

# News from

## Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead & Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM)

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### **Major investment announcement welcomed Council invites tenders for town centre Masterplan Cross-party rejuvenation group formally launched**

Proposals for the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre have taken three significant steps forward this week.

As the Royal Borough began a tendering process for urban designers to draw up a Masterplan for Maidenhead, one of the world's largest property companies, ING Real Estate, announced it is proposing to invest more than £150m in a retail-led development linking the town centre to the station.

"This is very exciting news," said **council leader David Burbage**. "We are well on the way to bringing in experts to assist in re-designing a town centre for the future and we are delighted to be in discussions at this early stage with a respected developer for one of the key areas of the town."

This week also sees the formal launch of the **Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM)**, a cross-party group created by the council with an independent chairman charged with steering the regeneration.

Recognising the need for urgent progress, PRoM is pursuing actions on three fronts:

- Devising a Masterplan and strategy which will include Development Briefs for key areas
- Looking to progress one or more of these areas as a priority
- Ensuring that its work on a Vision for the town centre runs parallel to and informs the new Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan

As part of the process, council officers have held talks with a number of potential developers and investors – and the proposal announced by ING Real Estate is welcomed as a strong signal that Maidenhead is an attractive investment opportunity.

The need for regenerating the area bounded by Queen Street, Broadway and King Street was one of the main themes to emerge from public consultation and surveys. Since PRoM's formation it has been underlined as a main priority with a view to enhancing the retail offer and linking the town centre with the station.

ING has not yet made a formal presentation to PRoM or the council but its project would be retail-led. Discussions will take place in the next few weeks about the scheme, which could see the Nicholson's Centre linked to Queen Street, King Street and the station with shops, stores offices and housing.

**Bob Dulson, chairman of PRoM**, said: "This is just the kind of fillip we need and it proves there are serious players willing to get involved in the much-needed regeneration of Maidenhead."

At the same time, PRoM has been working on the draft Vision for the town centre and the council is now seeking tenders from urban planning companies for the preparation of a Masterplan.

Bob Dulson said: “Since PRoM was announced, lots of exciting ideas have been coming forward. Much valuable work has also been done by the council over the past year and PRoM, with the help of the planning department, has been busy pulling all this together into a brief for the design consultants.”

Importantly the Vision and Masterplan will be backed by a series of Development Briefs. These ‘action plans’ will provide more detailed guidance to determine the appropriate development for each of the areas that make up the town centre. They will also be built into the new Local Development Framework.

Bob Dulson added: “PRoM will try to stimulate a continuing constructive debate so that those who live and work in Maidenhead can have a proper say in defining its future. There will be formal and informal opportunities for the public to be involved, as the blueprint is prepared.

“One of the most important things for me was that PRoM had the support of both parties – and not only do we have their support but we have the participation of the leaders of both of the main political groups on the council.

“Our job now is to produce a cohesive plan for the town centre as a whole. Everyone seems to agree where the problem sites are and we need to address those, but they have to be seen as part of an overall scheme.

“We’re looking for a blueprint for a Maidenhead that properly befits, attracts and serves its residents – and hopefully excites them too.”

Cllr Burbage said: “This investment is the first sign that our town is starting to come back to life. PRoM is leading the way by developing a Masterplan that will make Maidenhead the envy of the region. This £150m is just the start of the good news – we expect other investors to follow ING; in short Maidenhead’s coming back!”

**Cllr Simon Werner, leader of the Liberal Democrat Group**, said: “Back in 2006 the council started the process of creating the partnership vision for Maidenhead. PRoM is a welcome next step in this process. I look forward to being part of the team that will regenerate Maidenhead and make it once again ‘The Jewel of the Thames’.”

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## **Contacts**

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## **Notes:**

1. ING Real Estate is an integrated real estate group focused on the development, financing and investment management of quality real estate in all major global markets with a total portfolio of over EUR 100 billion. ING Real Estate ranks among the world’s leading real estate companies and serves a broad client base from offices in 21 countries in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia.
2. ING Real Estate is part of ING Group, a global financial institution of Dutch origin offering banking, insurance and asset management to over 60 million private, corporate and institutional clients in more than 50 countries

3. PRoM is a cross-party group with a majority of lay members representing a wide cross-section of interests in the town, including Maidenhead and District Chamber of Commerce, Maidenhead Civic Society and Maidenhead Waterways Group. Its role is to find and promote agreed solutions for the regeneration of the town centre. It has an independent chair and makes recommendations to the Royal Borough's cabinet.
4. Appended are: PRoM's Brief for the Vision for Maidenhead, background information about PRoM and short biographies of its members.

## **Brief for the Vision**

As a first step in promoting a vision for the town centre, the Partnership has suggested the following:

A town with a distinctive heart

- easily accessible
- with safe, attractive surroundings
- distinguished buildings and open spaces

It should reflect

- Maidenhead's unique character
- Its history & Thames Valley setting

And meet the expectations of the community and visitors for the very best of environments.

The brief to the consultants suggests that Maidenhead's strengths and its attraction are based on its unique accessibility: It underlines the desire to make Maidenhead different from other local towns, rediscovering its character, emphasising its heritage and creating links to the station and the river. The primary aim will be to serve the needs of the community but there is also a desire to revive Maidenhead as a destination.

Specifically it includes:

- A unique sense of place with its own rediscovered character, a people friendly and safe environment.
- A town of walking dimensions, with attractive features, spaces and points of interest linking the shopping, recreational and transport areas.
- A modern, clean, bustling town that serves as a hub for all members of the community.
- A co-ordinated, identifiable high quality level of building design with a healthy mix of uses.
- Architecture and design that together make a series of statements about the achievements of Maidenhead and its inhabitants and reflect its unique history and setting.
- Distinct retail and civic centres, and a preponderance of mixed-use buildings, including housing.
- A town square providing a focus for community/cultural events and a large communal building, such as a conference hall, hotel, arts centre etc.
- An eye to the future in its transport arrangements, capitalising on its unique accessibility, with practical links to the riverside and to a transport hub, based on a re-vamped station.
- An integrated transport system centred on the railway station with less traffic in the town centre.
- Pedestrian areas will dominate the retail and entertainment quarters of the town with a 'cafe culture' that appeals to all ages at all times of the day.
- An improved retail / commercial / leisure offering using the town's excellent communications.
- Accessible, well located, well defined and connected open space.

- The restored waterway/York Stream to be a key central feature, providing potential for imaginative recreational and leisure uses

## **Background to PRoM**

PRoM is charged with coming up with solutions for Town Centre regeneration, including the creation of a vision and Masterplan and a strategy for achieving it. It will make recommendations to the RBWM Cabinet.

The Partnership is unusual in that it is a cross-party group with a majority of lay members and has an independent chair.

## Terms of Reference

- 1.1 PRoM aims to find and promote agreed solutions for the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre.
- 1.2 PRoM was set up by the controlling administration with opposition support. It is independently chaired and has a majority of lay (i.e. non-politician) members, representing a cross-section of community interests. It makes recommendations for action to the RBWM Cabinet. As such, therefore, it operates as an advisory body to the Council and its officers.
- 1.3 No funds are allocated directly to PRoM but it is supported by Council. It will also call on other groups, organisations and individuals within and without the council to inform the process.

## Objectives

- 2.1 PRoM's primary objective is to advise on:
  - a vision for the future of the Town Centre which has the support of the community
  - an ensuing Masterplan, and allied to this
  - a series of Development Briefs with priority areas defined

The Development Briefs will determine the kind of development appropriate for designated key areas.

- 2.2 Additionally, PRoM will be minded that its deliberations and decisions will be used to inform the preparation of the revised Core Strategy with regard to Maidenhead town centre.

## Representation

- 3.1 PRoM has representatives of the council's two main political parties but is independently chaired, with a view to continuity.
- 3.2 Its lay members are chosen to reflect the interests of the wider community. To ensure community involvement, all its members were invited – and are expected – to bring the widest cross-section of opinion to the table.

Bob Dulson	Independent chair
Cllr David Burbage (Council leader)	Constituents & Town Centre
Cllr Simon Werner (Lib-Dem Leader)	Constituents & Town Centre
Cllr Derek Wilson (Lead member, Planning)	Constituents, Planning & Housing
Cllr Norma Herdson (Lib-Dem)	Constituents & Arts
Nigel Cockburn (Civic Society)	Amenity & Residential
Richard Davenport (MWRG)	Leisure & Environment
Stuart Maconochie (Regeneration Group)	Critical Friend
Jane Wright (Nicholsons Centre)	Economy & Retail

Also contributing to PRoM are Stephen Brown (Head of Highways & Engineering) and Steph James (Maidenhead Town Manager) and the group is supported by Peter Hitchen (Planning Policy Manager) and Tim Slaney (Head of Planning). Council officers attend in an advisory capacity.

## Biographies

### **Bob Dulson**

Bob spent nearly a quarter of a century in public relations at the BBC, latterly as Head of Corporate Media Relations. Previously he'd been a journalist in the Midlands and in London, including a spell as a lobby correspondent in Westminster. Bob has been resident in Maidenhead for 22 years and, since early retirement in 2001, has immersed himself in local issues as a founder member of his local residents association in Riverside, as an officer of the River Thames Society and with the Civic Society where he was recently made Chairman. He is also a member of the Cookham Festival steering group.

### **Cllr David Burbage**

David Burbage lives in Bray, having moved to the Maidenhead area in 1987. He was first elected to Council in 2000, and was promoted to the Cabinet in 2001. He was elected as Leader of the Opposition during the last Liberal Democrat administration, and became Leader of the Council following the May 2007 local elections. Outside politics David is married with two children, both of whom attend local schools. He runs his own software business and is a graduate of Imperial College, University of London.

### **Cllr Simon Werner**

Brought up in Maidenhead, Simon went to local schools and is totally committed to the town. He became a councillor in 1993, first on Berkshire County Council and then at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead where he is currently leader of the opposition. In 2006, as Deputy Leader of the council, he kicked off the Partnership Vision for Maidenhead which has now developed into the PRoM. Simon is a campaign consultant – advising various groups on how to lead successful campaigns.

### **Cllr Derek Wilson**

Derek Wilson was born in Cliveden but moved to Maidenhead in 1976. He began his political career when he was elected to Cox Green Parish Council in 1987; he was elected to Council in 1991 and is currently member for Oldfield ward. He was promoted to the cabinet in 2000 and again in 2007 and is currently lead member for Planning and Housing. Derek is also the chairman of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel. Outside politics he works in the pharmaceutical industry and is a governor of Desborough School.

### **Cllr Norma Herdson**

Raised and educated in the vibrant northern cities of Liverpool and Manchester, Norma has spent 40 years of family and professional life in education in Maidenhead. Her public service has included fund-raising for the voluntary sector, delivering WEA community courses and performing in concerts to raise money for local churches. She is a member of the Carnival Committee and Chairman of Maidenhead Arts Council – an umbrella organisation consisting of 40 member groups to support and promote visual arts, music and drama in Maidenhead and District.

### **Nigel Cockburn**

Nigel is vice-chairman of the Maidenhead Civic Society and Chairman of its Strategy & Policy Group. He spent 30 years in accountancy, much of it with Price Waterhouse, as an auditor and latterly as a tax partner specialising in VAT, roles which as well as the usual clients brought him into contact with many charities and non-profit organisations. He took early retirement in 2000

since when his voluntary work has also included Hon Treasurer of the River Thames Society and Chairman of the Civic Society's Planning Group.

**Richard Davenport**

Richard is Chair of the Trustees of Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group. A resident of Maidenhead for 24 years, Richard is married with two grown up sons. As a graduate engineer and Chartered Management Accountant (FCMA), he spent most of his working life in the telecoms industry with BT and later O2 in a variety of corporate and operational finance roles. Prior to this he worked for Rover Group, British Steel and Ford of Europe. Now mostly retired, he relishes being part of the team tasked with developing the new Town Centre Plan, which he hopes will incorporate the restored waterways as a major feature.

**Stuart Maconochie**

Stuart is Chairman of the Maidenhead Regeneration Group, a pressure group comprising local businessmen and local interest groups. He has held a number of senior appointments in the business world including President of the Fragrance Division and a main board director of International Flavors and Fragrances Inc. (a NYSE company and a member of the Fortune 500). Since retiring from full-time employment in 2001 he has held a several non-executive directorships and chairmanships and is currently Chairman of NanoBioDesign Ltd., an Imperial College spin-out. Stuart was a resident of Maidenhead for 20 years but lives now in West London. He brings an informed independence to the group.

**Jane Wright**

Jane Wright has been managing The Nicholsons Centre in Maidenhead for 9 years. With many years working in the retail industry, Jane believes a strong retail offer is key to a successful and vibrant town centre and that loyal shoppers who support the local retailers are key to achieving this success.

Jane is Vice Chair of the Maidenhead Town Partnership and a member of the Maidenhead and District Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee.