The 11 community centres could helpfully be shown on the Policies Map.

Policy HE 1

19)The extent of the historic parks and gardens should exclude the buildings and car parking area at Easthampstead Park and South Hill Park in the same way that they are excluded from the historic parkland designation at Lily Hill Park.

Policy EC1

20)It will be necessary to show the boundaries of the Southern and Western Employment Areas, and the Eastern Road Area, in addition to the Town Centre Boundary on the Policies Map, so it is clear where Policy EC1 applies.

Policy EC3

21)The boundaries of the neighbourhood shopping areas should be defined on the Policies Map.

Policy EC4

22)The boundaries of Bracknell and Wokingham College and also Bracknell Open Learning Centre should be shown on the Policies Map.

Policy TR1

23)It would be helpful if the sections of the missing cycleway network referred to in the policy could be shown, especially the sections at Bull Lane/ Folders Lane, Sandy Lane and Shepherd's Lane.

Concluding remarks

24)I hope my expectations set out in this document are clear but if there are any questions or matters of clarification required I would be happy to comment further on my aspirations/expectations. Equally if the team preparing the plan(s), wish to share with me an early draft of their mapping to confirm that they have interpreted my intentions correctly, I would be happy to see a draft to avoid abortive work.

25)Once I receive the plans referred to above, I will be able to, in a relatively short time to issue my final examination report. I will not set a deadline for the receipt of the maps, as I appreciate that the Town Council will wish to liaise with other regarding the preparation of the document and it is difficult from my standpoint to know how long the work may take. It would assist my work programme if the Town Council could be given some indication when the plans are likely to be available.

26)I would be grateful if a copy of this note be placed on the respective websites.

John Slater BA (Hons), DMS, MRTPI

John Slater Planning Ltd

Independent Examiner to the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan

3rd February 2020