

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** PLANNING COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 1st November 2017

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Paul Stimpson, Planning Policy Lead Officer  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 87 5820

**WARD(S):** ALL

### **PART I** **FOR DECISION**

#### **EMERGING PREFERRED SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH 2013-2036**

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Members' approval for the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan so that it can be taken forward for further testing and consideration.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to resolve that the emerging "Preferred" Spatial Strategy for the Review of the Local Plan which is set out in this report be approved for further testing

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

This will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

4. Housing.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The emerging spatial strategy will help deliver the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.
- Our residents will have access to good quality homes.
- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications

(b) Risk Management

| <i>Recommendation</i>   | <i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>  | <i>Mitigation(s)</i>       |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| That the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy be approved for testing. | Failure to progress the Local Plan will affect the Council's ability to plan for development in the most sustainable way. | Agree the recommendations. |

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications as a result of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equality impact issues

(e) Workforce

There are no specific workforce implications arising from this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

Introduction

- 5.1 Members will be aware that we are preparing the Review of the Local Plan for Slough which is intended to guide the future development of the Borough over the next twenty years.
- 5.2 Following on from the publication of the Issues and Options report and the consideration of the results of public consultation, it is now necessary to decide what the Council's "Preferred Spatial Strategy" should be.
- 5.3 Local Plans are required to address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change and set out the strategic priorities for the area. These include policies to deliver the homes and jobs needed as well as provision for supporting infrastructure in accordance with the principles and policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.4 The emerging "Spatial Strategy" set out in this report is therefore only one element of the Local Plan. Further work will have to be carried out to develop the policies that will be needed to implement it and guide development in the future.

- 5.5 The development of the strategy has, and will continue to be an iterative process that will need to be evidence based, tested and consulted upon, including through the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.6 Identifying an “emerging” Spatial Strategy at this stage is an important part of this process because it means that more detailed assessments can now be carried out, including a Sustainability Appraisal, to see to what extent it is likely to meet the “tests of soundness”.
- 5.7 Work on the Local Plan has established that Slough has a young, growing population, is a major economic powerhouse and has the opportunity to attract some major investment into the town. It also has a shortage of land, problems with traffic congestion and a declining shopping centre. It also suffers from a poor image and has some environmental issues.
- 5.8 The Issues and Options report identified that the four biggest challenges facing the Local Plan are how can we provide enough housing (20,000 dwellings), create new employment (15,000 jobs) transform the shopping centre and accommodate the proposed expansion of Heathrow airport?
- 5.9 Work on the Review of the Local Plan has produced a "Vision for Slough" and a set of "Objectives". These are listed in Appendix 1. They set out the ambitions for Slough to become a place where people want to *live, work, rest, play and stay*.
- 5.10 All of these factors have to be taken into account in developing the Spatial Strategy.

#### Summary of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy

- 5.11 A more detailed explanation as to how the various elements of the emerging Spatial Strategy have been derived is set out in the latter part of this report. The following summary is intended to explain how they all fit together and what the key factors and decisions were that have led to the production of the Strategy.
- 5.12 The most significant factor that has to be taken into account is that the work on the Issues and Options Document has shown that there are no reasonable spatial options, or combination of options that would allow Slough to meet all of its identified housing and employment needs within its boundaries.
- 5.13 As a result it is necessary to consider whether the Local Plan "Objectives" of seeking to meet our needs should be changed. In particular we have to review the Objective of seeking to meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs in full and whether we should continue with the Objective of creating 15,000 new jobs.
- 5.14 It should be noted that the Local Plan Objectives have already prioritised housing over employment by not seeking to meet the identified need for more

employment land. It is considered that seeking to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need and creating the necessary number of new jobs remains of critical importance for the soundness of the plan. As a result it is proposed that the emerging Spatial Strategy should be based upon the current Local Plan Objectives. This involves seeking to meet the need within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises within a balanced housing market.

- 5.15 The emerging Spatial Strategy has then been developed using some basic guiding principles which include locating development in the most accessible location, regenerating previously developed land, minimising the impact upon the environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and deliverable.
- 5.16 When applying these principles, the evidence points to the fact that the centre of Slough should be the location for major development. This also meets most of the Local Plan Objectives.
- 5.17 The emerging Strategy recognises that there is scope for development outside of the centre in selected locations. In terms of determining the balance between housing and the economy it assumes that no further employment land should be lost to residential uses.
- 5.18 The emerging Spatial Strategy also takes account of all of the major constraints that there are to development throughout the Borough and concludes that the existing residential suburbs should be protected from intensive development for environmental, sustainability and social reasons.
- 5.19 The proposed Strategy also takes account of the proposed third runway at Heathrow which will have an impact upon the eastern part of the Borough. As a result it proposes some guiding principles for how this can best be accommodated.
- 5.20 The shortage of land means that any suitable Green Belt sites that are left in Slough will have to be considered for housing subject to detailed testing.
- 5.21 The emerging Strategy also envisages that the proposed northern expansion of Slough into the Green Belt in South Bucks will have to take place in order to meet the housing shortfall in the most sustainable way that is possible.
- 5.22 Putting all of this together the emerging Spatial Strategy for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough can be summarised as one of:

***Delivering*** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;

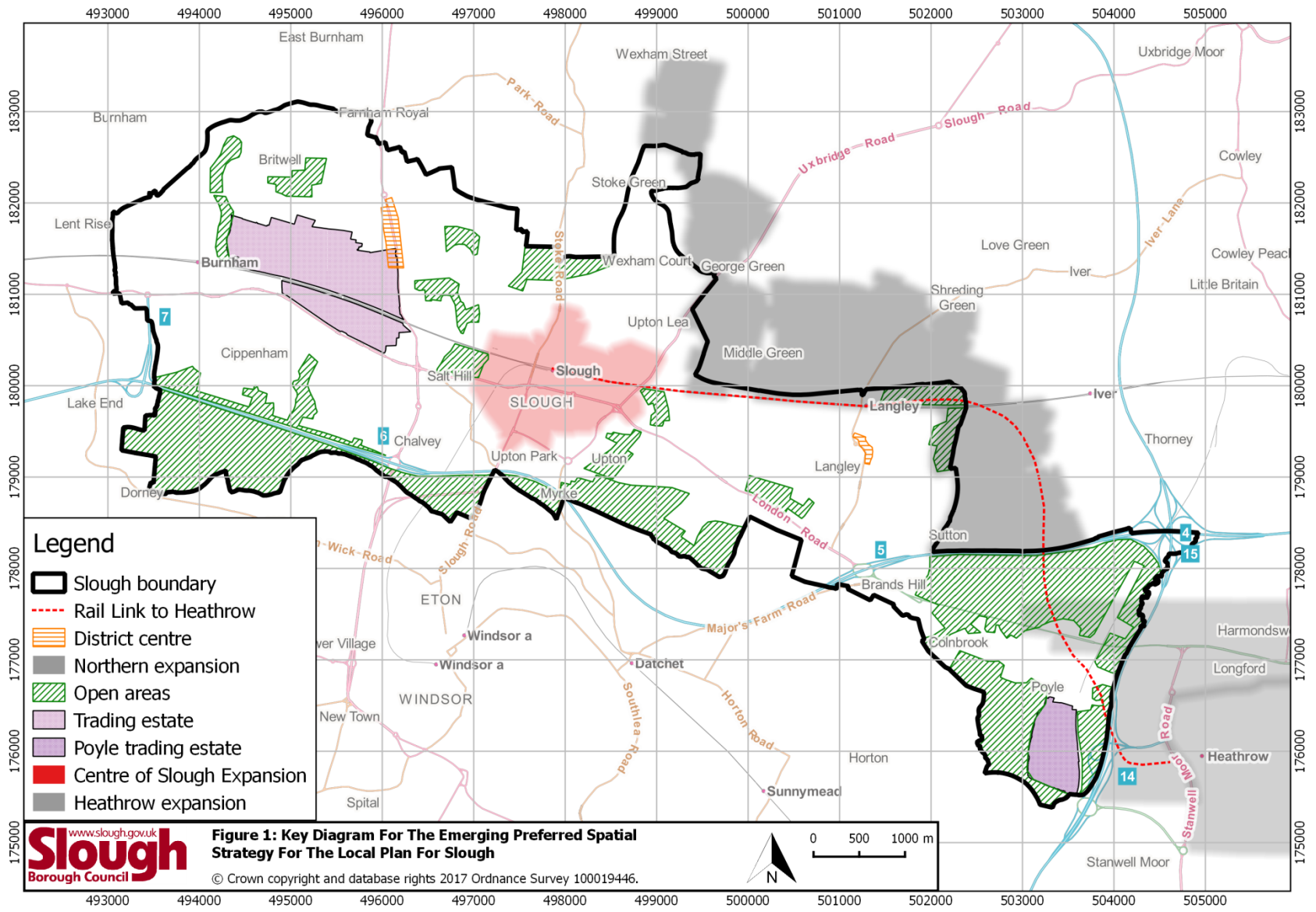
***Selecting*** other key locations for appropriate development;

***Protecting*** the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs.

***Accommodating*** the proposed third runway at Heathrow;

***Promoting*** the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a “Garden Suburb”;

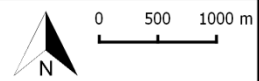
5.23 In order to understand what this high level emerging Spatial Strategy would look like we have produced a Key Diagram which is set out in Figure 1.



- Legend**
- Slough boundary
  - Rail Link to Heathrow
  - District centre
  - Northern expansion
  - Open areas
  - Trading estate
  - Poyle trading estate
  - Centre of Slough Expansion
  - Heathrow expansion

**Figure 1: Key Diagram For The Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy For The Local Plan For Slough**

© Crown copyright and database rights 2017 Ordnance Survey 100019446.



- 5.24 What is very unusual about the position in Slough is that the implementation of this strategy is to some extent outside of the control of the Council. It is dependent upon the government making a decision about the proposed third runway at Heathrow airport. It is dependent upon development taking place to the north of Slough outside of the Borough, which can only be brought forward through the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan. Although we are currently delivering major development, particularly in the centre of Slough, future delivery will be dependent upon owners bringing land forward and developers being prepared to invest millions of pounds.
- 5.25 As a result the Local Plan will have to be a “campaigning” document which seeks to promote Slough’s interests by influencing important decisions. It will have to prioritise and coordinate development and will have to insist upon the highest standards of design and protection for the environment. It will also have to put in place policies which will ensure that we meet local needs as far as possible.
- 5.26 There is a shortage of land in Slough and problems with traffic and environmental issues that may constrain the emerging Spatial Strategy. This means that it will have to be subject to thorough testing before it can be taken forward. Identifying what the “Preferred” strategy would be at this stage enables this to be done in a meaningful way.
- 5.27 It will also be necessary to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging strategy as part of the on going process of testing the Local Plan at all stages. The Sustainability Assessment for the Issues and Options was not particularly conclusive because of the lack of detail about the individual options. (See Appendix 2) The development of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy, which includes the key sites that are likely to form part of its implementation, should mean that a more detailed assessment can be carried out.

#### Development of the Preferred Spatial Strategy

- 5.28 The emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy has been developed from the work that was carried out at the Issues and Options stage of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.
- 5.29 The Consultation Document identified the major issues facing Slough such as:
- How can we provide around 20,000 houses to meet our needs?
  - How we can create 15,000 new jobs?
  - How we can transform the shopping centre? and
  - How we can accommodate the proposed expansion of Heathrow airport?

- 5.30 The document also set out a “Vision for Slough in 2036” which included making it a place where “*people choose to work, rest, play and stay*”. It also set out a series of Local Plan Objectives which included seeking to meet local needs as close as possible to where they arise. The full Vision and all of the Objectives can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 5.31 The Consultation Document also set out a number of Spatial Options for the future development of Slough. These were.
- A Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
  - B Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
  - C Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
  - D Regeneration of the selected areas:
    - D1 - Canal basin
    - D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road
    - D3 – Chalvey regeneration
  - E Estate Renewal
  - F Intensification of the suburbs
  - G Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
  - H Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
  - I Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
  - J Expansion of Slough
    - J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb)
    - J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
  - K Build in other areas outside of Slough
- 5.32 Most of these options are compatible with each other and could be taken forward simultaneously, but a few are mutually exclusive. It is important to note that some involve development outside of Slough which is outside of our control and can't form part of the Slough Local Plan. It should also be noted that no assessment was made of the cumulative effect of all of these options coming forward.
- 5.33 There was only a limited response to the public consultation exercise. The representations from the specific consultation bodies and other interested parties have been taken into account. The majority of objections came from residents of South Bucks and organisations who were opposed to Option J1

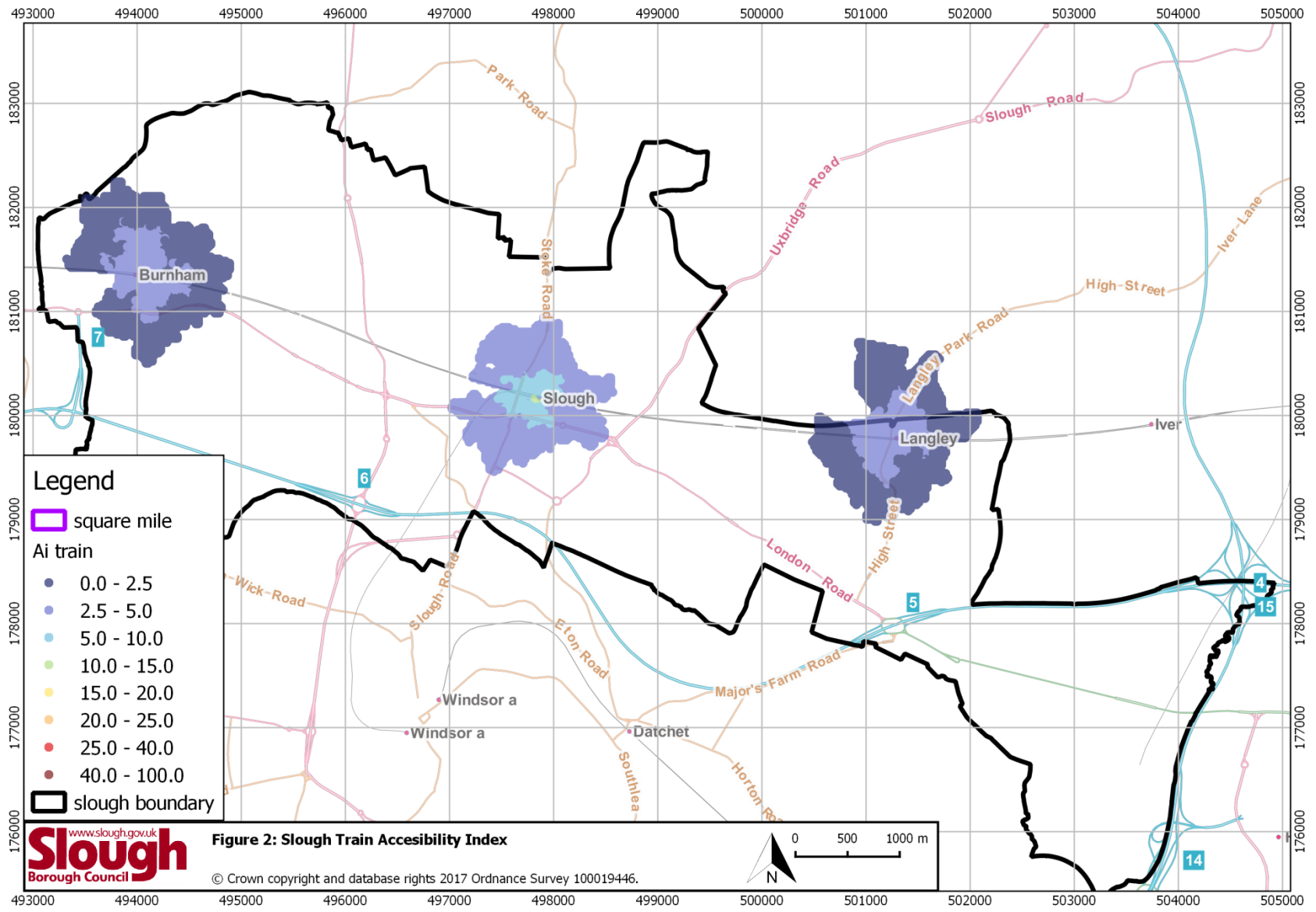


which was the proposed northern expansion of Slough into the South Buck's Green Belt. Account has also been taken of this in developing the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy.

- 5.34 Although some respondents suggested increasing densities, no new options were put forward during the consultation and so it can be concluded that there are is not a reasonable option or combination of options that could meet all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough.
- 5.35 As a result of the shortage of land in Slough it is necessary to consider whether the Local Plan Objectives should be adapted accordingly.
- 5.36 For example we need to consider whether we should amend the Objective which states that we should plan to meet our objectively assessed housing need of 927 dwellings a year as close as possible to where the needs arise. Under the Government's draft proposals for calculating Objectively Assessed Housing Needs, Slough's number could be reduced from an average of 927 to 912 homes a year but this is not a significant change. The Government's proposals do, however, reinforce the need for housing to be fully provided within Housing Market Areas. As a result it is considered that Local Plan Objective should be retained as the basis for developing the preferred Spatial Strategy.
- 5.37 At the same time we need to consider whether we should we retain the Objective which seeks to create a minimum of 15,000 new jobs in Slough.
- 5.38 It should be noted that, because of the shortage of available land, the Local Plan does not have an objectives of seeking to meet the assessed need for up to 180 hectares of additional employment land for warehousing and other uses. This makes it all the more important that new jobs are created elsewhere. This means that the Objective of creating 15,000 new jobs should therefore remain as the basis for developing the preferred Spatial Strategy.
- 5.39 There were no significant objections to the "Vision for Slough" or the "Local Plan Objectives" from the consultation exercise and there have not been any other changes in circumstances which suggest that they should be reviewed. As a result it is considered that the emerging Spatial Strategy should be developed using the Objectives which aim to plan to meet identified needs in the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arise. Failure to do so would risk the plan being found unsound.
- 5.40 This means that due to the shortage of land and limited capacity within the Borough, the main task in producing a Preferred Spatial Strategy is not choosing between options but establishing how they can reasonably be brought forward together.

### Spatial Development Principles

- 5.41 In deciding upon what the emerging Spatial Strategy should be, there are some basic principles that need to be considered about where new development should go.
- 5.42 The first is to make sure that development is located in the most accessible locations possible which will also meet Local Plan Objective of encouraging sustainable modes of travel and reducing the need to travel.
- 5.43 With the introduction of the new Crossrail service it is considered that land close to stations should be considered for more intensive development. Figure 2 shows the areas within convenient walking distance to the three stations in the Borough.

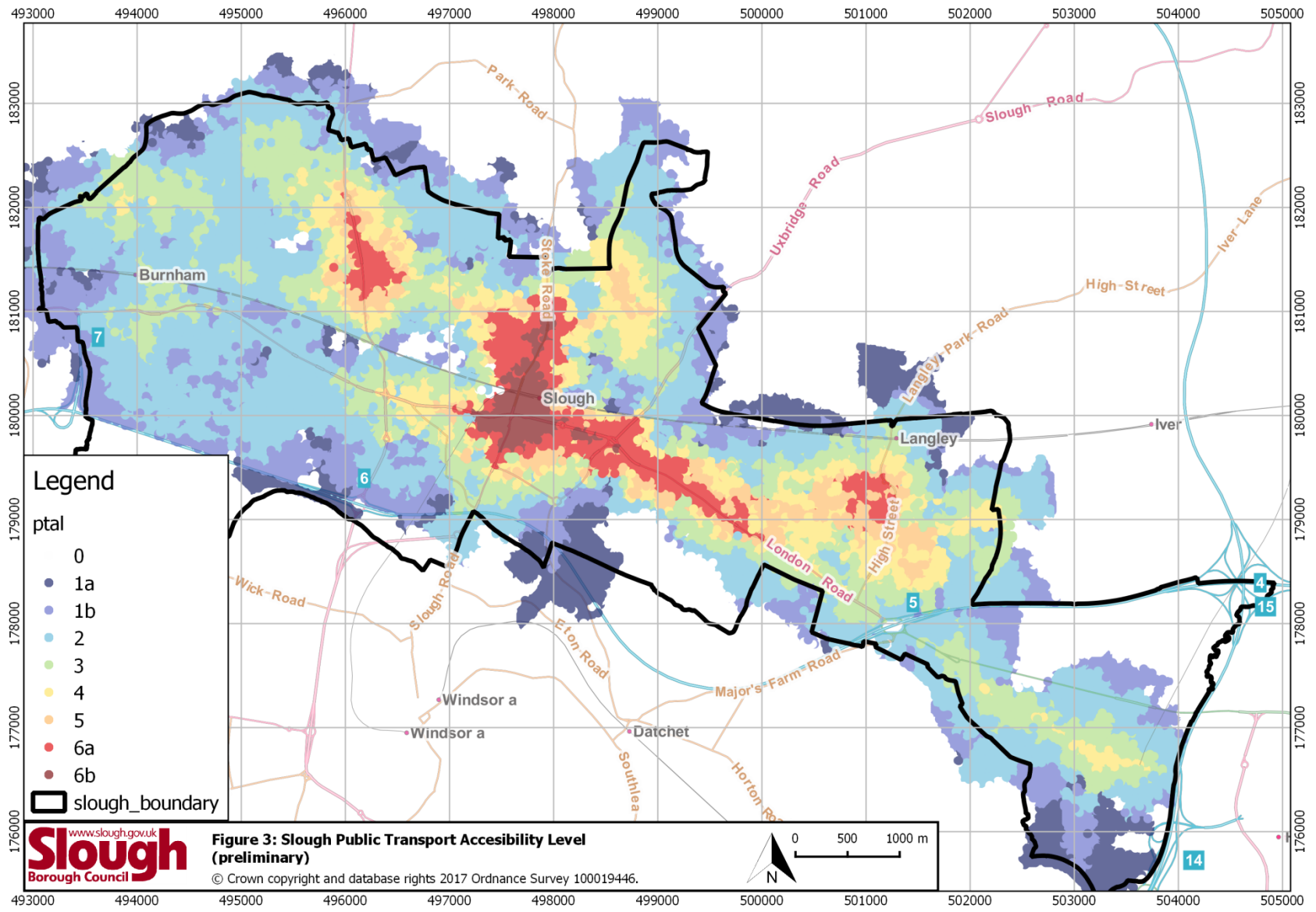


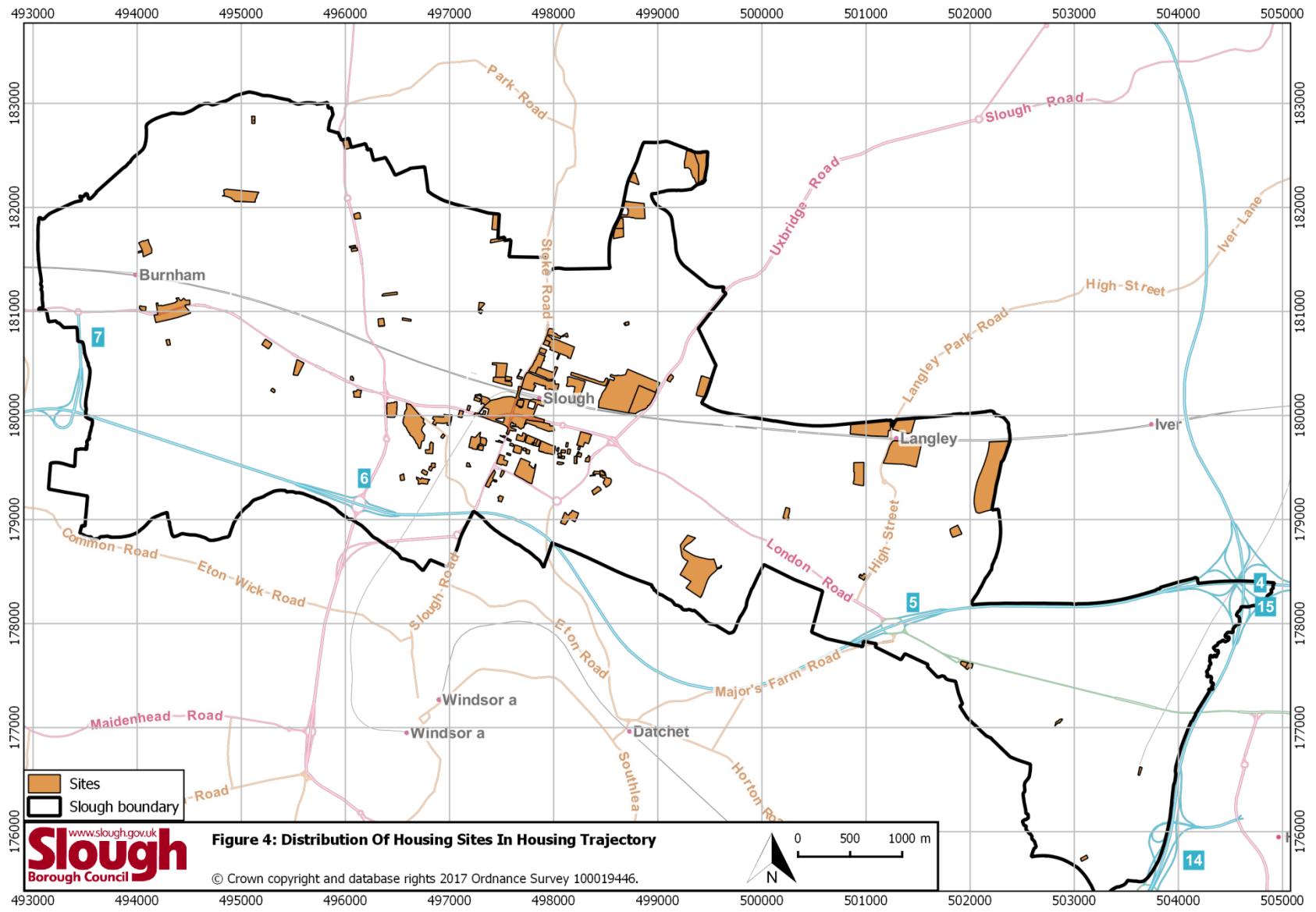
- 5.44 We have also carried out work to identify the relative accessibility of different parts of the Borough taking into account both rail and bus services. Figure 3 shows the preliminary results of the PTAL (public transport accessibility) model for Slough. This illustrates how the centre of Slough is by far the most accessible location in Slough and how many of the outlying residential areas and the Poyle Trading Estate have very poor accessibility by public transport. It should also be remembered that the centre of Slough contains a lot of the towns major facilities and so people living in the centre can walk to their destination. This makes it even more sustainable location for development.
- 5.45 It is therefore suggested that the preferred Spatial Strategy should be guided by accessibility factors in determining where new development should go, and make sure that if development goes in areas that are not currently very accessible suitable new infrastructure is provided.
- 5.46 Major office and a new shopping centre are also proposed for the centre of Slough which reinforces the fact that this should be a priority location for new development.
- 5.47 The emerging Spatial Strategy also needs to take into account market forces which show where the demand for new development is and where it is likely to be deliverable. Figure 4 shows the location of all of the sites within our current Housing Trajectory. This illustrates how much new development is likely to be concentrated within the centre of Slough.
- 5.48 One of the core principles of plan making is that you should make the most effective use of land by using that which has been previously developed. The centre of Slough contains a lot of these brownfield sites which should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact.
- 5.49 All of these factors suggest that the fact that emerging Spatial Strategy should be based upon the fact that the centre of Slough is the most suitable location for major development.

#### Delivering Major Comprehensive Redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”

- 5.50 Option A in the Issues and Options Consultation Document was to expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards). Previous plans have sought to concentrate development within a tightly drawn town centre. This option would retain a core shopping area and central business district but expand the area for potential development to a wider area within the catchment of the centre. In particular promoting redevelopment beyond the edge of the current town centre. This would mean that the proposed development at the Canal basin (Option D1) and the redevelopment of the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites

(Option C) should be regarded as part of the expanded centre and linked into it. It could also include the creation of a new residential neighbourhood in the Horlicks/Stoke Gardens area with direct links to the station.





- 5.51 There are many brownfield sites within the centre which have the capacity to be developed more intensively. Whilst they may need careful planning and some remediation or mitigation measures, they should be capable of being developed without causing any significant damage to the environment that might occur elsewhere.
- 5.52 Two of the key issues identified in the Issues and Options Consultation Document were how we can revitalise Slough town centre as a major retail, leisure and commercial centre and how we can enhance the quality of the built and green environment in order to improve the overall image of the town.
- 5.53 The decline of Slough as a retail centre has accelerated and it is considered that this can only be reversed by the comprehensive redevelopment of the existing Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres to provide a mix of new retail and leisure uses which will restore Slough back to its previous status as a sub regional centre. This means that the delivery of a new shopping/leisure centre must be a priority within the emerging Spatial Strategy.
- 5.54 If this can be achieved, along with the regeneration of other key sites, such as the former TVU site, it should be possible to revitalise the centre as a whole. By insisting upon the highest standards of architectural design and high quality improvements to the urban realm it will be possible to improve the appearance and image of the centre of Slough and attract more investment. This will build on the success that we have recently had in bring forward distinctive new buildings in the centre.
- 5.55 The scale of development that could potentially be built within the "square mile" in the centre of Slough could meet a significant amount of the housing and employment needs identified in Local Plan. As result delivering this development in a comprehensively planned way will be an important part of the emerging Spatial Strategy.
- 5.56 Policies and guidelines will have to be put in place to ensure that development only takes place in suitable locations, in a way that respects its surroundings and meets the highest standards. The amount of development that can take place in the centre of Slough may, however, be constrained by congestion, air quality and other environmental factors and so this will all have to be subject to further testing and modelling.

#### Balancing the need for Housing and Employment Land

- 5.57 Most of the options in the Issues and Options Document are not mutually exclusive but there is conflict between the need to provide land for more housing and the need to provide more land for employment. This needs to be



resolved in order to develop the emerging Spatial Strategy for the rest of the Borough.

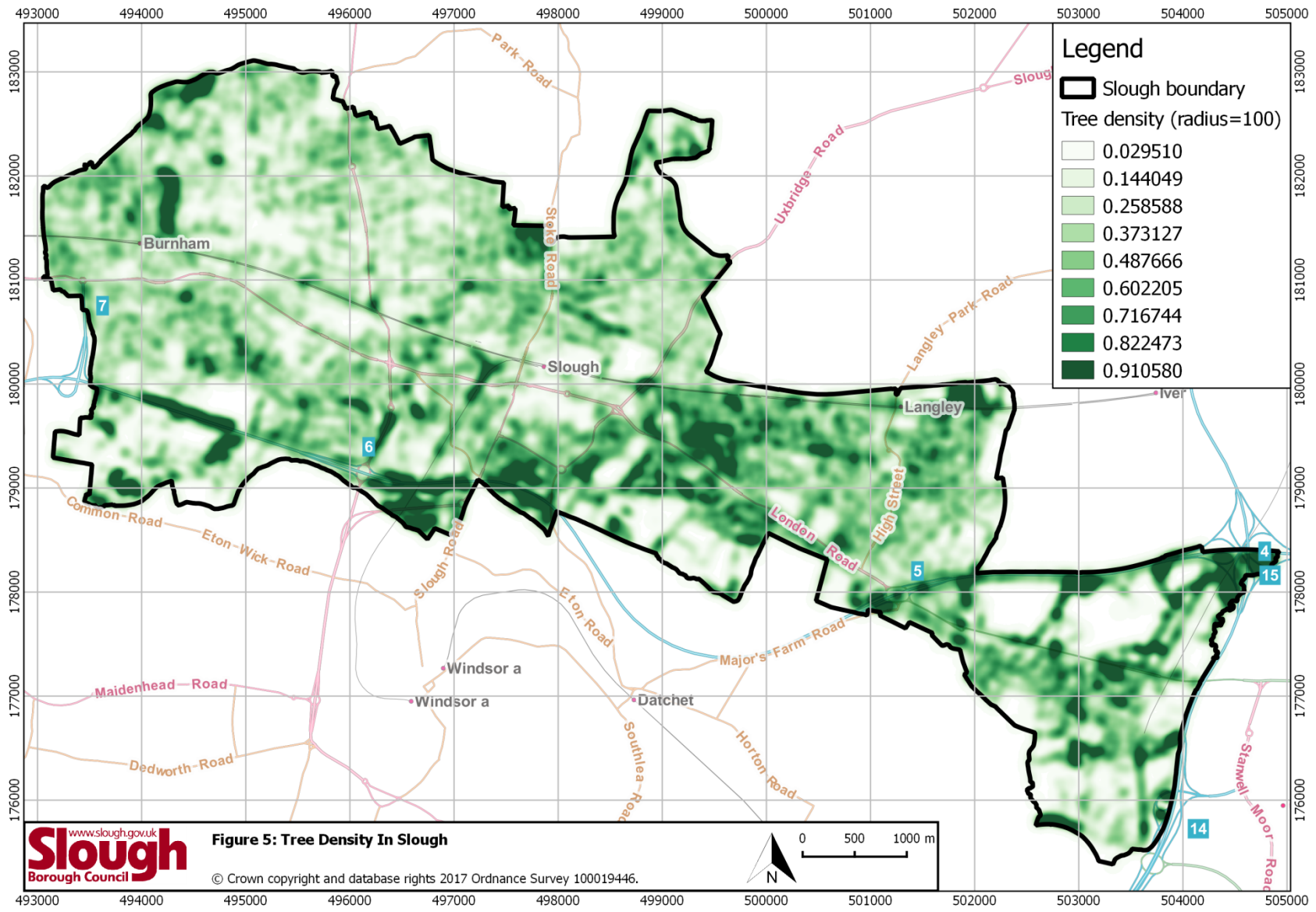
- 5.58 The Issues and Options document included Option G which was to redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing. Whilst this would increase the supply of housing in the Borough in accordance with Objective A, it conflicts with other Objectives such as the need to create 15,000 new jobs and ensure that Slough's economy creates wealth, has a diverse economic base and supports business start-ups.
- 5.59 The Options to expand the centre of Slough, expand Langley centre, build on the Kazoo Nobel/National Grid site, Canal Basin and New Cippenham Strip all involve the loss of some employment land
- 5.60 As explained above we are unable to meet the need for 180 hectares of additional land for warehousing and other uses. We have also lost a large number of offices to residential through the "Prior Approval" process. As a result it is not considered that there is scope to lose any more employment land if our economic objectives are to be achieved.
- 5.61 This means that it is suggested that the emerging Spatial Strategy does not propose any more housing on existing employment land in addition to those sites already proposed for housing in Options A to D.
- 5.62 The emerging Spatial Strategy assumes that Slough Trading Estate, the town centre and Poyle Trading Estate will be the main employment centres, with the centre of Slough offering the most scope for an increase in jobs. It is considered that we will have to carry out an Employment Land Study to establish how the other remaining areas of employment land can best be utilised for economic purposes. This could include some redevelopment which creates more floor space and introducing policies that continue to protect land for local businesses.

#### Protecting the Built and Natural Environment of Slough

- 5.63 Protecting and enhancing heritage assets of historic value is a key element of this part of the strategy. These assets are primarily Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks & Gardens and Ancient Monuments. They contribute to the distinctiveness of neighbourhoods and image of the town. Protection does not mean they cannot contribute to housing, the economy and the community through sensitive use of buildings and in some cases conversion or adaptation.
- 5.64 Parks and open spaces need protecting to contribute to the health and well being of the population providing places for recreation and community events plus visual amenity and connection to nature. They also contribute to neighbourhood identity. Their protection also contributes to ecology, water

quality and adaption to climate change (through rain water absorption and limiting the 'heat island' effect in dense urban areas on hot days).

- 5.65 Trees and landscaping need a degree of protection in many cases. They contribute to ecology, visual amenity and attractiveness of neighbourhoods or streets. If limited loss is necessary as part of the towns growth replacement or mitigation policies will need to be applied.
- 5.66 Slough is already very urbanised and lacks the green infrastructure that many other areas have. One of the indicators of the state of the environment in Slough is the lack of tree cover. Slough has fewer trees per hectare than London. Figure 5 shows that the trees are mainly in the suburban areas which makes them important for environmental and biodiversity reasons.



- 5.67 The emerging Spatial Strategy has to ensure that the most important and valuable parts of the built and natural environment are protected from adverse development.
- 5.68 In terms of other constraints parts of the town affected by flooding need protecting from development that would make flood risk worse.
- 5.69 Parts of the town affected by pollution will constrain some developments; these are primarily polluted soil and developments that will make identified areas of poor air quality worse. Noise from some existing uses and the airport will limit some types of development going ahead unless attenuation is feasible.
- 5.70 It is proposed that no new residential development should take place in the Colnbrook and Poyle area until the future expansion plans for Heathrow airport have been agreed.

#### The Future of the Suburbs

- 5.71 Most of Slough's residents live in the suburban areas. One of the Local Plan Objectives is to ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place. As explained above one of their distinctive qualities is the amount of greenery that they have compared to other parts of the Borough.
- 5.72 Option F in the Issues and Options Consultation Document was to intensify the suburbs. This could take the form of comprehensive redevelopment of several plots, the creation of rows of mews type houses or allowing piecemeal development.
- 5.73 The suburban areas of Slough have already absorbed a lot of organic unplanned growth through extensions and the development of "beds in Sheds". This investment has meant that these areas are already fairly intensively developed and house prices have risen.
- 5.74 Unlike many suburban areas in other towns, few Slough houses have very long or wide gardens. Detailed analysis has shown that there is very little opportunity for traditional "backland" development. Multiple ownerships also makes it difficult to secure comprehensive schemes. In any case Government policy discourages the loss of gardens which are not considered to be brownfield sites.
- 5.75 The combination of these factors means that it is often not viable to redevelop property and so any proposals to intensify the suburbs is not likely to deliver very many additional units over and above the current level of small site completions that we have at present.

- 5.76 The housing need evidence shows that there is a demand for 2-4 bedroomed houses. The recognised that the existing suburban areas provide the main supply of family houses, which in many cases have to accommodate extended families. Opportunities to build family housing elsewhere in the Borough is likely to be limited with the majority of new development in places like the centre of Slough being flats.
- 5.77 The suburban areas contain distinctive communities with their own network of facilities. These provide a good basis for “living locally”, and so are important for social reasons. It is also important that the large scale growth that is proposed for Slough takes place in a way that is as least disruptive as possible for established residents and communities.
- 5.78 As a result the emerging Spatial Strategy adopts the approach of protecting the existing residential suburbs from major intensive redevelopment. This does not prevent them from continuing to grow organically and adapting to meet residents needs so that people can “live locally”. It does mean that they are unlikely to provide a significant number of new houses to meet the Local plan Objectives.

#### Selected Key Locations for Appropriate Development

- 5.79 Having established that the centre of Slough is the most sustainable location for major development, that there should be no more loss of employment land and that the residential suburban areas should be retained, it is necessary to determine which of the remaining areas have potential for development.
- 5.80 The Issues and Options Consultation document contained a number of spatial options which fall into this category. These are:
- B Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
  - D Regeneration of the selected areas:
    - D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road
    - D3 – Chalvey regeneration
  - E Estate Renewal
  - H Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
  - I Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
- 5.81 It is considered that all of these should form part of the emerging Spatial Strategy.

### Expanding the Langley Centre

- 5.82 Langley is one of the two “District Centres” in Slough along with the Farnham Road. As a result it has an important role in supporting the local community. It will also soon have the full Crossrail service to the station which will significantly increase its attractiveness.
- 5.83 As a result it is considered that there is an opportunity to redevelop the area around Langley railway station to take account of its accessibility and limit the level of car ownership and use associated with new homes.
- 5.84 The key development site is the Langley Business Park which is in an excellent location between the railway station and the Harrow Market shopping centre. It is proposed that this should be developed as a residential site, including family housing, along with some ancillary commercial and retail uses which would complement the existing shopping centre.
- 5.85 The Langley rail station will be improved through the provision of a new pedestrian bridge and lift to make it accessible for all. There also needs to be improvements to the forecourt to make it more accessible to non car modes of transport.
- 5.86 It was proposed that the former Total Oil Depot site north east of the station should be developed for housing but this is now intended to be used as a rail depot for the Heathrow Express service.
- 5.87 Langley Centre would also be an important focal point for the proposed northern expansion of Slough if that goes ahead.

### Chalvey Regeneration Area

- 5.88 Some redevelopment has already happened in Chalvey but there is scope for this to happen on further sites to contribute to regeneration of the area. A new academy school, health centre, extra care apartments for the elderly and infill housing are all planned or underway. In addition two major housing developments on Montem leisure centre site and on Tuns Lane can further contribute to regeneration and help meet housing demand. Further redevelopment sites can be explored. A key issue is making sure redevelopment contributes to improving Chalvey in terms of facilities, housing and appearance. Public realm enhancements are also needed as are improving pedestrian and cycle linkages to adjoining areas and recreation space such as the Jubilee River and Salt Hill Park. The stream through Chalvey is an opportunity for enhancement to create a distinctive attractive feature for the neighbourhood. Traffic flow issues and access by buses are issues to address as part of a wider regeneration plan.

### New Cippenham Central Strip

- 5.89 This area currently has a mix of commercial uses including some open sites. There is scope for comprehensive redevelopment to create a primarily residential area to improve the appearance of this key entry road into the town. As it is not far from Burnham Station and it is on the Bath Road bus route, with potential to be a rapid transit route, it is a sustainable place for residential development. A flatted development is envisaged with some family homes at the rear of the site. Redevelopment needs to take account of flood risk on part of the site and there is an opportunity, as part of this, to create a better route into Cippenham recreation ground to benefit the residential development.

### Estate Renewal

- 5.90 This option is proposed as part of the Council's ongoing programme of improvements to its housing stock. On some estates there is scope to redevelop parts, to make overall improvements and create additional homes as well. Additional homes can also be created on redundant garage courts or other redundant estate associated land continuing a development programme already underway.

### Releasing Green Belt Land for Housing

- 5.91 The shortage of land for housing in Slough means that consideration has to be given to the release of the remaining areas of Green Belt within the Borough.
- 5.92 This would meet the various elements of Objective A which is to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs as close to where it arises within a balance housing market. The development of Greenfield sites would have the potential to provide much needed family houses and should be sufficient viable to provide a high percentage of affordable housing for rent. This would help to meet Objective B which is to provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough's population.
- 5.93 Option H identified a number of Green Belt sites on the edge of Slough that had the potential for development.
- 5.94 It is recognised that the Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances but it is considered that the inability of Slough to meet its Objectively Assessed Housing Needs can constitute the very special circumstances that are necessary to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.
- 5.95 It is, however, also recognised that the sites have not been subject to any detailed assessment to see whether they have a particularly important role to play in for example maintaining the separation of Slough from other

settlements. The site at Upton (south of Blenheim Road) is also part of a Historic Park and Garden and so will have to also be assessed for its contribution to the historic landscape and setting of the Listed Building at Ditton Park. The need to retain the whole of Bloom Park for open space will also have to be considered.

- 5.96 Other potential Green Belt sites are part of, or adjoin, the proposed Northern Expansion of Slough. As a result it will be important to ensure that they are developed in a comprehensive way in accordance with the proposals for the new Garden Suburb, should that go ahead.

#### Accommodating the Proposed Third Runway at Heathrow

- 5.97 One of the Objectives of the Local Plan is to ensure that growth at Heathrow delivers benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough and any negative impacts are avoided or mitigated.
- 5.98 In October 2016 the Government announced its support for the construction of a third runway at Heathrow which will partly be built within the Borough at Colnbrook. Support for this has been set out in the draft National Planning Statement which will require parliamentary approval before a scheme can be brought forward through the Development Consent Order process. This is likely to be considered at an Inquiry in two years time.
- 5.99 As a result the role of the Local Plan for Slough will not be to determine the outcome of this process but to influence the form of the proposed airport expansion and promote the development of the required facilities which are not included in the DCO application.
- 5.100 The obvious benefit to Slough from the expansion of the airport would be the creation of up to 77,000 new jobs by 2030. Providing for new airport related development in the Poyle area would help to address the potential shortfall in jobs in the Borough and make up for the loss of employment land elsewhere.
- 5.101 The expansion of Heathrow can also spread benefits elsewhere. Slough town centre, which will be directly connected to the airport by the new passenger rail link (WRLtH), will be well positioned to benefit from inward investment opportunities. It could also attract ancillary uses such as hotels or conference facilities.
- 5.102 It is recognised that the expansion of the airport and construction of the new runway will have some adverse environmental impacts such as noise, air quality and increased traffic.
- 5.103 Heathrow Airport is intending to produce a consultation setting out the options for the way that the proposed northwest runway and all of the associated infrastructure could be planned. As part of this exercise work is also taking place on detailed land use planning. It is suggested that the as part of the emerging Spatial Strategy the following principles should be applied:
- Protect Colnbrook and Poyle villages in a “Green Envelope”



- Enhance the Conservation Area and built realm.
- Prevent all through traffic but provided good public transport and cycle routes to the airport
- Provide for the replacement Grundons energy from waste plant and the rail depot north of new runway
- Ensure that there are good public transport links into Heathrow from Slough.
- Enlarge the Poyle trading Estate for airport related development but with access only from the M25.
- Provide mitigation for the Colne Valley Park and ensure that existing connectivity is maintained through Crown Meadow.
- Develop tangible measures to improve air quality in the Heathrow area
- Ensure that all homes in the Borough that are eligible for noise insulation are provided for under the Quieter Homes Scheme.

5.104 The Local Plan will have to apply a complete embargo on new development in Colnbrook and Poyle until plans for the airport are approved. This would mean continuing to use the Strategic Gap policy in the short term. Whether it would be appropriate to continue with this, or we need another policy to deal with the post runway position, will need to be decided later.

5.105 We will also need to work with Heathrow to ensure that Slough's residents get the skills and training opportunities that will be needed in order to obtain the new jobs that will be created.

5.106 There will also be a need to ensure that Slough residents working at the airport have convenient and affordable access to the airport by public transport.

5,107 As a result it is considered that the need to accommodate the expansion of Heathrow airport as set out above forms an important part of the emerging Spatial Strategy for the review of the Local Plan for Slough.

#### Promoting the Northern Expansion of Slough in the form of a "Garden Suburb"

5.108 Taking into account the need to use brownfield land first, the "proximity principle" and the Local Plan Objective of meeting housing need as close as possible to where it arises, the basic hierarchy for deciding where housing should go can be summarised as:

- Build within Slough urban area
- Build within the remaining undeveloped areas within Slough Borough
- Expand Slough (northwards and southwards)
- Build elsewhere within the Housing Market Area
- Build elsewhere

- 5.109 In addition to this, consideration has to be given to some of the other Local Plan Objectives such as having a balanced housing market with an appropriate mix, type and tenure to meet Slough's identified need.
- 5.110 It is important that major new development is located in as sustainable location as possible in accordance with the Local Plan Objective of reducing the need to travel and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- 5.111 The Issues and Options Document included all of the options listed above. The emerging Spatial Strategy has prioritised building within the urban area of Slough followed by releasing the remaining appropriate areas of Green Belt land in Slough.
- 5.112 It is clear that there will still be a significant, but as yet not fully quantified, shortage of land to meet Objectively Assessed housing needs in Slough.
- 5.113 The current proposals in the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan to export part of its housing needs to Aylesbury will put further pressure on part of South Bucks which is in the same functional Housing Market Area as Slough. This will both reduce the supply of affordable housing that is available locally and make affordability even worse. The Government's new draft proposals for calculating Objectively Assessed Housing Needs highlights the importance of dealing with affordability and indicates that more housing should be needed in South Bucks District.
- 5.114 Taking all of this into account it is considered that the expansion of Slough should form part of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy as the best way of meeting Slough's unmet housing needs.
- 5.115 The Issues and Options Consultation Document identified two elements of this Option.

#### J Expansion of Slough

J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb)

J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)

- 5.116 The southern expansion of Slough is limited by physical constraints such as the M4 motorway, Jubilee River and Slough sewage works. As a result there are only two small sites that are suitable for housing. One of these is proposed to be released from the Green Belt for housing in the Windsor & Maidenhead Local Plan but the other is not. We will continue to pursue this through the Local Plan process but this is not going to make a significant contribution to meeting housing needs.
- 5.117 As a result it is considered that the emerging Spatial Strategy should promote a northern extension of Slough into South Bucks District in the form of a "Garden Suburb". This is the most sustainable option in terms of proximity to

existing jobs, facilities and community facilities. It also make use of major national infrastructure investment such as the Crossrail service on the Elizabeth Line.

- 5.118 It could also help to solve some existing transport problems by providing major new infrastructure to promote public transport. It would provide a range of housing including a large supply of affordable and family housing. It would therefore help to rebalance Slough's housing market and meet local needs.
- 5.119 It is recognised that this is outside of Slough's control and cannot be delivered through the Slough Local Plan. As a result it will have to be promoted through the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan process. This will mean that it will have to be demonstrated that there are sufficient exceptional circumstances to overcome the harm to the Green Belt that the development will cause.
- 5.120 It is proposed that some of the strategic issues facing the area could be examined through the commissioning of a joint Growth Study for the area which would look at all of the constraints and opportunities in a more holistic manner.
- 5.121 In the meantime, in order to respond to the results of public consultation and aid discussions, the Council has commissioned a high level strategic study from its consultants Atkins to show how a northern expansion could take place.
- 5.122 This will now be the subject of ongoing discussions with landowners and other interested parties to see whether it is a reasonable deliverable option. The results of this will be fed into the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan inquiry where the case for the strategic release of Green Belt to meet longer term housing needs can be considered. This could result in the need to have an immediate partial review of the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan which could be considered alongside the Slough Local Plan, when the decision about the third runway at Heathrow will have been made.
- 5.123 The Issues and Options consultation document contained two other option of building elsewhere outside of Slough. It is not considered that this would be as good as the expansion of Slough for all of the reasons given above. Nevertheless it can be considered as part of the proposed Growth Study for the area.
- 5.124 As a result, although it is outside of the Slough Local Plan area, it is considered that the promotion of a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks in the form of a "Garden Suburb" should form part of the emerging Spatial Strategy.
- 5.125 It is recognised that, like all of the other parts of the emerging strategy, this will have to be the subject of further testing and close working with Duty to Cooperate partners.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The emerging Spatial Strategy set out in this report is an important step in progressing the Review of the Local Plan. It is proposed that this should be the subject of further testing before the final version of the Preferred Spatial Strategy is brought forward for approval in the New Year.
- 6.2 The timing of Slough's Local Plan is also dependent upon factors that are outside of the Council's control. This will not affect the ability of the Council to continue to deliver housing, employment and other regeneration schemes in the short term.

## **7 Background Papers**

1. Review of the Local Plan for Slough Issues and Options Consultation Document
2. Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options

## **8 Appendices**

- A- Appendix 1 – Local Plan Vision and Objectives
- B- Appendix 2- Summary of Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options

## **Appendix 1: Vision and Objectives of the Local Plan**

### **A Vision for Slough in 2036**

Supporting the Council and its communities' ambitions for the Borough, by 2036 Slough will have a high profile image which recognises its important role in the region as a prosperous, confident, attractive, metropolitan place where people choose to work, rest, play and stay. The centre of Slough will be an attractive, vibrant hub providing high quality offices, retail, leisure, landmark buildings and cultural opportunities for our diverse communities. Slough will be an "economic powerhouse" with a large skilled resident workforce and a reputation as an excellent place to do business which will encourage established and new companies to invest and grow in the Borough. As a result of Crossrail, the Western rail link to and expansion at Heathrow airport, Slough will be one of the best connected places. Accessibility within the town will have been improved through the development of convenient pedestrian, cycle and bus networks. By encouraging investment, regeneration, innovation and high standards of design we will have created distinct environments with high quality public realm that create a sense of place. Our proactive approach to meeting our housing need locally means Slough is a place where our residents feel a sense of belonging and are able to live in good quality and affordable homes. We are proud of our diversity and cohesion; we live in greener, safe and distinctive neighbourhoods with lifelong access to excellent education and job opportunities, and the facilities and services they need to live positive healthy lives.

Slough will have embraced new digital technologies for the benefit of the community to optimise the use of our spaces, places and transport network, and help our business and residents help themselves to a better quality of life.

This balanced approach to delivering growth means Slough will be a town with cohesive residential and business communities where people think globally but are happy to work and live locally.

2.6.1. Having established an overall vision, we have developed a set of 14 Objectives which set out in more detail the Council's priorities and give an indication for how the Local Plan can begin to achieve the Vision.

#### **2.6.2. The Objectives for the Local Plan are:**

A. To meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) of 927 dwellings per annum within the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises within a balanced housing market.

B. To provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough's population that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard.

C. To support innovation, growth and regeneration and ensure the Town Centre is the focus for high density housing and major retail, leisure, office and cultural development.

D. To ensure Slough's economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse by retaining its multinational HQs, having a diverse resilient economic base, and including opportunities for business start-ups and Smart technology.

E. To create 15,000 jobs supported by a competitive local workforce who have the skills to meet businesses' changing needs.

F. To ensure Crossrail, the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and growth at Heathrow deliver benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.

G. To encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, reduce the need to travel, make non-car modes the best choice for short journeys and tackle traffic congestion.

H. To improve the health and well-being of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.

I. To provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.

J. To make Slough feel like a safe place through minimising the opportunity for crime and antisocial behaviour.

K. To improve the image and attractiveness of the town through insisting on high quality design for all new buildings and enhancing the public realm. To support the vitality, viability and distinctiveness of local centres and ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place.

L. To increase opportunities for leisure and recreation and improve the quality and use of Slough's parks and open green spaces and the links to these and the surrounding countryside including the Colne Valley Regional Park.

M. Protect the environment, and adapt to climate change and minimise its effects through protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity and water environment, and addressing flood risk, carbon emissions and pollution.

N. To protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value.

**Source: Issues and options Consultation document pages 12-13**

## **Appendix 2: Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Document**

### Introduction

- 1.1 This Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Issues and Options was published for public consultation, alongside the Issues and Options document in January 2017. At this stage of the sustainability process the draft objectives and spatial options were assessed against the sustainability objectives which are set out in table 1 below.
- 1.2 A Draft SA Scoping Report, which summarises the sustainability Issues for Slough was consulted on at the same time.
- 1.3 The SA Scoping Report sets out the baseline information for Slough and identifies issues the borough is facing. Prior to this it was published by the Council on 30th November 2016 for consultation for 5 weeks with the four SEA consultation bodies as required by the SEA directive. Representations received requested minor edits to the document. These will be made and a final SA Scoping Report will be published later this year.
- 1.4 We are now at the stage of testing the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy .This will further assess the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve the identified environmental, economic and social objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal.

### Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Document

- 1.5 The Sustainability Appraisal had been carried out at a strategic level on the draft Local Plan Objectives and the Spatial Options elements of the Issues and Options Consultation Document. The assessment looked at “potentially significant” effects that any of the local plan objectives or spatial options may have in terms of the ten identified social economic or environmental objectives as set out below:

**Table 1: The Sustainability Appraisal objectives**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Transport and accessibility:</b> Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.</li><li>2. <b>Biodiversity and geodiversity:</b> Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.</li><li>3. <b>Climate change:</b> Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.</li><li>4. <b>Economy:</b> Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.</li><li>5. <b>Health:</b> Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.</li><li>6. <b>Cultural heritage:</b> Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of</li></ol> |
|---|

archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.

7. **Housing:** Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population
8. **Landscape:** Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.
9. **Use of resources:** Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth
10. **Pollution:** Reduce air, noise soil and water pollution.

- 1.6 The Issues and Options Local Plan Objectives and Spatial Options have been tested against the SA objectives on a high level basis to see whether there is a significant positive or negative effect between the ability of each Local Plan objective or Spatial Option to deliver the SA Objectives. In some cases the compatibility of the Objectives was not predicted because of uncertainty or lack of information.
- 1.7 Firstly this exercise was carried out to test compatibility of the Local Plan objectives against the SA objectives. This showed generally compatibility between the Local Plan Objectives and the Sustainability Objectives. The Local Plan Objectives that have the most uncertainty or potential conflict with some of the Sustainability Objectives are those that are proposing or seeking to accommodate growth.
- 1.8 The results of this assessment show that there is the potential for some internal conflicts between the Objectives of the Local Plan and the SA Objectives. Some of the Local Plan Objectives are competing for scarce resources and may be mutually exclusive. For example the shortage of land in Slough means that the objectives associated with providing housing and those which aim to provide enough employment may not be compatible. All development will inevitably put pressure upon the environment.
- 1.9 It is also important that the Sustainability Objectives are reflected in at least one of the Local Plan Objectives in order to ensure that the plan is prepared in a balanced way. The table shows that all of the Sustainability Objectives have significant positive links with at least two Local Plan Objectives.
- 1.10 The four Sustainability Objectives which could potentially have a significant conflict with the Local Plan are SA Objective 1 (transport), SA Objective 3 (climate change), SA Objective 5 (health) and SA Objective 10 (pollution). As a result the Local Plan will have to ensure that suitable mitigation is provided to ensure that new development does not have a significant adverse effect upon these Sustainability Objectives.



- 1.11 The conclusion from the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options was high level and the outcomes were that more assessment is needed to assess the impacts due to lack of information at that stage.
- 1.12 More detailed information can be seen in the Sustainability of the Issues and Options document from the following link:  
[https://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/SBC\\_IO\\_SA\\_Consultation\\_Doc.pdf](https://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/SBC_IO_SA_Consultation_Doc.pdf)

#### Mitigating Adverse Effects and Maximising Beneficial Effects

- 1.13 It is necessary to consider whether there are measures that can be taken to mitigate any adverse effects of a Spatial Option against individual objectives or accentuate the positive effects that have been identified.
- 1.14 However as this is an emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy it is too early to mitigate any adverse effects. Once the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy has been agreed, this will be assessed at the next stage in the next version of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.15 The extent and effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures can be assessed in more detail at this stage in the next version of the Sustainability Appraisal.

#### Conclusion

- 1.16 Once the principles of the emerging preferred Strategy has been agreed. A full Sustainability Appraisal of the Preferred Strategy will be undertaken at a later stage. This will appraise the sites against the sustainability appraisal objectives.

#### Habitat Regulations Screening opinion

- 1.17 Habitat Regulations Screening Opinion was produced alongside the Issues and Options document.
- 1.18 The Screening Opinion concluded that, based on the information currently available in the Issues and Options Consultation, a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of Burnham Beeches SAC cannot be effectively ruled out.
- 1.19 As part of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy there is ongoing liaison between South Bucks, Natural England on mitigation to reduce the likely significant effect on Burnham Beeches SAC. An assessment of the development sites proposed in the Local Plan will therefore be needed to assess and address this at a later stage.