

Review of the Local Plan for Slough

**Issues and Options
Consultation Document**
16 January-27 February 2017



Review of the Local Plan for Slough

Issues and Options Consultation Document 16 January - 27 February 2017

Planning Policy and Projects
Slough Borough Council
51 Bath Road
Slough
SL1 3UF

Email: planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk
Phone: 01753 477341

Published 16 January 2017

Foreword

Since becoming council leader I have been clear that I want our residents to have a bigger say in how our town works, how our town grows and how our town meets your needs.

Our growth must be inclusive for all. Slough has changed, and will continue to change, but we must ensure local people feel the benefit of this change. We must ensure we have an offer to local residents that guarantees their place and their children's place in Slough for years to come.

This consultation gives you that say. By taking part you can influence how Slough changes over the next 20 years. We have some fantastic opportunities, but also real challenges. Our population is growing fast, we must provide housing for local people and ensure those living here continue to have access to fantastic job opportunities and improved leisure facilities.

This document looks at a number of crucial issues facing Slough; from the numbers of new homes we can supply - ensuring these include genuinely affordable homes - to how we all move around our town, how we can grow our local economy and how we can make sure you see the benefit of this economic growth.

We want residents to get involved in this mammoth challenge at the earliest opportunity. By getting involved now we can do things with you, and your ideas and comments will influence the plan we produce, steer our approach to tackling the issues that matter and shape the future of Slough.

This is your chance to think about the big issues for Slough as a place to live, work, play and stay. So please send in comments, your ideas and possible solutions and let's craft Slough's future together.



Sohail Munawar
Leader of Slough Borough Council

Contents

1. Introduction	
1.1. The Issues and Options Consultation	1
1.2. How does this feed into the Local Plan (2016-2036)?	1
1.3. What is this consultation about?	1
1.4. What will happen next?	2
1.5. What will happen to the council's existing planning policies?	2
2. Section A: Context	
2.1. Aim of the plan	4
2.2. Slough today	4
2.3. Past performance	6
2.3.7. Conclusion	7
2.4. Key drivers of change to 2036	7
2.4.2. Slough's population will continue to increase	7
2.4.9. Shopping patterns are changing and Slough town centre is at risk	8
2.4.16. Heathrow Airport will continue to have a major impact on the way Slough develops	10
2.4.23. Slough has very little available land for growth, therefore a new approach to accommodating development is needed	11
2.5. Vision	12
2.6. Objectives	13
3. Section B: The big strategic issues	
3.1. Overview	14
3.2. How can we meet as much of our objectively assessed housing need of 927 dwellings a year as close as possible to where these needs arise?	14
3.1.16. Conclusion	16
3.2. How can we offer a wide choice of high quality housing and create balanced communities?	17
3.2.27. Conclusion	20
3.3. How can Slough maintain its role as an economic powerhouse?	20
3.3.11. Conclusion	21
3.4. How can we support the creation of 15,000 additional jobs?	21
3.4.27. Conclusion	24
3.5. How we can revitalise slough town centre as a major retail, leisure and commercial centre?	24
3.5.15. Conclusion	25
3.6. How can we get the maximum benefit from growth at Heathrow Airport and mitigate for any adverse environmental effects?	25
3.6.12. Conclusion	26
3.7. How can we enable our suburban areas to continue to absorb the growth in population without losing the distinctive character of individual neighbourhoods?	27
3.7.12. Conclusion	28
3.8. How can we deal with the problem of traffic congestion to ensure that people can travel around Slough?	28
3.8.12. Conclusion	29
3.9. How can we enhance the quality of the built and green environment in Slough and improve the overall image of the town?	29
3.9.19. Conclusion	31
3.10. How can we provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support new housing and employment?	32
3.10.4. Education	33

3.10.9.	Health Facilities	33
3.10.14.	Recreation and Leisure	34
3.10.15.	Community Facilities	34
3.10.16.	Utilities	34
3.10.19.	Flood Risk Mitigation	35
3.10.21.	Conclusions	35
4.	Section C: Policy response	
4.2.	Creating an environment for investment	36
4.2.4.	Improving the image of Slough	36
4.2.6.	Public investment leading the way	36
4.2.10.	Optimising opportunities from Heathrow and Crossrail	36
4.2.15.	Facilitating infrastructure development	37
4.2.18.	Developer contributions and viability	37
4.2.21.	The "Slough Pound"	38
4.2.23.	Town Centre First	38
4.2.31.	Supporting growth in jobs	38
4.2.36.	Supporting education and workplace learning	39
4.2.38.	Simplified planning for business	39
4.2.40.	Support for new and growing businesses	39
4.2.43.	Investing in digital infrastructure	39
4.2.45.	Investing in housing	39
4.3.	Meeting future housing need	39
4.3.2.	Delivering enough homes	40
4.3.5.	Higher density in new developments	40
4.3.8.	Houses on small sites	40
4.3.10.	Council's led housing delivery	40
4.3.12.	Options for strategic sites outside Slough Borough Council	41
4.3.15.	Providing a choice of housing for residents	41
4.3.21.	Releasing Green Belt land for housing	42
4.3.26.	Providing affordable housing to those who need it most	42
4.4.	Fostering choices for communities	43
4.4.2.	Encouraging neighbourhoods to say what they need	43
4.4.6.	Providing more housing within existing neighbourhoods	43
4.4.9.	Enhancing the green environment	43
4.4.11.	Living locally	44
4.4.14.	Creating a sense of place in neighbourhoods	44
4.5.	Making it easier to move around	44
4.5.5.	Locating development in the most accessible locations	45
4.5.8.	Using new development to create high quality public transport networks	45
4.5.11.	Removing pinch points	45
4.5.14.	Traffic management	45
4.5.17.	Smart infrastructure strategies which improve traffic conditions	45
4.5.19.	Travel planning	46
4.5.22.	High quality efficient and affordable public transport system	46
4.5.24.	Better bus service	46
4.5.29.	Better rail service	46
4.5.36.	Increased walking and cycling	47
4.5.42.	Parking restraint	47
4.6.	Insisting upon design quality and environmental standards	47
4.6.2.	Good design is non negotiable	48
4.6.8.	Enhancing key corridors and gateways	48

4.6.12.	Quality in other public realm	48
4.6.16.	Design priorities in residential areas	48
4.6.18.	Achieving a sense of place in new neighbourhoods	49
4.6.23.	Residential standards	49
4.6.26.	Environmental protection policies	49
4.6.28.	Flood risk and watercourses	50
4.6.30.	Ecology and biodiversity	50

5. Section D: Spatial Options

5.1.4.	The Spatial Options	51
A.	Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)	54
B.	Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)	59
C.	Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road	63
D.	Regeneration of the selected areas:	
	D1 - Canal basin	67
	D2 - New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road	70
	D3 - Chalvey regeneration	73
E.	Estate Renewal	76
F.	Intensification of the suburbs	78
G.	Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing	82
H.	Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)	85
I.	Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)	89
J.	Expansion of Slough	
	J1 - Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb)	92
	J2 - Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)	97
K.	Build in other areas outside of Slough	100

6. Section E: Questions

Figures

Figure 1: Slough in the region	5
Figure 2: Slough's neighbours	5
Figure 3: Slough Population Projections 2015-2036	8
Figure 4: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2014	9
Figure 5: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2036	9
Figure 6: Housing Trajectory 2013-2036	15
Figure 7: Options Index - location plan	53
Figure 8: Option A	58
Figure 9: Option B	62
Figure 10: Option C	66
Figure 11: Option D1	69
Figure 12: Option D2	72
Figure 13: Option D3	75
Figure 14: Option H	89
Figure 15: Housing Trajectory	92
Figure 16: Option J1	96
Figure 17: Option J2	99

Tables

Table 1: Key statistics of Slough	7
-----------------------------------	---

Abbreviations

CC:	County Council
EDNA:	Economic Development Needs Assessment
GVA:	Gross Value Added
HFR:	Housing Flow Reconciliation
HGV:	Heavy Good Vehicle
LTP3:	Local Transport Plan 3
MOVA:	Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation
NPPF:	National Planning Policy Framework
OAHN:	Objectively Assessed Housing Need
ONS:	Office of National Statistics
PRS:	Private Rented Sector
SCOOT:	Split Cycle and Offset Optimisation Technique
SEN:	Special Education Needs
SEP:	Strategic Economic Plan
SHMA:	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SMaRT:	Slough Mass Rapid Transit
SME:	Small and medium sized enterprises
TVBLEP:	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
VOA:	Valuation Office Agency
WRAtH/WRLtH:	Western Rail Link to Heathrow

1. Introduction

1.1. *The Issues and Options Consultation*

- 1.1.1. This document has been produced by Slough Borough Council as the first stage of preparing a new Local Plan. The Local Plan 2016-2036 will guide development in the Borough for the next 20 years and hopefully create a place where people want to live, work, play and stay.
- 1.1.2. The Council has prepared this Issues and Options document in order to begin the consultation process on the Plan. This is not a draft Local Plan, rather it is a discussion paper on the overarching strategic issues. The document sets out the Council's current view of the major issues the new Local Plan will need to address, our thoughts on the policy responses to them, and set of spatial options that could begin to deliver them.
- 1.1.3. This document is necessarily long and at times technical, so we have also produced a short summary which is available at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan.

1.2. *How does this feed into the Local Plan (2016-2036)?*

- 1.2.1. The new Local Plan can have a major role in the way Slough develops over the next 20 years. In doing so it will have to take account of the Government's planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also has to take account of the Council's other strategies such as the 5 Year Plan and the strategies and plans of other organisations.
- 1.2.2. The new Local Plan for Slough will eventually contain a number of policies and site allocations to guide future development in the borough. It will set out our housing allocation and where development will happen, including land for housing, employment, infrastructure and community uses. It will also identify areas to be protected such as public open space and areas important for biodiversity.

Once adopted it will become the key document in the determination of planning applications in Slough.

- 1.2.3. Many planning issues cover a much wider geographical area than the Local Plan. The council has a requirement under the Duty to Cooperate set out in the Localism Act 2011 to engage with other planning authorities on a constructive and on-going basis throughout the preparation of a Local Plan, so that strategic, cross boundary matters are dealt with effectively in individual Local Plans. The publication of this Issues and Options document is an important step which will help to inform future discussions with our Duty to Cooperate partners.
- 1.2.4. Any new policies and proposals that are eventually included in the Local Plan will have to demonstrate that they are sustainable, realistic and supported by the necessary evidence. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report has been prepared and is available at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>. This sets out the baseline information for Slough and identifies issues the borough is facing.
- 1.2.5. A high level Sustainability Appraisal of the Spatial Options in this document has also been carried out and is also available at the link above.

1.3. *What is this consultation about?*

- 1.3.1. We have published this document in order to get feedback on what the key issues facing Slough are and how we should plan to deal with them. We are particularly interested in your views on the proposed Spatial Options for the future development of Slough. We have a number of questions which you are invited to answer but we welcome any planning related comments that you would like to make.
- 1.3.2. We have also published our evidence base and topic papers that have informed the issues and options document.

Consultation questions

Q1.	Do you agree we should plan to meet our local housing needs in or around Slough? <i>If not, where should new housing go?</i>
Q2.	Do you agree that we should be building more high quality homes to meet future aspirations of local people? <i>If not, what type of housing would you want?</i>
Q3.	Do you agree that we should continue to promote Slough as a major employment centre? / <i>f not, how should we provide new jobs for local people?</i>
Q4.	Do you agree that Slough Town Centre should be revitalised as a commercial, leisure and retail centre? <i>If not, what should the future of the town centre be?</i>
Q5.	Do you agree that we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development? <i>If not, what sort of development should we allow in the Suburbs?</i>
Q6.	Do you agree that we should plan to get the maximum benefits and mitigate from environmental impacts of growth at Heathrow Airport? <i>If not, what should our approach to Heathrow be?</i>
Q7.	Do you agree we should use strong measures to discourage people using their car for short journeys? <i>If not, how should we try to stop congestion getting worse?</i>
Q8.	Do you agree that we should insist on better design to improve image of Slough? <i>Can do you think of other ways we could improve the image of Slough?</i>
Q9.	Which Spatial Options do you support and why?
Q10.	Which Spatial Options do you object to and why?
Q11.	Any other comments?

- 1.3.3. In order to help you answer these questions please read the relevant sections of this document and supporting evidence.
- 1.3.4. The consultation will run for 6 weeks from Friday 16 January to Monday 27 February 2017. All responses must be received before the close of consultation at 5pm.
- 1.3.5. We request that responses are submitted using the online form if possible. The questions are also available in Word and .Pdf documents, and can be accessed from the following link:
www.slough.gov.uk/localplan.
- Those not using the online form should submit representations
- via email to:
planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk
 - via post to: Slough Borough Council, Planning Policy, St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, SL1 3UF
- 1.3.6. If you have any queries in relation to the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation, please contact the Planning Policy team using the contact details above or call 01753 477341.

1.4. What will happen next?

- 1.4.1. The Council will use the results of this consultation to develop a 'Preferred Option' plan over spring and summer 2017. That will include more detailed evidence gathering and testing. There will also be further discussion with Duty to Cooperate partners. We intend to consult on the Preferred Option Plan in autumn/winter 2017.
- 1.4.2. The Local Development Scheme sets out our timetable for the production of the new Local Plan and is available online.

1.5. What will happen to the council's existing planning policies?

- 1.5.1. Slough has an existing planning policy framework which consists of the following documents:
- The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2008)
 - Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2010)
 - Saved policies in the Local Plan for Slough (adopted 2004)
 - Saved policies from the Replacement Berkshire Minerals Plan (2001)
 - Saved policies from the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (1998)
- All of these will remain in force until they are replaced by the new Local Plan policies.

Find out more

To help understand the consultation we have produced a short magazine that summarises the challenges Slough faces and the options for addressing them, including proposals for development in some areas like Langley and the town centre.

A copy is available online, with paper copies at the Curve, Landmark Place and some community centres.

The full detailed consultation document, the 'Issues and Options consultation' and supporting technical information are available to view online and at the Curve, or by prior arrangement at St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road opposite Montem Leisure Centre (email planningpolicy@Slough.gov.uk).

2. Section A: Context

2.1. *Aim of the plan*

- 2.1.1. It is important not to pre-determine what the final version of the Local Plan will look like until we have considered all of the options and listened to what people have to say. Nevertheless it is helpful to set out from the beginning what we think that the aims of the plan should be.
- 2.1.2. At its simplest we want to make Slough a better place for Slough people. We recognise that it has an important role within the region and want to play our part as a successful commercial centre.
- 2.1.3. Slough has been very successful in accommodating growth in the past and we want it to continue to do so in the future. Much of this growth is needed to accommodate our existing population and it is important that new growth takes place in a way that doesn't disrupt existing communities.
- 2.1.4. We are ambitious for our residents and our town which we think deserves a better reputation as a place where people want to live, work, rest, play and stay.
- 2.1.5. In order to provide some context for the Review of the Local Plan it is necessary to understand Slough as it is today, consider what lessons we can learn from the recent past and attempt to identify the key drivers of change that will effect what will happen to it in the future.

2.2. *Slough today*

- 2.2.1. Slough is situated to the West of London in the Thames Valley. It has developed through the amalgamation of villages along the Great West Road, and has retained its linear shape as the area grew during the 20th century. It shares most of its northern and western boundary with South Bucks District Council (Buckinghamshire CC) and its southern boundary with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It bounds the London Borough of Hillingdon to the east

near Heathrow and has a very small boundary with Spelthorne Borough Council (Surrey CC) at the south east corner of the Borough.

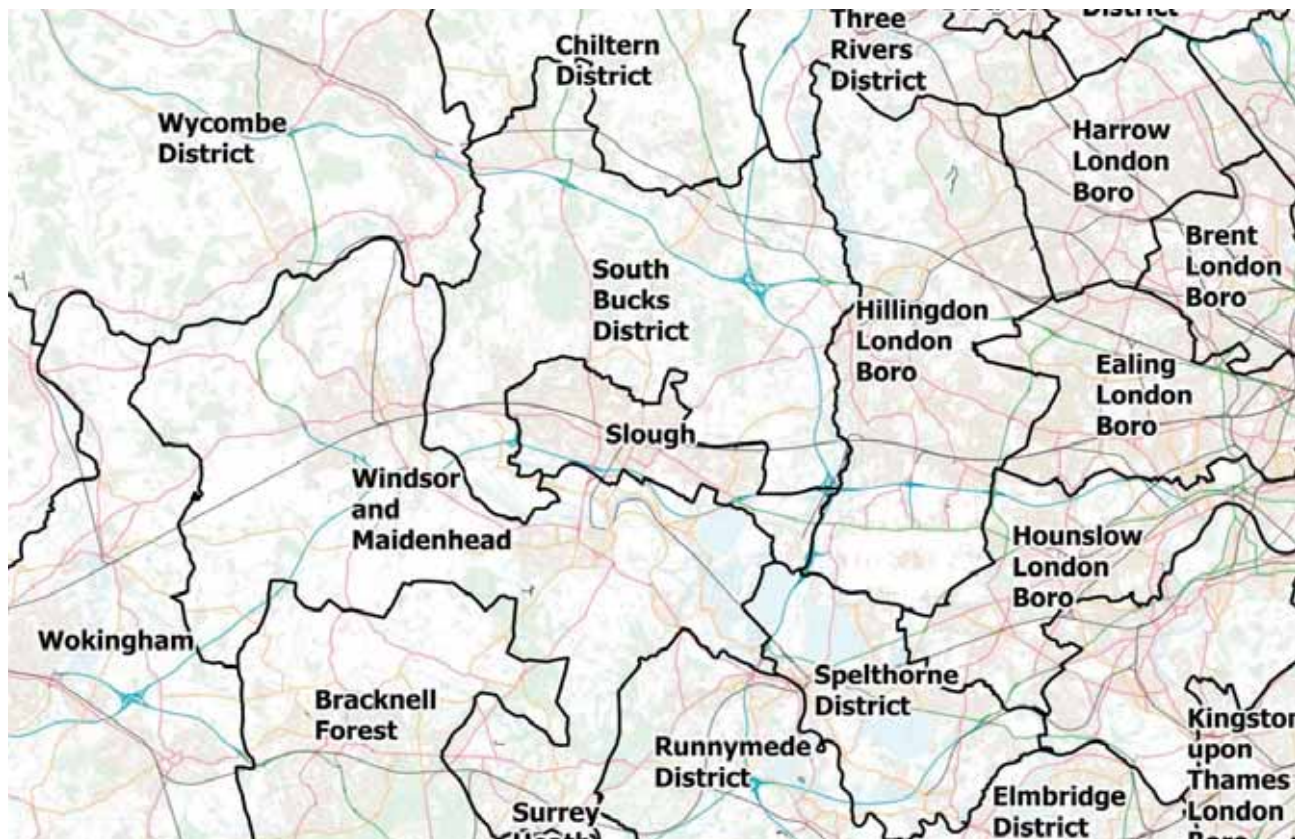
- 2.2.2. The Borough has a small geographical area: just 32.5 km². This means that with a population of around 148,000 people it is densely built up in a way that is more comparable with London than the neighbouring Boroughs.
- 2.2.3. There are around 53,000 houses in the Borough, mostly in suburban areas built in the last century. Recently a lot of new flats have been built in the town centre.
- 2.2.4. It has the well known Slough Trading Estate which is the largest of its kind in single ownership in the country. There are a number of other business areas, including the Poyle Trading Estate which mainly serves Heathrow airport. The town centre is an important transport hub and commercial centre which is currently undergoing major regeneration.
- 2.2.5. Slough is bordered by countryside which is particularly important for the access it gives our residents to parks, open areas and leisure space.
- 2.2.6. The town has a long history of having a culturally and ethnically diverse residential community which has created a place that is unique and valued by those who live and work here.
- 2.2.7. The 2011 Census indicated that 40% of the population was classified Asian or Asian British and 36% White British. Over 150 languages have been recorded as being spoken in Slough schools.

Figure 1: Slough in the region



Data from Ordnance Survey (2016).

Figure 2: Slough's neighbours



Data from Ordnance Survey (2016).

- 2.2.8. Slough has the highest proportion of people who profess a faith anywhere in England. It has the highest percentage of Sikh residents in the UK and the highest percentage of Muslim and Hindu residents in the South East outside of London. The town has a high level of community cohesion with the vast majority of residents agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- 2.2.9. The Borough has a significantly younger population compared to any of the south east local authorities with around 28% of people being under twenty.
- 2.2.10. Slough has an excellent education system. The GCSE results in all Slough schools were the seventh best in the country. Statistics show that as a result of getting a good start in life there are very high levels of social mobility in the Borough. This is important because, although there are lots of well-paid jobs in Slough, on average residents earn less than those working in the town or living in the surrounding areas.
- 2.2.11. Slough has transformed itself from a predominantly industrial town into a commercial centre with a range of more knowledge based businesses. It is claimed that Slough has more European Corporate HQs than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined.
- 2.2.12. There are around 80,000 jobs in Slough which contribute around £7bn to the national economy which is why it can be described as an “economic powerhouse”.
- 2.2.13. One of the reasons for Slough’s success is that it is one of the best connected places in the country. The proposed expansion of Heathrow with a new rail link to Slough (Western Rail Link to Heathrow ‘WRLtH’) will make international travel even easier. The town has access to both the M4 and M25 motorways. When it opens in 2019 the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) will provide direct train services into central London and beyond.
- 2.2.14. Slough also has Windsor and all of the attractions of the Thames Valley on its doorstep.
- 2.2.15. All that Slough needs now is to shake off the unfair legacy of John Betjeman’s poem about “Friendly Bombs” in order to become an even better place to live, work and do business.

2.3. Past performance

- 2.3.1. Before we plan for the future it can be helpful to see if there are any lessons to be learnt from the way that Slough has adapted to change and managed to grow in the past.
- 2.3.2. Slough grew rapidly during the 20th Century mainly as a result of the development of the Slough Trading Estate. Utilising its strategic location between London and Berkshire on the M4 Thames Valley corridor and excellent rail, road and air transport links, Slough continued to grow as a “working town” attracting residents from all over the world. It earned a reputation as an affordable town for those seeking a better quality of life through working and educating themselves.
- 2.3.3. This trend continued over the last 15 years as shown in the table below. Slough’s population increased by almost 23% (Table 1: Key statistics of Slough). Slough has always attracted a variety of people to live and work in the town. Between 2001 and 2011 the percentage of the population describing themselves as ‘non-white’ had increased from 36% to 54% (ONS, 2011).
- 2.3.4. At the same time the housing stock has increased by just over 18%, and the number of jobs increased by almost 29% (Table 1: Key statistics of Slough). By UK standards, this is very strong growth.

Table 1: Key statistics

Totals:	Year			
	2001	2011	2013	2016
Population	120,577	140,713	143,024	147,820
Number of dwellings	45,678	51,781	52,439	54,126
Average house price	£142,000	£253,000	£291,000	£371,000
Number of jobs	91,260	91,450	92,885	94,800
Unemployment rate	3.8%	7.3%	7.4%	4.7%

ONS (2016), Land Registry (2016), Estimations based on LLPG data (2016), Estimations based on Cambridge Econometrics (2013)

2.3.5. Much of this growth has been planned. For example, we have

- delivered a major urban extension at Cippenham providing 1,682 new houses together with a new school, community centre, local shops, and playing field;
- collaborated with SEGRO and created the Simplified Planning Zone to transform the Slough Estate from a predominantly industrial area into a modern business park;
- delivered affordable homes at Ditton Park, Wexham and Castleview on former Green Belt;
- delivered comprehensive redevelopment in the town centre through the Heart Of Slough with improvements to the road network with the new bus station and The Curve; and
- undertaken major estate renewal developments such as at Britwell.

2.3.6. Other growth in Slough has been accommodated without any major planning intervention but has come about as a result of 'organic growth'. One of the functions of the Local Plan will be to produce Development Management policies which will determine how individual planning applications are dealt with.

Conclusion

2.3.7. The analysis of what has happened in the recent past shows that Slough has been capable of successfully accommodating growth through the use of a wide range of planning strategies and organic growth.

2.4. Key drivers of change to 2036

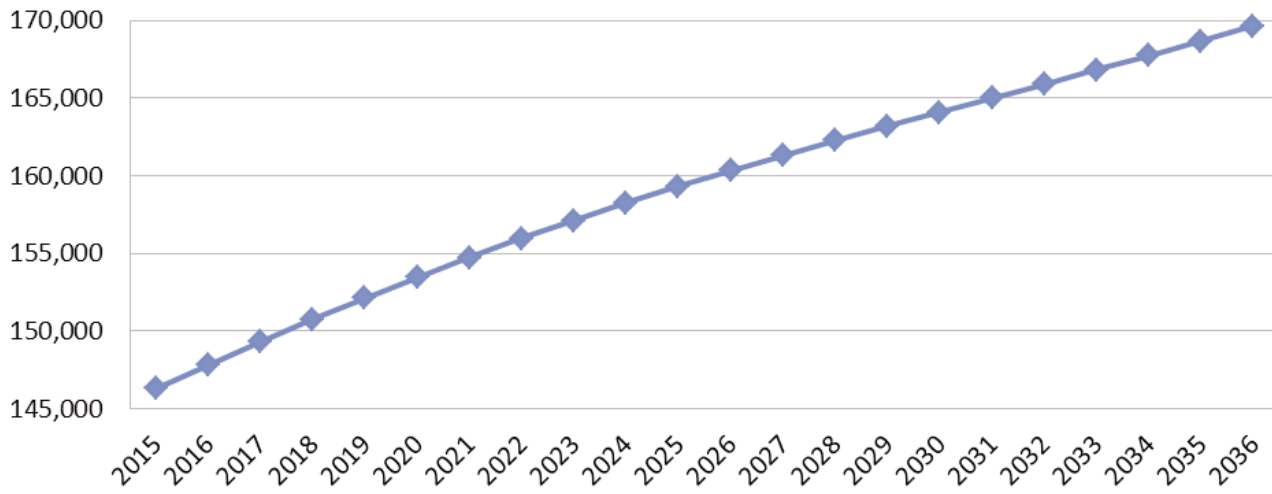
2.4.1. Just as Slough has changed over the past twenty years, we anticipate that it will continue to change over the lifetime of the plan. This section sets out what we think the key trends and developments will be which will help to shape the future of Slough. This concentrates upon four things which are most likely to happen that we have least control over.

2.4.2. Slough's population will continue to increase

2.4.3. The biggest factor that will affect Slough is that the population will continue to grow. This will affect many of the things that the Local Plan will have to deal with.

2.4.4. The Government Office of National Statistics (ONS) projects that Slough's population will increase by over 15% from almost 148,000 in 2016 to around 169,600 in 2036 (see Figure 3: Slough Population Projections 2015-2036).

Figure 3: Slough Population Projections 2015-2036.

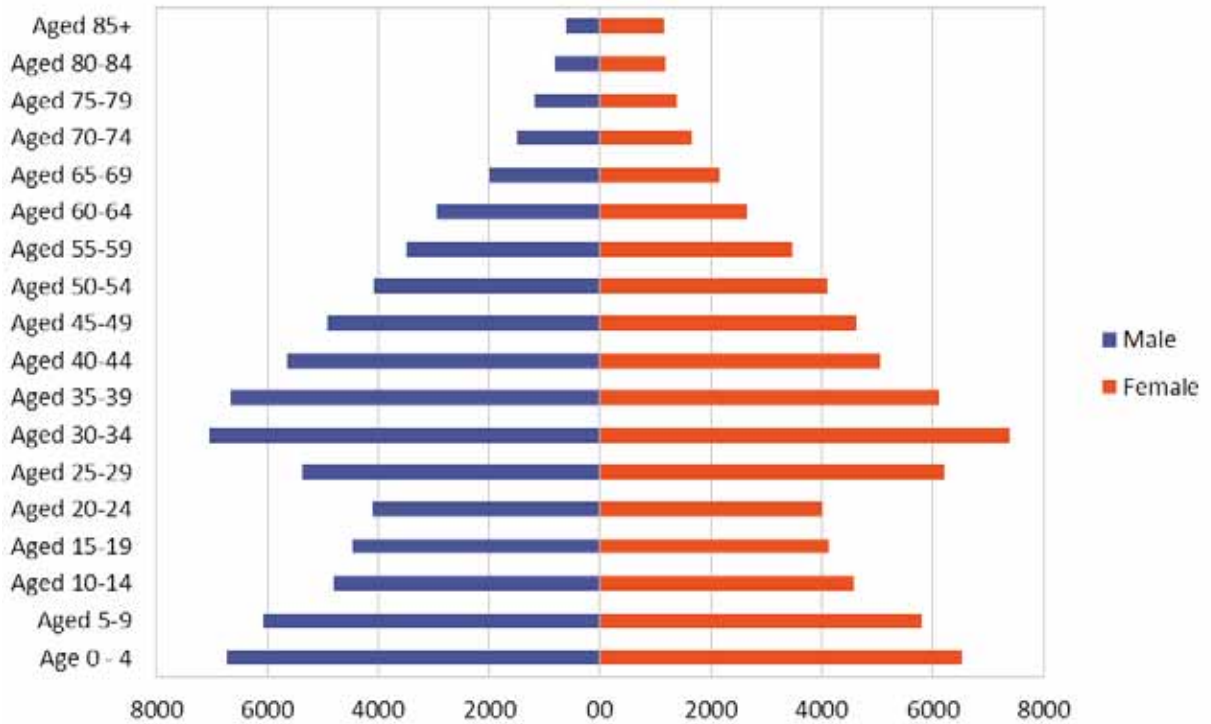


ONS (2016).

- 2.4.5. The main reason for the large projected increase in population is that Slough has a high proportion of people aged 30 to 40 and a large number of children under ten. In 2015 the fertility rate in Slough was 2.23 children per woman which is significantly higher than the national average of 1.82 children per woman¹.
- 2.4.6. In addition to the population increasing in Slough over the plan period, the age profile will also change. A comparison of the graph for 2036 in Figure 4 with the one for 2014 shows that Slough will have a much more balanced population with almost equal numbers of people in all age groups up to 60. Although there will be relatively fewer people over 60 than other age groups there will still be a significant increase in the number of elderly people compared to 2014. This change in the age profile will have an effect upon the type of housing and services that we will have to provide.
- 2.4.7. Overall having a large percentage of people of working age will be an advantage providing we can ensure that there are enough jobs for them.
- 2.4.8. The growth in population is the main reason that we will need more houses in Slough. It will also result in the need for more jobs and raise pressure on existing physical and social infrastructure.
- 2.4.9. Shopping patterns are changing and Slough town centre is at risk**
- 2.4.10. In the Core Strategy (2008) Slough town centre was classified as a “Primary Regional Centre” which drew shoppers from beyond the Borough’s boundary. This is reflected in the fact that in 2006 Slough was ranked as the 57th most important shopping centre in the country. Ten years later Slough has dropped significantly to 147th (Javelin Group, VENUESCORE 2016). By comparison Reading remains a top destination and is ranked 14th in the country.

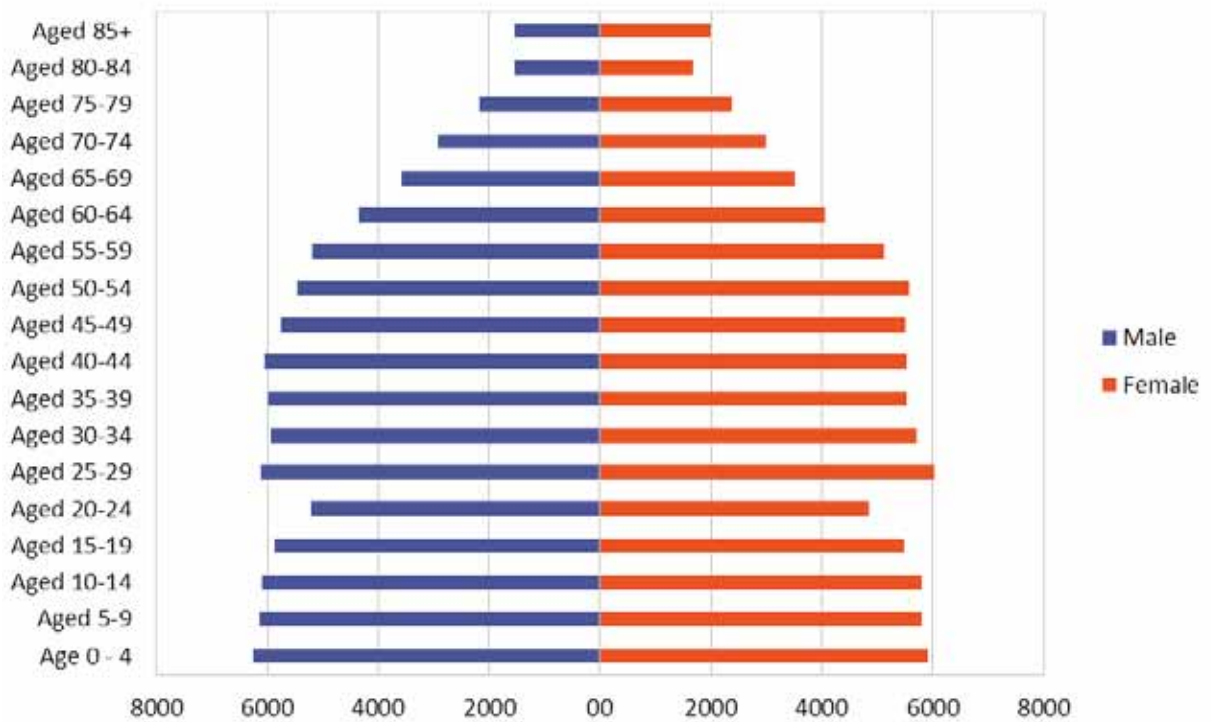
¹ Office for National Statistics, Birth Summary Tables, www.ons.gov.uk

Figure 4: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2014



ONS (2016).

Figure 5: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2036



ONS (2016).

- 2.4.11. This means that Slough is no longer a sub-regional centre and will continue to decline unless significant action is taken.
- 2.4.12. A household survey conducted by Cushman and Wakefield in January 2015 showed that Slough's catchment area had reduced significantly to around 60,000 people. This means that it is not serving the whole of the population of the Borough and that many Slough residents are going to other destinations for their main shopping. 12% of the interviewees stated they didn't shop in Slough because of the poor range of non-food shops. A further 13% said that Slough had an unattractive environment or was not a very nice place.
- 2.4.13. Shopping patterns are changing everywhere as result of the internet and the rise of online shopping. This means that only those centres which are offering 'destination shopping experiences' or leisure activities are prospering. Slough town centre is not in this category and there is a significant risk that the demand for retail uses will continue to decline.
- 2.4.14. The rise in click and collect and other changes to consumer patterns mean that more people like to shop locally in smaller stores on a day to day basis which are more convenient for them than the large superstores. There are three large superstores in Slough with two others close to its western boundary. It is unlikely that any more will be needed in the plan period and the role of the existing ones may change.
- 2.4.15. Shopping provision is not evenly provided across the Borough in that there are no superstores or retail parks in the east which also has fewer local facilities. The change in shopping patterns means that District Centres, Neighbourhood centres, Local parades and individual corner shops are likely to have an increasingly important function in meeting consumer needs in the future.
- 2.4.16. Heathrow Airport will continue to have a major impact on the way Slough develops**
- 2.4.17. Heathrow Airport already has a significant influence in Slough. In October 2016 the Government announced its support for expansion through the construction of a third runway which will partly be built within the Borough at Colnbrook. The construction of the runway and all of the ancillary development that goes with it would result in major changes to the eastern part of the Borough. There would also be changes to the road network and travel patterns, as well as the environment of the area.
- 2.4.18. It is estimated that there could be up to 77,000 new jobs by 2030 of which 5,000 would be apprenticeships. The overall benefit to the economy could be a billion pounds a year. The new runway would also mean that Heathrow would be even better connected to more long haul destinations around the world.
- 2.4.19. The expansion of the airport will also have a number of impacts on the environment. These include potential increased noise and worsening air quality. There will also be more traffic and the loss of open land within the Colne Valley Park. There will also be the loss of some premises to make way for the new runway.
- 2.4.20. If it is decided that the third runway should go ahead, because it is in the national interest, the existing Core Strategy policies which seek to preserve a Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London and to protect the Colne Valley Park will have to be reviewed.
- 2.4.21. It will be a few years before any detailed permission for the third runway could be granted which means that there will be a period of uncertainty about the proposal. It will be important to ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in the Colnbrook and Poyle area until the future of Heathrow is resolved.

2.4.22. It should be noted that the various housing and employment forecasts quoted in this document do not take account of the possible expansion of Heathrow. These will have to be updated as decisions are made about the new runway.

2.4.23. Slough has very little available land for growth, therefore a new approach to accommodating development is needed

2.4.24. Slough Borough has a very small geographical area of just 32.5 km². With a population of 148,000 people and major employment areas it is one of the most tightly bound and urbanised local authorities in the UK. The population density of 45 persons per hectare (pph) means that Slough is ten times denser than the South East as a whole (4 pph) and is almost comparable to the density for London which is 55 pph (ONS 2001).

2.4.25. Yet Slough must plan to accommodate both population growth and also growth and change in the economy, including provision of national infrastructure projects such as the Heathrow expansion, Crossrail and WRLTH.

2.4.26. This means that the Local Plan will have to find different ways of accommodating growth compared to the past. The scarcity of land has become a driver for change in its own right.

2.4.27. The shortage of developable land will affect how the necessary physical, environmental and social infrastructure required to support both population and economic growth is provided. It will necessitate most growth being accommodated on previously developed land rather than greenfield sites. The capacity to provide all infrastructure within the borough is an issue which will require co-operative discussions with adjoining local authorities. It is probable that new digital technology will be utilised to facilitate changes in the way people live and work that makes better use of space and services available.

2.5. Vision

- 2.5.1. Very few local authorities in the UK have the opportunity to grow in the way that Slough has. We set out our aims for the Plan at the beginning of the document and, taking account of all of the available information, it is considered the following vision should be used to guide the plan making process. In formulating the vision we have taken account of other Slough Borough Council strategies and plans.

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. Objectives

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.*

3. Section B: The big strategic issues

3.1. Overview

- 3.1.1. The previous section set out the vision and objectives for the kind of place that we want Slough to be by the end of this planning period in 2036. In this section we are outlining the ten big issues that need to be considered in planning how development will be managed in Slough in order to achieve this vision and respond to the key drivers of change.
- 3.1.2. There are a few themes that run through all the strategic issues that need to be addressed in the Review of the Local Plan. These are how much growth we should plan for given the shortage of land for development, the problem of congestion, and the potential impact of development upon the quality of the environment. Image and viability are also important considerations as these impact on the attractiveness of the town and therefore the ability to attract investment.

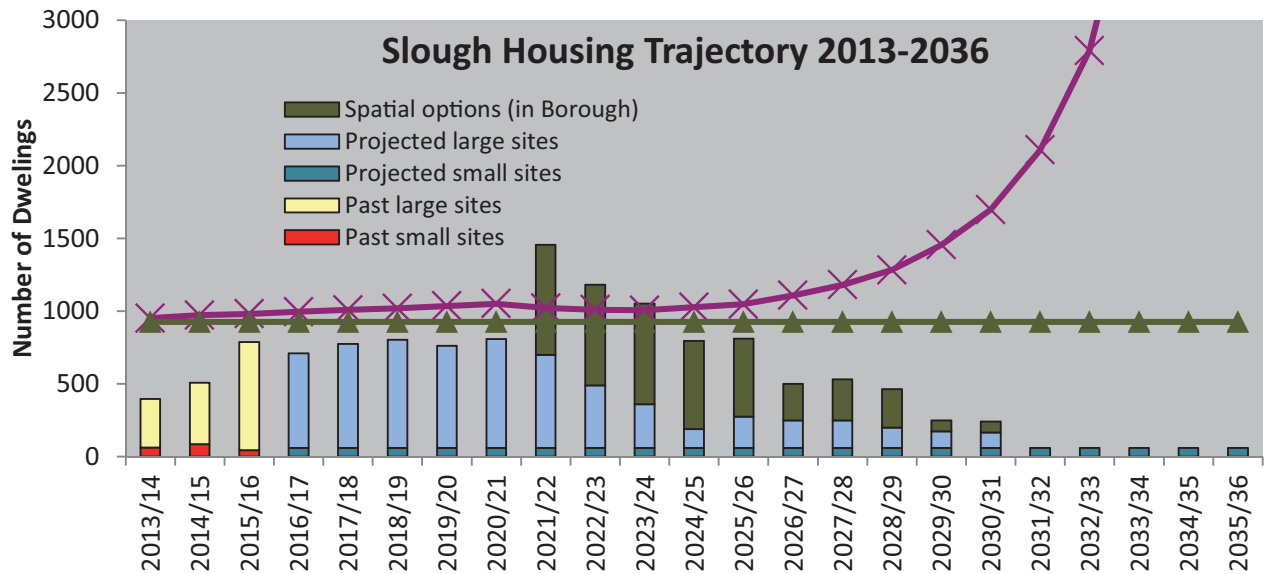
3.2. *How can we meet as much of our objectively assessed housing need of 927 dwellings a year as close as possible to where these needs arise?*

- 3.2.1. One of our Objectives is to meet as much as possible of the objectively assessed need for housing within the borough or as close as possible to where the need arises.
- 3.2.2. The results of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Berkshire (including South Bucks) (SHMA), which was published by GL Hearn in February 2016, shows that Slough's Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) is for an average of 927 homes a year. This is a much higher building rate than we have managed in the past. If we were to build 927 homes a year from 2013 to 2036 there would be 21,321 new homes in Slough. This would result in a 41% increase in the housing stock which was 52,212 in 2013 (HFR, 2013).

The study also identifies the need for a significant amount of affordable housing to meet local needs.

- 3.2.3. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment was carried out in accordance with government guidance using the data that was available at the time. It takes into account projections for how the population is growing, draws on information on rates of household formation, economic conditions, employment growth prospects, and an extensive range of other factors. There are two significant constraints which affect our ability to meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs. The first is the shortage of land for development which has been highlighted above. The second is the potential lack of viability which could prevent new housing coming forward and being delivered at the rate, scale and quality that is required.
- 3.2.4. It has not been possible to deliver as many as 927 houses a year in Slough in the past. Slough has been able to achieve its previous target of 550 homes per year and the Core Strategy and Site Allocations have established planning policies that should continue to enable new homes to be built at that rate. The latest housing trajectory shows that, based on existing commitments including sites with planning permission and existing plan site allocations and proposals under discussion, up to 800 homes per year will be built over the next 5 years. After this, the level of house building will fall to well below this level unless we actively plan for new development and identify further land for housing.

Figure 6: Housing Trajectory 2013-2036



3.2.5. Historically, Slough has been able to meet its need for housing by building upon both brownfield and greenfield land. Not all remaining development of the land is suitable for housing - some is subject to flooding, some affected by airport extension plans, some is essential for environmental protection reasons. Some brownfield land would require such substantial remediation that redevelopment is less likely to happen.

3.2.6. Former employment land has been changed to residential use in the past, but the need for housing has to be set alongside the need to protect land for employment to retain and create new jobs and support the economy of Slough. In addition to existing sites allocated for housing, new opportunities for large scale redevelopment of vacant or redundant employment and other sites will be identified through the Plan process. These may provide sites for sustainable expansion of housing in new neighbourhoods. There could be valuable opportunities for mixed use developments in the future particularly in the town centre and other local centres. Piecemeal development of smaller employment sites could also deliver more housing but this could equally endanger jobs and services in local areas and compromise other plan objectives.

3.2.7. In the past Slough has released Green Belt land in order to meet housing needs. The last of these sites are now under construction and so it will be necessary to consider more Green Belt land. There are, however, very few developable sites left within Slough's very tightly drawn boundary. As a result this option may not be a major source of new housing. It will be necessary to show that there are exceptional circumstances before any changes can be made to Green Belt boundaries, and the sites will need to be assessed for flood risk and other sustainability matters.

3.2.8. The Council has used its knowledge of Slough to identify potential housing sites and has also asked for suggestions in the public "Call for Sites" in early 2016. These exercises identified a number of potential options for significant quantities of housing to be provided. The contribution from development on these options sites within the Borough are discussed in the policy directions and spatial options sections in this document. Even taking an optimistic view of suitability and deliverability of building housing on the remainder of the sites that came forward through the "Call for Sites", they will not come close to satisfying housing need later in the plan period.

- 3.2.9. Increasing housing need, coupled with a shortage of undeveloped land within the Borough means that we will have to look at range of alternative ways of accommodating new housing development. We will need to consider whether existing suburban areas could accommodate more intensive use of the land in a way that will still be acceptable to the way people in Slough want to live. The design, form and mix of new development should ensure that a healthy well designed environment is created for residents and that on smaller or more constrained sites, the character of the adjacent area is respected.
- 3.2.10. The needs of new and existing communities for schools, health care and leisure/green space will also need to be provided at appropriate levels. This will require additional land and resources.
- 3.2.11. If we still cannot meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Need within Slough it will be necessary to look outside of our boundaries. Based upon the principle of meeting needs as close to where they arise this would involve expanding the built up area of Slough. Other options will also have to be considered in discussions with other local planning authorities.
- 3.2.12. Experience has shown that even when we are able to identify sites in Slough, not all of them come forward for development. Some sites which have been promoted by landowners and received planning permission still do not get built. There can be a number of reasons for this, which includes developers "land banking" but the main one tends to be the lack of viability in the Slough market caused by Slough's comparatively low house prices. There are signs that this may be changing but the Local Plan will have to try to ensure that measures are in place to encourage the delivery of new housing at a higher rate than has been achieved in the past.
- 3.2.13. The draft Housing Strategy for Slough (Nov 2016) explains how the Council will deliver more affordable housing on its own land, through estate renewal or as part of an acquisition and building programme. Although Government changes to housing benefits and the way that Councils are able to finance the management and expansion of their housing stock has yet to be fully clarified, the Council already has a programme of 190 affordable homes which it is delivering directly on its own land during the lifetime of the strategy. As a result of Slough's proactive approach it is estimated that 200 new units, including affordable housing, can be delivered or facilitated each year during the five year life of the Strategy. It is also estimated that over the next 15 years a net gain of 1,000 units can be achieved on land held by the Council. This will be a very welcome contribution to meeting housing need and policies to facilitate these coming forward should be developed.
- Gypsy and travellers housing**
- 3.2.14. The Council has a duty to plan for the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. The Council needs to gather more evidence as to the need of these communities. Therefore it is proposed that planning policies to address these issues will be considered at a subsequent stage of the plan making process.
- Self build and custom housing**
- 3.2.15. The Government has recently introduced requirements on councils to ensure that land is available through the planning system for people to build or commission homes for their own use. A register has been set up for people to register their interest. At present 15 people or groups have registered in Slough. The plan should consider how the council could encourage suitable sites to be brought forward on the market to meet this fairly limited level of demand.

Conclusion

3.2.16. It will be very challenging to build the 927 dwellings a year that are required to meet Slough's Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) over the plan period given the built up character of the area and competing demands from other strategic needs such as employment. Responding to these issues will require a wide range of new initiatives and the identification of a large number of new housing sites within, on the edge or outside of Slough. It may also require us to consider new forms of development at a higher density with more flats and apartments in comprehensive well designed housing schemes. Most new housing will be built upon previously developed land including a range of large strategic sites some of which have been previously used for employment. A smaller proportion could potentially be delivered as the result of infilling or redevelopment of existing housing. There may be scope for some greenfield development on the edge of the town for family housing subject to detailed consideration of Green Belt policy issues.

3.3. How can we offer a wide choice of high quality housing and create balanced communities?

- 3.3.1. One of our Objectives is to provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard. Another Objective is to create a balanced housing market.
- 3.3.2. The evidence shows that the population of Slough is both growing and changing. We have aspirations that it should be a place where people can work, rest, play and stay. This means that we need to make Slough a place where people have the choice of accommodation to meet their lifestyle at different stages in their lives. We need to recognise the different needs of people in larger extended families with both children and elderly people living together, working families, younger working people without

children, single working people and elderly or people with disabilities who are possibly living alone, and others. We want to give those people who will be growing up, educated or working in Slough the choice to stay within their existing community. Retaining their social network can be beneficial for wellbeing and health, is good for the community and reduces the need to travel.

- 3.3.3. Most of the housing stock was built in the 20th century when Slough was a boom town. There is only a limited amount of the Victorian "heritage" property that you find in neighbouring towns. As a result we need to make the most of what we have in order to fill this niche in the market. There are very few houses in Slough at the top end of the market with none in the most expensive Council Tax band H and only 0.6% in band G (Valuation Office Agency, 2016). By comparison South Bucks District has 30% of its properties in these bands. As a result consideration needs to be given as to whether higher specification residential accommodation could be provided in Slough.
- 3.3.4. There is also a need for high quality family housing in Slough which can compete with what is on offer in the surrounding areas. Whilst the need for higher density development means that we are not going to be building new houses with large gardens we can try to make sure that there is a range of good quality housing built in and on the edge of Slough which can meet the needs and aspirations of the community.
- 3.3.5. In order to do this it will also be necessary to improve the quality of the environment and appearance of the street scene within some existing neighbourhoods.
- 3.3.6. In the last ten years on average around 60% of all of the new dwellings built have been flats. Projections based on the Housing Trajectory show that because of the nature of the sites that are likely to come forward in the future, up to 80% of new builds will be flats.

- 3.3.7. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimates the size of accommodation required for the affordable and market sectors. Slough needs 61% of private market dwellings and 27% of affordable housing to be 3 bedrooms or larger.
- 3.3.8. This indicates that there is still a high need for family housing in Slough. Whilst households have in many cases managed to adapt their living accommodation to try to meet their requirements, there clearly is a need for an ongoing supply of family housing.
- 3.3.9. As a result there is a question as to how the need for 3 bed units will be met in the future. Will we be able to accommodate all families in houses with gardens or will some have to live in apartments in the future?
- 3.3.10. Since new development is likely to contain a high proportion of flats it will be all the more important that we retain our existing stock of family housing if we are going to meet future needs. We also need to think about how we allow existing houses to be adapted to larger families and what impact this has on the open character of the suburbs.
- 3.3.11. As Slough's population gets older there will also be a need for properties that can be adapted to meet the needs of the elderly and new specialist accommodation can be provided within the neighbourhoods where people live. Similarly there are other groups in the population who have specific needs. Some of these could potentially find appropriate housing within the mixed use environment of the town centre and other larger developments. But for others, meeting such needs in suburban areas would enable people to live locally at all stages of their life.
- 3.3.12. The needs of local people will only be met if they can afford to live in the housing that is available.**
- 3.3.13. Slough is different to many towns in that only just over half (56%) of homes are owner occupied while 24% of properties are privately rented. Although the privately rented proportion is very high compared to other areas, it is likely to grow as a result of increasing demand from people who can't afford, or don't want to buy a house. An increase in supply is therefore likely to come from PRS and institutions who will build and let whole blocks of flats, Buy to Let landlords who will acquire new or old property as an investment and a whole range of private landlords who provide a variety of accommodation including the 100 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) that there are in the Borough.
- 3.3.14. The remaining 20% of dwellings in Slough are in the "social rented" sector provided either by the Council or what were previously known as Housing Associations. The council has a stock of 7,100 homes, 6,000 of which are rented and the remainder leasehold.
- 3.3.15. Accommodation in Slough is relatively cheap compared to London and the surrounding areas. House prices have however gone up by over 20% in the last year with the result that the average price in Slough is now £304,000 (Zoopla, August 2016). The latest statistics show that the average house price is 11 times the average wage in Slough (Land Registry and ONS, 2016). Rental levels have also risen.
- 3.3.16. Many people in Slough choose to live in extended families. There are also many "hidden households" who are sharing because they cannot afford a home of their own. The result is that 12.6% households in Slough live in overcrowded conditions compared to 3.6% in the South East (ONS, 2011). The average figure hides the fact that there are some properties, often containing extended families, which have very high levels of occupancy.

- 3.3.17. The criteria for being on the Council's waiting list have been made much stricter in recent years to reflect the reality of the number of homes available. Prior to that, there were 8,000 households on the register and seeking accommodation. Even after the change there are still around 2,000 who are registered as being in housing need. Homelessness has increased and the use of temporary accommodation is increasing rapidly. At 31 March 2015, the Council had 156 households in temporary accommodation. A year later this had risen to 225. By September 2016 the total in temporary accommodation stood at over 300. If this continues the position in Slough will soon be approaching that of a typical London Borough.
- 3.3.18. It is an objective of the local plan to provide appropriate housing to meet local need, and this includes the provision of affordable housing for those people who need help to bring the cost of their housing down to below market values.
- 3.3.19. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) calculated that there was a need to build 671 new affordable houses each year over the plan period. The SHMA explains that the basis for assessing affordable housing need is not the same as for assessing overall housing need. Therefore there is danger in comparing the two figures directly. However since the affordable requirement would represent 72 % of the total number of new houses required to be delivered, it is highly questionable whether such a figure would be deliverable in practice.
- 3.3.20. How much affordable housing the plan should seek to deliver in order to meet housing need will have to take account of development viability. At the moment the core strategy requires that between 30% and 40% of all additional units in housing schemes of more than 15 units should be affordable housing. National planning policy is clear that local plan policy requirements should not deter development from coming forward by making it unviable.
- On greenfield sites where existing use values are low and remediation costs usually nil, a significant proportion of affordable housing will be viable alongside developer contributions for the provision of infrastructure. Landowners still need an incentive in terms of a competitive return to bring greenfield or indeed brownfield land forward for development.
- 3.3.21. For most brownfield sites there is only a limited amount of money available for contributions to infrastructure, affordable housing and other key requirements. This is limited by the existing use value, remediation and other enabling costs. So there is usually a need to choose what this contribution is used to provide for. Affordable housing associated with large market housing schemes will continue to make an important contribution to the supply, whether those units are on site as part of the development or whether a development funds an off site contribution so the housing can be built elsewhere. In some instances, the objective of raising the image of Slough through better but more costly design and the "Slough Pound" concept may take precedence over affordable housing contributions. However allowing higher densities in appropriate areas can achieve higher development values, better design and affordable housing/infrastructure in skilfully designed comprehensive new housing schemes.
- 3.3.22. Affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Within this definition are several forms of housing including "social rented", "affordable rented" or "intermediate" housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. "Intermediate" housing is taken to include shared ownership and rented housing provided to households who can afford to pay between 80% of market rates and the full market rate. "Social rented" homes are provided by Local Authorities or Housing Associations at or below "Target" rents.

“Affordable rented” housing is provided by Housing Associations or local councils at rents between the target rent and 80% of the market rent.

- 3.3.23. The plan needs to consider what mix of types of affordable housing is required to meet Slough’s needs. The SHMA also make some broad recommendations suggesting that approximately 20-25% of the need for affordable housing could be met by “Intermediate” homes. The remainder is to be met by rented housing at 80% of market levels or below.
- 3.3.24. However the mix needs to take account of the different impact that each type has on the viability of development coming forward. Therefore while there is a preference for social rented housing there may have to be some flexibility as to what is actually provided in order to achieve the best outcome for the individual development.
- 3.3.25. The Council Housing Strategy has reached a balanced view to promote affordable housing at a range of rents, from traditional social housing rents to rents that are within the reach of households on middle incomes. This takes account of the viability trade-off between the number of affordable units and the additional costs in providing affordable rented units; that many of the households seeking accommodation are on low incomes and cannot afford rents at “affordable rent” levels without subsidy; the government policy changes such as “pay to stay”; and other considerations.
- 3.3.26. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced the concept of Starter Homes which are homes for first time buyers to be sold at a discount of 20% from the market value. The Government has consulted on how this form of affordable housing should be delivered and will bring in secondary legislation to implement the requirements. Until we know what the requirement is we cannot assess how this will affect affordable housing provision, but it is reasonable to assume delivering a substantial number of rented housing units will be harder.

Conclusion

- 3.3.27. In order to encourage people to live and stay in Slough we need to ensure that we have enough of the right sort of housing to suit residents at all stages of their lives. Housing is moving out of reach for increasing numbers of residents. We need to decide how much affordable housing (social rented, affordable rented or some form of shared ownership) should be provided in the plan period. To get more investment in housing we need to improve development viability. Hard choices are required about what priority should be given to affordable housing against other plan priorities. Family housing is in demand and should be protected. But there is also a need for some specialist non family housing in suburban areas, allowing people to live locally and stay within their communities.

3.4. How can slough maintain its role as an economic powerhouse?

- 3.4.1. One of our Objectives is to ensure that Slough’s economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse.
- 3.4.2. The extent to which it is a powerhouse can be seen from the fact that the economic output of Slough (as measured in terms of its Gross Value Added) is £5.6b a year. The productivity of the average worker in Slough (as measured by GVA) £70,900 per year which is some 32% higher than the national average of £53,000.
- 3.4.3. Slough is part of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) which has ambitious plans through the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to deliver a further uplift to the area worth £700m by 2020.
- 3.4.4. As a result it can be seen how important the future prosperity of Slough is, not just to local people, but the wider economy.
- 3.4.5. There are currently around 5,000 businesses in Slough which between them provide around 80,000 jobs (ONS Business Register and Survey, 2015).

- 3.4.6. Whilst Slough has a wide range of employers, which provides some resilience to the local economy, it is unusual in having so many corporate European and UK headquarters. These are particularly significant, not just because of the number of jobs they provide, but also because they have high value jobs which significantly boost the GVA per worker. As a result it is important that Slough continues to promote itself as one of the best located places for headquarter offices to do business
- 3.4.7. It is important that Slough continues to have a diverse and resilient economic base so that it is not over dependent upon particular sectors which may shrink in importance as a result of global, national or local changes to the economy. We also need to ensure that all of the small businesses which serve the local economy and make it function continue to be provided for.
- 3.4.8. One of the reasons that Slough is an “economic powerhouse” is that it has access to a large workforce. Currently around 39,000 people commute into Slough on a regular basis mainly to take the high skilled jobs. At the same time a similar number Slough residents commuting out, many of them to less skilled jobs. This results in a disparity between wages for Slough residents £529 per week compared with the average wages of those employed in Slough, which is £574 (Slough Business Focus Study 2015).
- 3.4.9. In recent strategies, businesses have highlighted the difficulty in finding the right staff to meet their business needs. As a result it is important that local people are given the opportunity to improve their skills, either in education or at work, so that they are able to fill vacancies in the higher paid jobs. Not only will this help to maintain Slough as a major employment centre it will also help to boost the spending power in the town which will help to underpin existing businesses. As a result we will need to take the opportunity to increase the provision of higher educational facilities in Slough which can improve skills and support innovation and research and development
- 3.4.10. It is also important that there will be a range of suitable new houses and flats in Slough to meet the needs and aspirations of the future workforce.
- Conclusion**
- 3.4.11. Slough has an important role as an employment generating and wealth creating town. The Local Plan will have to ensure that Slough remains as an attractive place to do business in order to make sure that it continues to prosper as a major economic powerhouse within the Thames Valley region.
- 3.5. How can we support the creation of 15,000 additional jobs?**
- 3.5.1. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to create a minimum of 15,000 jobs in Slough over the plan period. Slough has always been a “working town” and in 2015 there were 80,000 jobs in the Borough (ONS 2015 business register and employment survey).
- 3.5.2. The target to increase the number of jobs in Slough is derived from the results of the Eastern Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA). Table 4.2 shows that using Cambridge Econometrics forecasts (2013) the various sectors in the local economy could grow to the extent that there would be a need for an additional 14,680 jobs in Slough in the 23 years from 2013-2036. Of these 9,605 would be in “business uses” excluding health, education and retail.
- 3.5.3. These projections assume that economic growth in the local area is not constrained by supply-side factors such as population and the supply of labour; and are trend based which means that they cannot take account of unforeseen changes in economic circumstances. As a result there can be no certainty that these forecasts of job growth will happen, especially if we do not have the right economic development strategies and planning policies to deliver the infrastructure needed to support this growth.

- 3.5.4. Table 4.6 of the Eastern Berkshire EDNA shows that in order to meet the predicted increase in the labour supply that would come about if the population grows at the rate that is projected, 20,080 new jobs would have to be created in Slough in the 23 years to 2036. This is why the proposed increase of 15,000 jobs over the 20 year plan period is a minimum target.
- 3.5.5. Analysing recent employment performance shows that there has actually been an overall loss of 500 jobs (-0.6%) in Slough from 2008 to 2015 which is a higher rate of decline than nationally (-0.2%). There has been high growth in information and communications with 1530 new jobs (+13%) created in this sector and 1,140 jobs (+15%) created in the transport and storage sector. Over the same period there was a loss of 1,760 jobs (19%) in manufacturing, 1,690 jobs (17%) in Business administration and support and 1,039 jobs (28%) in construction. In spatial terms the greatest job growth has been along the Bath Road and the greatest loss in the town centre. The Slough Trading estate saw modest growth of 90 jobs during the period. (BRES 2008 and 2013 Slough Business Focus Study and Strategic Response - May 2015).
- 3.5.6. The forecasts for Business Class jobs show the largest increases in office jobs (+4,240) and in distribution (+6,190), with a decline in manufacturing (-825) (EDNA, Table 4.2).
- 3.5.7. Slough has a large number of HQ buildings supporting 4% of jobs in Slough, many of which are on the Bath Road rather than the town centre. There is, however, a general trend away from Business Park type locations which rely upon high levels of car commuting, towards town centre locations with good public transport links. This is particularly true for companies that want to attract a young workforce.
- 3.5.8. There are a number of reasons why Slough town centre could become a major commercial centre and provide a higher proportion of new office jobs than the forecasts suggest.
- 3.5.9. Firstly the introduction of the Crossrail service in 2019 will make it much easier for residents in London to get Slough to work. It will also make it much easier for people working in Slough to access the City or Canary Wharf if they need to go there for business.
- 3.5.10. Secondly the much cheaper office rents in Slough compared to London, combined with its connectivity to the capital, will make it a very competitive location.
- 3.5.11. Thirdly the proposed passenger rail link from Slough to Heathrow (WRAtH), due to be completed in 2021, will make it attractive as a place for inward investment from overseas firms because staff will be able to make international trips more easily.
- 3.5.12. In order to compete with other areas the town centre will have to offer the sort of environment and range of facilities that modern day office workers expect. This would mean having better quality shops, a better range of leisure facilities and a better evening economy. Slough will also have to improve its image.
- 3.5.13. There are several speculative offices currently under construction or being refurbished in the town centre which shows that investors have renewed confidence in the area. If all of the major office schemes that are currently in the pipeline were to be occupied there would be 10,000 new jobs in the town centre which is much higher than previously projected. Slough has one million square feet of office supply which is second highest after Reading in the Thames Valley. 60% of this is high quality Grade A (Lambert Smith Hampton, 2016).
- 3.5.14. Apart from having a good supply of Grade A office accommodation, there is a concern that the town centre has lost and will continue to lose its stock of lower grade space as a result of the ability to change offices into flats under the Prior Approval process without the need for detailed planning permission.

- Whilst this may become a problem for firms looking for less expensive offices, there may be advantages in attracting businesses to a vibrant location where their employees have the opportunity to live as well as work.
- 3.5.15. The town centre also contains a lot of service jobs. These are mainly in the retail sector but also include leisure, financial and business services. Whilst it is not expected that there will be an increase in retail jobs, all town centres need a balance of uses to encourage linked trips and to maintain their vitality and viability. There should be scope to expand leisure services including food and drink which are performing an increasingly important role in successful centres. There is also a need for Slough to differentiate itself from its competition, possibly through a pro-digital vision for the town centre to have 'enterprise quarters' that take advantage of superfast Wi Fi, and deliver innovation and services for start-ups.
- 3.5.16. Outside of the town centre we can expect to see an increase in jobs as a result of the re-development or re-use of existing sites. The high cost of land and high rents that can be achieved for premises means that there is an incentive for owners to replace low value buildings with higher density, high value ones. In some cases, such as the construction of data centres, this can result in a reduction of employment. In most cases the drive for cost efficiency means that companies have to use their assets as efficiently as possible which means that worker densities tend to increase as a result of redevelopment.
- 3.5.17. One of the effects of this is to drive out some of the small businesses that support the Slough economy.
- 3.5.18. Small and medium sized enterprises (SME) are a significant source of employment. In Slough 14% of total jobs are in businesses with fewer than 10 employees. Start up rates for new businesses are high in Slough with 64.3 per 10,000 population. Closures are however relatively high at 46.3 per 10,000 population in 2014 (Centre for Cities report taken from ONS Business demography data 2014). There may be many reasons for this but the lack of suitable affordable premises may be one.
- 3.5.19. Small businesses in Slough are tremendously diverse with many of them operating in the knowledge based sector such as information and communications; pharma and life science businesses. Some of these occupy bespoke business incubator premises but many are home-based. Facilitating the growth of these businesses could create a lot more jobs.
- 3.5.20. SEGRO have small units available for as little as three to six months and importantly supplement the accommodation offer with business support and connections. This is a good example of how the Slough economy will have to adapt to be able to grow in the future.
- 3.5.21. Whilst many jobs do not need land or premises, the traditional business sectors do. Some of these can locate across the SE as they are relatively 'footloose'.
- 3.5.22. The findings of the Economic Development Needs Assessment (Table 4.11) suggests between 148 and 180 hectares of new employment land will be needed in Slough for Business Class Land between 2013 and 2036 in order to meet the needs of the economy and potential demand for employment from the local population. It also shows that based upon past completion rates there would only be a need for 83 hectares of new Business Class land.
- 3.5.23. As explained above, it is considered that a higher number of jobs than expected could be created through office development in the town centre. There would still be a need for a large amount of new land to meet the projected growth in the industrial sectors, such as storage and distribution, which requires large sites for warehousing. As we have explained there is a shortage of land available for development in Slough. The few greenfield sites around the periphery of Slough are not particularly suitable for employment use and are more likely to be developed for housing if they come forward.

As a result it is very unlikely that additional land for warehouses will be allocated in Slough.

- 3.5.24. The only area where new warehousing could be built is in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. This is subject to a number of environmental constraints which limit the amount of development that can take place. It is also an area that is subject to very strong policy constraints such as Green Belt, Strategic Gap and Colne Valley Park.
- 3.5.25. The proposal to build a third runway for Heathrow in Colnbrook could require a large land take for the airport and the supporting infrastructure. It would be premature to allow any unrelated development in this location until the future plans and needs of Heathrow have been agreed. Given the importance of Heathrow to the national economy it is considered that any new warehousing development should only be allowed if it can be shown that it is needed to support the airport.
- 3.5.26. The proposed expansion of Heathrow could create up to 77,000 additional jobs and so this could make up for any shortfall in Slough.
- Conclusion**
- 3.5.27. Slough has continued to adapt to changes in the economy with knowledge based businesses replacing traditional manufacturing. It has the potential to create more jobs in the future. It is likely that there will be more office jobs than trends suggest as a result of the revitalisation of Slough town centre as a commercial centre.
- 3.5.28. The shortage of land means that it will be very difficult to provide new areas for industrial or warehousing development.
- 3.5.29. This means that In order to provide the necessary employment in Slough the Local Plan will have to find ways of creating new jobs in the service sectors and ensuring that existing employment land is protected.
- 3.5.30. The proposed expansion of Heathrow airport could help to provide the new jobs needed in the local economy.

3.6. How we can revitalise Slough town centre as a major retail, leisure and commercial centre?

- 3.6.1. Our objective is to make the Town Centre the focus for all major retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development.
- 3.6.2. The future of the town centre is of particular significance for the way that Slough develops in the plan period. Not only will it become an increasingly important transport hub, it will also have to continue to provide a full range of facilities including new offices and it will have an influence upon the perceived image of Slough as a whole.
- 3.6.3. The evidence shows that it has been declining as a shopping centre and that it has been losing jobs as a result of major employers moving out and offices being converted to residential. It has also not developed a significant leisure offer or night time economy.
- 3.6.4. At the same time there can be high levels of traffic congestion around the centre and it suffers from a perception of having a poor environment.
- 3.6.5. As explained in the previous section there are a number of reasons why Slough town centre could become a major commercial centre and provide a higher proportion of new office jobs than the forecasts suggest. Investment is already taking place in new high quality office buildings which should be able to attract new HQ occupiers. This will help to change the quality of development and appearance of the centre.
- 3.6.6. There has already been a significant increase in the amount of residential development taking place in the centre which is likely to continue. The conversion of offices to flats and the construction of new high rise blocks will help to transform the centre and increase its vitality.
- 3.6.7. The major issue is what will happen to the shopping centre. The evidence shows that the quality of shops is declining and it no longer has a sub-regional shopping role. It is now operating as a very large "district centre".

- 3.6.8. It is however meeting local needs with the range of shops reflecting the needs of Slough's diverse population. Considering the size of the centre the vacancy rate of around 12% (which is the national average) is not as large as might be expected and footfall is still quite high. There are a lot more coffee shops in the centre which also show that it is beginning to adapt to a place where people will choose to socialise rather than just shop.
- 3.6.9. The Council's "Centre of Slough Strategy", which was prepared in September 2015, concluded that it might be necessary to shrink the shopping centre and rely upon new residential development to regenerate the area. Alternatively it could position itself as an "Outlet" centre with a different offer to competing towns. Recent investment decisions have made the rather pessimistic assumptions in the strategy out of date.
- 3.6.10. The major investment in major office development that has taken place since then shows that confidence has returned in Slough as a commercial centre and so it may be possible to boost the retail offer on the back of the new expenditure that should arrive when the new offices are occupied. The increase in new residents in the town centre should have the same effect.
- 3.6.11. The Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres have recently been sold to a new owner which means that there is now the prospect of getting the major investment that is needed to transform the centres into a residential, retail and leisure destination which could attract people from a much wider catchment area and restore Slough's role as a sub regional centre.
- 3.6.12. In order to help to facilitate this, the Local Plan will have to provide investors and potential occupiers with a clear, consistent and positive strategy for improving the town centre. Key to this will be an insistence on having a high quality of design and ensuring that new development contributes to the broader regeneration of the area.
- 3.6.13. Since Slough has not got a significant night time economy or an extensive leisure offer there is the option to promote it as more of a leisure destination which could, for example, aim at the family market.
- 3.6.14. Whilst one of the objectives of the plan is to improve the vitality and viability of the District, Neighbourhood and local shopping centres this should not be at the expense of the Town Centre which has a vital role in enhancing the image of the Borough as a whole.

Conclusion

- 3.6.15. It is anticipated that current and proposed investment in new major office buildings will revitalise the town centre as a major commercial centre. It will also continue to be the location of major new residential development. The combination of these should help to regenerate the centre of Slough.
- 3.6.16. The key to revitalising the town centre will, however, be to facilitate the expected major investment in the shopping centre in order to restore it as a major retail and leisure destination.

3.7. How can we get the maximum benefit from growth at Heathrow Airport and mitigate for any adverse environmental effects?

- 3.7.1. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to ensure that growth at Heathrow delivers benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.
- 3.7.2. 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.
- 3.7.3. In addition to boosting the local economy and creating up to 77,000 new jobs by 2030, the expansion of Heathrow will have a number of other benefits for Slough. We will be working with all of the other Local Authorities in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group to produce a vision and a non-statutory strategy for the sub region.

- Part of this will consider how the benefits from the expansion of Heathrow can be spread beyond the airport.
- 3.7.4. 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.
- 3.7.5. The Local Plan will therefore have to develop a strategy for capturing this investment within the local economy.
- 3.7.6. 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. The Government is proposing new legally binding noise targets, encouraging the use of quieter planes and a more reliable timetable to provide respite for those living under the flight path. Heathrow has also pledged over £700 million for noise insulation for residential properties.
- 3.7.7. The work conducted by the Government has concluded that the new runway is deliverable within the air quality limits set out in the National Air Quality Plan (2015). This will, however require a number of mitigation measures to be put in place which include improved public transport links and the introduction of an ultra-low emissions zone for all airport vehicles by 2025. It will be important that the relevant measures cover the wider area and are not just confined to the airport.
- 3.7.8. The total mitigation package for the local community most affected by the third runway could be up to £2.6 billion and there will be a role for the Local Plan in ensuring that appropriate measures are made for Slough.
- 3.7.9. The construction of the runway will mean that a number of existing facilities such as the British Airways Headquarters at Waterside Park and the Grondon's energy from waste plant will be demolished. The Local plan will therefore have to facilitate the re-provision of these and other uses. This could include promoting a site for the relocation of the energy from waste plant in advance of a decision being made about the third runway in order to ensure that this important sub regional facility is available at all times.
- 3.7.10. Although the third runway has been approved by Ministers there is still a very long way to go in the decision making process. The next stage will be the publication of a Draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for public consultation. The results of this will be considered by a Select Committee which will hold an Inquiry. The final version of the NPS will then be approved by Parliament at the end of 2017. A planning application in the form of a Development Consent Order will then be prepared considered through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process under the 2008 Act. This could mean that, following the Inquiry, detailed consent for the new runway may not be granted until 2021.
- 3.7.11. This long timescale for making a final decision about the third runway at Heathrow will make the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough very complicated. The Local Plan will have to safeguard the land that is needed for the airport and related facilities as well as any changes to the road network. It is envisaged that this will eventually be worked up into a Master Plan for the Colnbrook and Poyle area. This will inevitably be controversial and lead to objections to the Local Plan. As a result there is a danger that the Local Plan Inquiry could be dominated by Heathrow related issues which could make it a very long and expensive process.

Conclusion

- 3.7.12. The expansion of Heathrow airport through the construction of a third runway will be a significant boost to the local economy. It will also have some adverse environmental impacts.
- 3.7.13. The preparation of the Local Plan provides the opportunity to ensure that the benefits of the expansion of Heathrow are channelled towards Slough and that the appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

3.8. How can we enable our suburban areas to continue to absorb the growth in population without losing the distinctive character of individual neighbourhoods?

- 3.8.1. The majority of Slough's residents live in the various neighbourhoods that make up the Borough.
- 3.8.2. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place. These suburban areas have already absorbed a lot of the population growth that has been taking place. This can be seen from the large number of extensions that have taken place and the existence of a large numbers of outbuildings which are accommodating what are known as "beds in sheds."
- 3.8.3. The extent of "organic" growth that has taken place in many neighbourhoods means that the scope for intensifying development, or "densification" as it is sometimes called, is likely to be more limited than it might appear. This is because household occupation is already high and the use of land is already being optimised. The layout of the town also means that there are very few areas with long undeveloped gardens where traditional "backland" development can take place and very few gaps between buildings where individual infilling can take place.
- 3.8.4. This means that to be effective any densification of the suburbs is only likely to work on a more comprehensive basis.
- 3.8.5. Where development or redevelopment does take place it will be important that it does so in a way which enhances the sense of place.
- 3.8.6. One of the characteristic features of the suburbs is their greenery. Unfortunately some of this is being lost as a result of front gardens and verges being used for parking and back gardens being concreted or paved over. As a result although Slough has many open spaces and parks it has a lot less trees than other urban areas. It only has around 24 trees per hectare compared to London which has almost twice as much at 45 trees per hectares. Despite this London has the ambition to increase tree cover by 20%. It is therefore important that where development does take place in Slough it replaces some of the greenery. There should also be an overall aim to increase the number of trees in the vicinity.
- 3.8.7. The quality of the street scene is also critical to the appearance of an area. As a result it is important that any new development, ranging from extensions to more extensive infilling, respects and enhances the street scene. This should be possible without inhibiting new innovative design.
- 3.8.8. Another objective is to protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of which are of local or historic value. The identity of some neighbourhoods are at least partly derived by the existence of Conservation Areas, historic buildings, parks, open spaces or local landmarks. It is therefore important that these are retained, improved and where appropriate celebrated.
- 3.8.9. A key feature of the neighbourhoods is the local facilities that they provide. One objective is to support the vitality, viability of local centres. Another is to provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.

- 3.8.10. It is considered that allowing some development in the suburban areas could directly or indirectly help to achieve these objectives and enable to access most of the things that they want in the local area.
- 3.8.11. One of the most important objectives of the plan is 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. It is considered that in most cases this can best be achieved by making our neighbourhoods as adaptable as possible so that people can live their whole life within their community so that they can get the support that they may need.

Conclusion

- 3.8.12. It is considered that the existing neighbourhoods should be able to continue to accommodate growth without any significant loss of character. There may be a need to provide more facilities and better quality accommodation but it should be possible to do this without any detrimental impact upon the street scene which is critical to the maintenance of the suburban character of these areas.

3.9. How can we deal with the problem of traffic congestion to ensure that people can travel around Slough?

- 3.9.1. One of the reasons for Slough's success as an employment centre is its location in the Sub-region and excellent transport links to the rail, airport and road network. Whilst it is well connected to the outside world, travelling even short journeys within the Borough can be difficult as a result of high levels of congestion in the morning and evening peaks. Apart from making it difficult for local people to travel to work or school, increasing congestion could threaten our ability to deliver economic growth and revitalise the town centre.
- 3.9.2. Congestion has a number of costs. It was previously estimated that delays cost Slough businesses £34m a year (LTP3, 2011). It also has an impact upon local communities and the environment. Having a lot of stationary vehicles in an area and can cause significant risks to health particularly in Air Quality Management Areas.
- 3.9.3. A lot of the congestion in Slough is caused by local people. 66% of residents commuting out of Slough do so by private car and many travel a short distance. This is the 6th highest proportion for all towns and cities in the South East. During the morning peak one in three car journeys is taking a child to school.
- 3.9.4. The geography of Slough means that there is only a finite capacity on the road system. We are investing in a number of improvement schemes but there is a limit to how much traffic management can achieve.
- 3.9.5. We are also investing in public transport such as the Slough Mass Rapid Transit scheme. It may be necessary for the Council to become more directly involved in the provision of the local bus service.
- 3.9.6. There may also be the opportunity to provide strategic park and ride facilities close to junctions on the M4 motorway. These could be linked to the Mass Rapid Transit scheme.
- 3.9.7. Major improvements to the rail services are due to be introduced in the future such as the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) and new link to Heathrow (WRLtH). There is also scope to improve the service to Windsor and create a new halt at Chalvey.
- 3.9.8. We have also been implementing a lot of smaller scale "soft" measures to reduce the need to travel and improve the alternatives modes of travel to the private car. Part of this involves developing a "hearts and minds" campaign.

- 3.9.9. Further improvements will, however, be constrained by the availability of resources, funding and the lack of space. As a result the Local Plan will have to set out a clear strategy for growth which can be used to justify obtaining the additional resources, both from developers and the government, that will be needed to implement the proposals in the plan.
- 3.9.10. In order to deliver the scale of development envisaged in the plan a high proportion of trips to and from new sites will have to be by non-car modes. It will also be necessary to achieve a modal shift for existing trips if congestion in order to avoid traffic congestion getting worse.
- 3.9.11. The Local Plan will also have to develop new solutions for how people can get around, particularly for short trips, and make journey times much more reliable. This may involve adopting radical measures that restrain the use of the private car.

Conclusion

- 3.9.12. Congestion in Slough is a significant problem that the Local Plan will have to address. It is unlikely that peak time congestion will ever be reduced but we can try to make sure that people can still get around.
- 3.9.13. The Local Plan may have to introduce some radical transport policies which will include the restraint of the use of the private car. Failure to do this will make it difficult to accommodate the scale of new growth that we are planning for.

3.10. How can we enhance the quality of the built and green environment in Slough and improve the overall image of the town?

- 3.10.1. The rapid development of Slough since the mid twentieth century has left Slough with several legacies in terms of the image of the Borough. Some of these are more valuable than others when planning for the future.

- 3.10.2. On the positive side, suburban development has provided residents with valuable family housing in a spacious environment. Gardens provide personal leisure space and vegetation that contribute towards the quality of the environment as well as supporting biodiversity and space for water runoff. These gardens are however under pressure from increased car ownership, desire for more space in homes and residents with less time or inclination to maintain them.
- 3.10.3. With a few exceptions, Slough has suffered from a lack of attractive characterful buildings and spaces compared to more historic and less developed towns. This affects the perception of the town by visitors and residents.
- 3.10.4. Slough's perceived poor image can have a real impact if it means that house prices are depressed, shoppers no longer come to Slough, residents have less pride in where they live and skilled workers, educated in Slough's excellent schools, are not attracted to staying and working in Slough. A key issue is how to improve the appearance of the built and natural environment, particularly in the town centre, gateways to the town and in the neighbourhoods.
- 3.10.5. The Heart of Slough project has begun to address this issue for the town centre. New development such as The Curve and improvements to the pedestrian environment of a key road junction has begun a process of improving the image of the centre. This improvement has been based on innovative, high quality design that provides a landmark building and enhances the sense of place. This approach should be embedded in the new local plan proposals. Some key components of better design in the centre are active street frontages, designing out crime, distinctive architecture, high quality public realm, good maintenance and use of materials that will endure and mellow well with age.

- 3.10.6. Similarly the key gateways into the town, junctions and corridors which make up the network of public spaces and streets should be recognised for the value that these can add in terms of the town's image. Lessons can be learned from the way that streets and public spaces are welcomed as relief from the built up areas in dense urban areas. Providing more greenery within a street, where it is practical to do so, is one way to complement investment in public realm works and the Slough Parks Strategy. The appearance and feel of how streets work can also have a positive impact on peoples' decisions about how they travel, whether by car or changing to walking or cycling. This latter aspect of improving streets links with objectives relating to reducing congestion on the roads and enabling people to live locally.
- 3.10.7. Slough's parks make a significant contribution to the environment and amenities of the town. The largest one, Upton Court, acts as a metropolitan park which can hold large events as well as serving local recreation needs. There are fifteen district and fifty three local parks that provide important facilities for sport, informal recreation and exercise. Three of the parks (Salt Hill, Herschel and Pippins) have been awarded Green Flag status.
- 3.10.8. Open spaces become increasingly important if housing development density increases as residents need relief from busy streets and apartment living as well as recreation space. Furthermore high quality and popular attractive local parks contribute to attractive neighbourhood objectives. There is no space for park extensions and there is pressure for some buildings or works within parks, that complement the recreation use, but that also reduce some green space. So the challenge is to ensure existing open spaces are attractive whilst being used by more people and accommodating a wide range of recreation uses. Whilst the Council can continue its current investment, funding for greater enhancement is needed and opportunities to enhance existing facilities taken.
- More Green Flag status Parks can be aimed for. Open space enhancement needs to incorporate biodiversity, sustainable drainage and water quality objectives. The Council has recently invested around £2m in restoring Herschel Park which is a Grade II Listed Historic Park and Garden. This is a focal point for the Upton area. Large new residential developments will need to incorporate their own open space.
- 3.10.9. Another Objective of the plan is to protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value.
- 3.10.10. There are five Conservation Areas in Slough and around one hundred Listed Buildings many of which are structures, such as walls, rather than actual buildings. This reflects the fact that much of the Slough has been built comparatively recently and there are only a few historic areas such as those within Upton, Langley and Colnbrook.
- 3.10.11. A number of Locally Listed Buildings have been identified as being worthy of protection and it should be possible to consider whether there are others which would fall into this category in order to protect and enhance buildings of local value.
- 3.10.12. Regarding biodiversity, Slough has three local nature reserves: Cocksherd Wood, Haymill Valley and Herschel Park. It also has seven locally designated sites of wildlife interest including wetlands, a reservoir and a lake (Sustainability Appraisal of the Slough Local Plan, Scoping Report) All of these need to be protected and measures put in place to ensure that they are properly managed. Promoting biodiversity across the town is important for a number of reasons. Firstly trees, many green spaces and gardens provide habitat for birds, bees, insects and small mammals. Secondly links between green spaces helps wildlife survive. Retaining these non designated areas is difficult especially if more development is promoted. So the challenge is to balance loss of some small green areas with the creation of new wildlife friendly planting around the town.

- 3.10.13. One of the features of Slough is that while very urbanised itself, it is surrounded by attractive countryside. Because of its elongated nature it is comparatively easy for residents to get easy access to countryside recreation corridors such as the Jubilee River to the south, the Colne Valley Way to the east and the canal to the north. The use of these facilities could be encouraged by improving the footpath and cycleway links to them from the urban area.
- 3.10.14. All of the proposals to improve recreational, sports and leisure facilities will meet the Objective of providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.
- 3.10.15. The health and well being of the population and workforce can suffer in modern towns due to lack of space, pollution, poor air quality, poor living conditions, limited recreation opportunities etc. A challenge for the local plan is balancing health and well-being objectives with the potential adverse effects of further growth. In particular without strong transport and environment policies to limit use of diesel engine vehicles local air quality will be worse. In turn this affects people's health. Some existing roads with poor air quality are in areas where new homes are or are likely to be proposed. Policies will need to be able to influence the location of and design of new residential property to ensure living conditions are acceptable.
- 3.10.16. Higher density development can result in poor living conditions due to limited amenity space and light, excessive noise and lack of privacy. Whilst metropolitan style living cannot replicate suburban estate conditions, adherence to minimum standards and careful design can create successful living environments even in higher density developments. This is all part of 'good design'.
- 3.10.17. Climate change is a national issue but local planning authorities have a duty to limit the effect of new development on climate change and help communities adapt to expected change. Minimising carbon emissions from new development is the key aim which is addressed via transport policies and building design - better energy efficiency and use of low or zero carbon emission energy generation. The latter can be within a development or off site. An example of off site low carbon energy generation is district heating for which Slough is well placed having its own local power station with an existing heat network. Consequently an issue to address is encouraging expansion of this network and facilitating connection of appropriate new development to it.
- 3.10.18. Preventing new development being at risk of flooding is an aim of planning but it is also part of the climate change objective. It is an issue in Slough because flood zones cover large areas of the Borough within which development is severely restricted or prevented (through the National Planning Policy Framework and Environment Agency policy). Some flood zones cover areas in need of regeneration (e.g. Chalvey) or that are logical places for new development to be located. This issue needs to be addressed through careful planning; research of precise flood risk and innovative solutions for mitigating building in flood zones. A separate aspect of flood risk is surface water drainage. Sustainable drainage solutions are necessary to stop localised flooding after big storms.
- Conclusion**
- 3.10.19. Sloughs lack of historic buildings, industrial past and legacy of rapid 20th century development has resulted in a poor image compared to nearby towns. It does have many pleasant residential neighbourhoods and interesting places. Improving the image can help attract investment for employment, new homes and shoppers to the town centre. In turn this can improve the quality of life for residents.

The Local Plan therefore needs to focus on driving up the quality of design and creating an attractive sense of place in new developments. Equally a better quality of environment will improve the town's image.

3.10.20. In addition to requiring good design for new developments maximum benefits can be achieved by focussing improvements on key corridors and places, such as the town centre which are seen and used by most people. Within neighbourhoods the priority should be on improving the street scene - ensuring the front looks good and keeping any distinctive characteristics of individual neighbourhoods. More greenery within the street, where practical, would be a benefit. Park enhancements can also help improve neighbourhood quality. Protecting and enhancing historic features helps improve the image of streets.

3.10.21. Those aspects of the environment that need protecting, enhancing or, in exceptional cases replacing are green infrastructure (open spaces for recreation, biodiversity) water quality and heritage. Health and wellbeing objectives need to be met through protecting people from pollution (for example noise, soil contamination, air quality). Consideration of living conditions (privacy, light, amenity space etc.) in relation to new development will become more important if higher density development takes place. Climate change needs addressing through green infrastructure and flood protection and, where practical, carbon emissions.

3.11. How can we provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support new housing and employment?

3.11.1. The planned housing and employment growth will need infrastructure to connect and support it. This involves community, utility infrastructure and transport infrastructure. The latter is dealt with in Section 3.8 above. Flood defences and air quality monitoring are sometimes needed.

Some infrastructure will need premises or land, some will need financial contributions from developers which can enhance and support existing facilities and services. It will be important that developers liaise with infrastructure providers well in advance of schemes coming forward in order to coordinate provision, which can reduce costs of provision and prevent delays in new development coming forward.

3.11.2. Utilities and health infrastructure plus commercial leisure and some education facilities are usually provided by private companies or public agencies without the need for the local planning authority to be involved other than coordination. However, at times, the Local Plan will need to protect or allocate key sites or corridors for infrastructure. Typical examples are for key transport links, flood mitigation, new schools, and community uses. Sometimes these will be within new development sites and serve a need beyond the development. Sometimes financial contributions from developers will be needed to provide infrastructure, on or off site, to support their development. Whilst some smaller developments may only need modest infrastructure the cumulative impact of multiple small developments will need to be addressed for some infrastructure types. Contributions by developers are costs that can sometimes make development unviable.

3.11.3. Facilities such as local shops are needed to support neighbourhoods and help achieve the objective of living locally and reducing car journeys. Ensuring key shops are available to residents in new and existing developments is a challenge. The market is normally relied upon to provide a range of local shops and services. For large new residential developments the Local Plan can require retail uses to be provided. Ensuring existing neighbourhoods retain a range of local shops is more of a challenge as the planning system cannot easily prevent closures. However, to support the 'living locally' objective policy options need to be explored that relate to protecting or promoting local shops.

Education

- 3.11.4. It is notoriously difficult to predict what the long term need for schools will be mainly because it depends upon whether we continue to get high levels of inward migration of adults with young children. The planned growth of new homes will inevitably result in some extra school places being needed.
- 3.11.5. Recent growth for primary school places has been mostly dealt with by building "bulge" classes on exiting sites. It is currently forecast that we will need around 20 bulge classes in order to meet a peak in five years time. Based upon birth data for 2014-15 there could be a surplus in all year groups after 5 years. Forecasts are regularly reviewed to establish what physical provision is needed in terms of new buildings or sites over the whole of the plan period. As there is limited space left for bulge classes on some sites land for new primary schools is likely to be needed if the forecasts go up in the future.
- 3.11.6. There are currently three new secondary schools under construction with a fourth one is planned which will include a primary school. This means that, assuming the planned extensions of existing schools also take place, we should be able to meet the short term peak for school places which is expected in 2022.
- 3.11.7. New school places are normally funded by either the Council or by Government direct to free schools and academies. However new housing development will generate demand for places for which public funding may not be available when those new homes are occupied. Consequently, to ensure development is not delayed and education standards are maintained funding will be required from developers. If sufficient space is not available for the new school places large housing developments may need to incorporate land for a school.
- 3.11.8. There will also be a need for more provision for Special Education Needs (SEN) schools over the plan period.

Health Facilities

- 3.11.9. Wexham Park Hospital provides health facilities for a much wider area than Slough. It has a significant programme of investment to improve the buildings and car parking. The future growth of Slough is likely to require further hospital expansion. This is difficult on the constrained site. Furthermore it is constrained by Green Belt policy but the main part of the site is identified as a 'major developed site in Green Belt'; this provides some flexibility to allow for expansion without conflicting with Green Belt policy. An undeveloped part of the hospital site, in the Green Belt, has been put forward by the hospital as a future housing site.
- 3.11.10. Remaining health facilities at Upton Hospital, south of the town centre, are expected to be rationalised soon. It will be important to ensure this process makes allowance for the demands of future population growth. Upton is already an allocated site for health and housing development; this allocation will be incorporated in the Plan.
- 3.11.11. Continuing liaison with the NHS will establish what extra primary care facilities (Doctor's surgeries etc.) will be needed to support population growth. The Council is already in discussions with the NHS and local doctors about relocating and improving health centres at Britwell and Langley. This is part of the Council's idea of creating community hubs combining various local facilities in one building. This also links in with the concept of One Public Estate which is intended to rationalise public buildings, reduce public sector costs but renew public facilities at the same time.

3.11.12. A key issue is identification of and allocation of suitable future hub sites or surgery sites to prevent development by other more valuable uses. Protection of existing health facilities may be necessary to ensure neighbourhood facilities remain. This will support the neighbourhood orientated Local Plan objective and help ensure much of the population can live locally and walk, rather than drive, to surgeries supporting the transport objectives of the Plan. To support such policies or site allocations health organisations will need to provide evidence of need and guide the type of facilities proposed.

3.11.13. Where public funding for new health facilities to support new residential development is not available in the builder's desired timescale developer funding will be needed.

Recreation and Leisure

3.11.14. Recreation space is needed to support objectives related to health and active lifestyles, image, sense of place and environment (through green infrastructure). Consequently large new housing developments will need to provide new, good quality recreation space within their sites unless, due to the type of development or context, it is impractical to do so - e.g. town centre flatted schemes. For smaller developments and town centre sites or some high density sites contributions towards enhancement of existing open spaces will be needed instead. For some smaller developments integrating informal recreation space within the public realm might be acceptable for example.

Community Facilities

3.11.15. Community halls are needed to support local communities. This ties in with the Local Plan objectives of enabling people to be able to live locally and improving wellbeing. Large new developments will need to include new facilities or expand/improve existing facilities. Existing facilities may need protecting if they are the only remaining neighbourhood meeting place.

The Council is reviewing its community facilities. As mentioned under Health above, some community halls will be renewed. However if a new hall is needed to support a large new development it will need to be provided as part of the development. Greater use of multi purpose spaces or sharing of meeting places will need to be explored and promoted to minimise the cost of provision but ensure neighbourhoods have reasonable access to community facilities.

Utilities

3.11.16. Liaison with utility providers well in advance of new development should ensure key services are available when development takes place. This may result in the need to protect key bits of land or corridors to install or construct cost effective services. Utility providers fund new infrastructure, but, if there are instances where substantial investment is needed to overcome a capacity constraint in connection with a new development the phasing of the latter will need to take account of the utility company capital expenditure programme. In accordance with the Objective of increasing the use of Smart technology, specific liaison with broadband providers will be needed to maximise opportunities for this communications network to benefit the town.

3.11.17. There is one overhead power line through the northern part of the town that it is a local eye sore and restricts development of some sites. It is owned by SSE. Removal of it or replacement of the power line underground is wanted. How this is to be funded needs to be explored.

3.11.18. District heating can reduce carbon dioxide emissions compared to normal energy generation and distribution. Reduction of these emissions is a national and local objective and ties in with the Plan objective M regarding climate change. District Heating can provide hot water from a local but centralised point for space and water heating. The waste heat from the boiler can also produce electricity.

As Slough has a local power station (run by SSE in the Trading Estate) with an existing small district heating network it is in an advantageous position to expand it to buildings with a high heat demand. A preliminary feasibility study has been carried out. Energy related policy will deal with promoting this network expansion and linking new buildings to it when available.

Flood Risk Mitigation

- 3.11.19. Infrastructure to minimise flooding from different sources. is dealt with by the Environment Agency. New development will need to be planned to avoid flood zones 2 and 3. But where, exceptionally, they are permitted any agreed mitigation will need to be funded by developers.
- 3.11.20. Flooding from surface water drainage is a Local Authority responsibility. Several parts of Slough are at risk of flooding after big storms or prolonged rainfall. New developments in these areas can be at risk of flooding and any new development could potential increase the risk of flooding on an adjacent site if not properly designed. Infrastructure to minimise this flooding in the form of sustainable urban drainage systems need to be incorporated in new development. This relates to climate change objectives and is addressed under design and environment policies. However some strategic sites that can be used to reduce local flood risk down stream have been identified in the Call for Sites plus some outside the Borough. These sites will need protecting from built development. Works to create storm water storage may in some instances be linked to new developments down stream in which case funding of the works will need to come from those developments.

Conclusions

- 3.11.21. The planned housing and employment growth will need infrastructure to connect and support it. Community infrastructure needed relates to education, recreation space, health, community halls etc. and libraries. Utility infrastructure needed relates to water supply, sewage disposal, energy, and communications. Sometimes flood risk mitigation and air quality monitoring is needed. Transport infrastructure is dealt with at Section 3.8. Coordination of development timescales with infrastructure providers is important.
- 3.11.22. Where infrastructure is not funded or provided directly by a public authority or private company development dependent upon it cannot proceed unless developers make the provision through financial contributions or, occasionally, land or buildings. The Local Plan will need policies to ensure infrastructure necessary for development to proceed is provided at the appropriate time. This usually relates to transport, education and recreation. Larger developments might need additional infrastructure. The Local Plan will need to allocate land for some infrastructure in particular sites for transport links, schools or flood water storage.
- 3.11.23. Local neighbourhood shops will need to be the subject of policies for major new residential developments and, where practical, for existing neighbourhoods to allow for 'living locally'.

4. Section C: Policy response

4.1.1. In this section we set out the way policies could be developed in a way that responds positively to the challenges set out in the Issues section. These should be read in conjunction with the Spatial Options in the next section which identify where major new development could take place to accommodate the future growth of Slough.

4.2. *Creating an environment for investment*

4.2.1. The Local Plan strategy will ultimately only work if people are prepared to invest in Slough. Identifying sites and granting planning permission does not mean that development will take place. At the height of the recession in 2012/13 there were only 182 houses built in Slough despite the fact that there were planning permissions for 4,323. Even in today's improved market there are sites where no development has started which have planning permission for over 1,000 houses.

4.2.2. Slough is seen as a good place to do business. In 2013 it was ranked as the 50th most competitive borough in the UK. This is still the lowest in the Berkshire and was a slight fall of 2 places since 2008. We are in a very competitive market and vulnerable to changes in the national economy, as a result we have to do what we can to attract investment to Slough.

4.2.3. Slough has a reputation for welcoming sustainable development and will continue to do so through pro- growth policies which spell out clearly to developers and residents, what is wanted and where it should go. This approach reduces risk for investors and gives confidence that Slough is a place to do business.

4.2.4. *Improving the image of Slough*

4.2.5. The second cross cutting strategy is to improve the image of Slough so that investors, businesses, workers and residents perceive an attractive dynamic, vibrant environment.

Making the most of the location on the edge of London within easy reach of motorways and transport hubs is part of this. But it also relies on improving the quality of the built environment, the streets and public spaces. It also means providing housing to meet all lifestyles and ensuring that we have all of the high quality facilities and services that we need such as health and education.

4.2.6. *Public investment leading the way*

4.2.7. Public investment in the town has an important role in attracting further investment from the private sector. The Council has established partnerships in order to take a proactive role in regeneration such as the Heart of Slough and has an ambitious programme of delivering projects through the Slough Urban Renewal partnership. The Council have also chosen to take an active role in housing provision. Under the five year Housing Strategy it is proposed that the council will build, on average 200 new homes per year and will be the major provider for new affordable housing.

4.2.8. The Council has also been successful in attracting money for major new infrastructure projects such as the A355 Tuns Lane and A322 Windsor Road widening schemes. It now implementing the Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) project and has successfully lobbied for the new rail link to Heathrow (WRLtH).

4.2.9. The preparation of the Local Plan, with its ambitious growth targets, will help to enable the Council to continue to bid for more government funding.

4.2.10. *Optimising opportunities from Heathrow and Crossrail*

4.2.11. The arrival of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) service in 2019 has already had an effect upon the housing and office market in Slough. Planning policies will be able to take advantage of the uplift in viability that this will bring to many schemes.

They can also exploit the gravitational pull there will be towards the railway stations which will become even more attractive locations for development because of their improved connectivity.

- 4.2.12. The proposed rail link to Heathrow from Slough (WRLtH) will have a big impact upon the town centre which will be only 6 minutes away from Terminal 5. This should attract a lot more inward investment and help to revitalise Slough as a commercial centre.
- 4.2.13. The proposed third runway at Heathrow will be a £18.6 billion development taking place on Slough's doorstep. Planning policies will have to make sure that Slough gets its fair share of the £2.6 bn mitigation package and benefits from the new infrastructure and investment that will be taking place.
- 4.2.14. The shortage of suitable land in the Colnbrook and Poyle area means that there will be a limit to how much development can take place. In order to maximise the benefits of expanding Heathrow, planning policies will have to ensure that development will only be allowed if it is essential to support the airport.

4.2.15. Facilitating infrastructure development

- 4.2.16. The Plan will need to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided to support and accommodate the anticipated growth. This will include providing support for a wide range of infrastructure development including good connectivity, better digital and broadband services, health care, social infrastructure, education, recreation/leisure, water supply, sewage disposal, flood risk mitigation. This will be achieved through a combination of allocating space for or seeking developer contributions for necessary infrastructure plus liaising with infrastructure providers to help coordinate provision.

- 4.2.17. Existing communities are often concerned that accommodating new housing will put pressure on existing resources. The Local Plan will ensure that the needs of communities are met when large new housing developments are approved. Through the planning system we will work with developers and providers to identify opportunities; land and resources, for new facilities such as schools, play space and doctors surgeries. An infrastructure delivery plan will be prepared for the Local Plan.

4.2.18. Developer contributions and viability

- 4.2.19. We recognise that development will not come forward if it is not viable. Brownfield sites with high existing or alternative use values or with high demolition, or decontamination costs can be problematic. We will carry out a Viability Study of the Local Plan to establish what the base line for development is. We have not so far sought to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy in Slough in order to reduce the cost of development, particularly small developments. Any schemes that do not include policy compliant contributions for necessary infrastructure and affordable housing will have to produce a viability study to justify this. The Council will take account of abnormal costs but greenfield sites will be expected to provide policy compliant infrastructure contributions and affordable housing.
- 4.2.20. If a viability study shows that a brownfield site cannot make the full infrastructure and affordable housing contributions, planning permission will be granted on the basis that there will be a review of the viability at a later stage to see if values have risen above costs sufficiently for further contributions to be made towards a policy compliant scheme. This will apply to major developments that do not progress substantially within a reasonable timescale. The Council wishes to guard against scenarios where a token start on site is made to keep a planning permission live for a long period whilst values rise above development costs.

4.2.21. The “Slough Pound”

4.2.22. Local Plan policies will have to guide what type of development goes where. In deciding what the appropriate scale, type and form of development should be on a site and what sort of infrastructure contributions it will be required to make, the Council will adopt a “Slough Pound” principle. This involves taking a broad view as to what will help the regeneration and image of the area as a whole, and making sure that Slough gets the best return from the private and public investment that is available. As explained elsewhere, getting good design which will improve the image of Slough is not negotiable. Getting good quality architecture which improves the public realm will therefore be important. Priority will also be given to proposals which unlock or encourage other high quality sustainable development to take place.

4.2.23. Town Centre first

4.2.24. Slough town centre has been declining as a shopping centre and has lost some large employers in recent years. It still remains the focal point which is important for the image and wellbeing of the town as a whole. It is also an important transport hub.

4.2.25. As explained elsewhere the centre of Slough is likely to have a significant amount of new residential development. This would involve making the most of its good connectivity to attract people who will want to live in a vibrant, mixed metropolitan environment. The additional income from people living, working and spending in the new town centre will in turn attract the retail and leisure businesses that can serve the wider Slough population.

4.2.26. It is also considered that there is great potential to revitalise the town centre as a commercial centre by taking advantage of the availability of sites and its excellent location to attract new HQ office development.

4.2.27. New ownership means there is also likely to be significant investment in revitalising the Queensmere and Observatory centres to make them much more attractive retail and leisure destinations.

4.2.28. In order to encourage all of this to happen it will be important that the Local Plan has policies to protect investment from inappropriate competition. This would involve adopting a strong “Town Centre first” policy which will prevent “town centre uses” such as major retail, leisure and offices from being built in less sustainable locations elsewhere.

4.2.29. By identifying areas for comprehensive redevelopment and insisting upon the highest standards of design for buildings and the spaces around them the Local Plan can provide further confidence for developers to invest in Slough town centre.

4.2.30. The Council will continue to invest in town centre regeneration projects and will be prepared to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers to assemble sites where this is necessary to see key developments delivered.

4.2.31. Supporting growth in jobs

4.2.32. Economic Assessments have indicated that a minimum of new 15,000 jobs are required to meet the needs of population and economic growth during the plan period. Although sites for major developments such as new offices in the town centre can be identified in the Local Plan there is very little new land that can be made available for employment uses. As a result policies will have to support the intensification of businesses where this is appropriate.

4.2.33. There is a need to retain some of the low key businesses which service the local economy. With the potential; loss of existing business premises to residential uses through the Prior Approval Process, it may be necessary to have a policy which protects land in employment use wherever possible except in the particular circumstances of option sites where a housing provision is considered a strategic priority.

Where existing buildings are redundant, redevelopment for employment will be encouraged in order to make the most of the scarce land available.

- 4.2.34. One area where it may be possible to create new employment opportunities is Colnbrook and Poyle. Local Plan policies will have to ensure that this is only allowed once the requirements of the proposed third runway at Heathrow have been established and any development can demonstrate that it is essential to support the airport.
- 4.2.35. There may also be scope for new business type and service employment in the town centre as a result of the rationalisation of existing retail and storage space. Policies will therefore have to be developed which facilitates this in a way which enhances the vitality of the centre.

4.2.36. Supporting education and workplace learning

- 4.2.37. Planning policies should support the economic development strategy that aspires to create a more skilled workforce. The local plan will therefore welcome investment in educational facilities supplying workplace learning and other tertiary education to meet the needs of business and raise the skill levels for residents. The Local Plan will also identify possible sites for a new tertiary education facility should the need arise.

4.2.38. Simplified planning for business

- 4.2.39. In order to attract new businesses to Slough we have adopted a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for Slough Trading Estate which means that development which meets the necessary criteria can take place without the need for planning permission. Although this approach may not be appropriate for other areas which are not in single ownership policies will have to provide as much certainty as possible as to what scale and type of development will be allowed in specific areas.

4.2.40. Support for new and growing businesses

- 4.2.41. In addition to trying to protect the network of small businesses in the Borough which support the local economy, policies will have to encourage the development of more incubator or nursery business premises, as clusters of such units provide both flexible premises for growing businesses.
- 4.2.42. As explained above there may be scope for encouraging small businesses to locate in surplus accommodation in the town centre.

4.2.43. Investing in digital infrastructure

- 4.2.44. Slough is leading the way in digital infrastructure provision through its SMART street light scheme and superfast broadband connections. The Local Plan will support facilities that deliver community and business benefits that make better use of the Borough's roads, homes and services.

4.2.45. Investing in housing

- 4.2.46. The correlation between a good supply of quality housing and economic growth is well known. As a result one way in which the Local Plan can support employment and economic growth is by ensuring that there is enough housing in the Borough. The development of new high quality flats in appropriate locations such as the town centre should encourage more young workers to live in Slough.

4.3. Meeting future housing need

- 4.3.1. The plan has the ambitious objective of planning to provide for around 20,000 new houses in and around Slough over the plan period. Another Objective is to provide an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough's population. This should enable households to find the accommodation that they will need at all stages in their life and as their circumstances change. The housing should also meet the needs of the whole population ranging from those who cannot afford to access housing at the full market rate through to those who aspire to more up market housing.

The provision of new housing also needs to be done in a way which enhances the quality of life for people in healthy thriving communities. It should also be done in as sustainable a way as possible which takes account of the impact upon the environment and ensure that scarce resources are used well.

4.3.2. Delivering enough homes

4.3.3. In the most recent years housing delivery has increased significantly, with 789 new homes completed in 2015/16. The majority of these were delivered on large sites. Even so the challenge of providing the 927 homes per year necessary over the local plan period is challenging. The Slough Housing Trajectory estimates the number of homes likely to be completed over the period to 2036. This indicates that whilst there is likely to be substantial delivery of new homes in the short term, as a result of existing commitments and sites coming forward from previous plans, there is likely to be a major shortfall in later years if the Local Plan doesn't make new allocations.

4.3.4. Some additional housing can be achieved by allowing redevelopment of some existing sites at a higher density than existing housing areas and past new-build housing sites. But much of the housing growth will need new land that is suitable for housing to be identified. Because of the tightly drawn boundaries of Slough, most of the sites proposed in the plan are previously developed land, although some greenfield land has also been identified as options for future housing development. A number of Spatial Options have been developed which are explained below. These spatial options identify the large site options for new housing. The local plan will however support the development of a range of smaller sites for housing subject to the assessment of the suitability of each site.

4.3.5. Higher density in new developments

4.3.6. New large housing sites, particularly those identified in the spatial options will be expected to have housing at a higher density than the residential suburbs that currently characterise Slough. The spatial option sites are sufficiently large that they will be able to create their own distinct neighbourhoods and, with high standards of design, to accommodate more homes whilst blending satisfactorily into the fabric of Slough. The Council's estate renewal schemes will similarly have increased housing capacity through new and better designs.

4.3.7. In all cases, whilst there may be an increase in density within new development, Housing standards will need to be applied in order to protect the amenity of residents and design briefs drawn up to guide development of the new strategic sites as explained in the policies approach to design and environment

4.3.8. Houses on small sites

4.3.9. In addition to the strategic sites, the plan will have policies that encourage new housing to come forward on as yet unidentified small sites and windfall sites. Some of these sites will have been identified through the call for sites earlier this year. In particular future development on brownfield or previously developed land will be welcomed in accordance with government policy, provided that the proposals meet other local policies and do not compromise other priority land uses.

4.3.10. Council's led housing delivery

4.3.11. The Council Housing Strategy aims to ensure that 200 homes per year are delivered or facilitated through Slough's own five year housing investment programme. This will include a range of housing proposals including estate renewal, building on the Council's own land and other land to be acquired. The Housing strategy includes a number of measures through which the council will take an active role in bringing housing forward including site assembly and use of strategic powers.

4.3.12. Options for strategic sites outside Slough Borough Council

- 4.3.13. Initial calculations show that even if all of the identified potential housing sites in Slough, including those in the Spatial Options and others identified through the "Call for Sites", were developed and an allowance is made for continuing small site development, there would still be a shortfall of around 8,000 houses especially in the latter part of the plan period. This is why the options of finding housing opportunities outside Slough's closely drawn boundaries either northwards or southwards, have been developed.
- 4.3.14. Obviously these options cannot be achieved without the agreement of the relevant authorities and so will have to be pursued through Duty to Cooperate negotiations. The Council has requested that Chiltern and South Bucks Councils should give detailed and rigorous consideration to the proposal for a northern expansion of Slough. It will be important to ensure that the timetable for the preparation of the next stages of the Local Plan for Slough enables the case for a northern expansion of Slough to be as fully developed as possible by the time it is considered at the South Buck/Chiltern Local Plan examination in public.

4.3.15. Providing a choice of housing for residents

- 4.3.16. The new Local Plan will be tested to ensure that its strategies are deliverable. The identification of sites and granting of planning permission cannot guarantee that housing will actually be built which is why a proactive approach to encouraging investment is required in order to make development of housing in Slough more financially attractive. Part of this strategy is to ensure that we build a range of houses that are attractive to people with different housing needs, including the skilled workers sought by existing and new businesses.

- 4.3.17. Between 2004 and 2016, 61% of all dwellings built in Slough were flats. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016) identified a need for a range of accommodation in terms of both size and tenure. This showed that there will be a need for family sized accommodation in Slough with 45% being three bed 16% being four bed properties.
- 4.3.18. Local plan policies will set out requirements for a mix of home sizes within all developments in order to reflect the needs evidenced through the SHMA. It has been estimated that if we built everything in the current housing trajectory and all of the proposed spatial options around 80% of new dwellings would be flats. This will meet much of the need for one and two bedroom homes, but in future a proportion of these could be family apartments in order to provide a range of homes which may be more affordable to families than the traditional suburban house. This would also help to provide an opportunity for more mixed income and mixed tenure developments and would give scope for housing suitable for elderly or vulnerable people or those with special needs.
- 4.3.19. The other main policy response to support the supply of family sized accommodation would be to ensure that the existing stock of family housing is not reduced. The Core Strategy currently has a policy of there being no net loss of family accommodation and limiting new development in the suburbs to infilling with family houses. This approach may have to be continued in the Review of the Local Plan.
- 4.3.20. There are hardly any houses in Slough at the top end of the market. Part of the strategy of trying to have a balanced community and encourage people to stay in Slough means that in some cases we could be more ambitious about the type of property we provide. As a result it may be appropriate to encourage penthouses to be built on top of the blocks of flats in the town centre. This would have the effect of raising the quality of development.

4.3.21. Releasing Green Belt land for housing

- 4.3.22. Slough has released land for housing from the Green Belt in previous plans. The last two of these sites are currently being developed and there is not very much left. The main area in Colnbrook and Poyle is heavily constrained and since this is where the third runway could be built it is not considered appropriate for housing. Land south of the M4 which contains the sewage works and Jubilee River is also not accessible or developable.
- 4.3.23. It is, however, considered that the option of releasing the remaining Green Belt land should be considered. It is recognised that that exceptional circumstances will have to be demonstrated in order to overcome this policy constraint.
- 4.3.24. Building upon greenfield land would have the benefit of being able to provide the family housing that is unlikely to be built on high density brown field sites and should be able to provide high levels of affordable housing because there will not be any viability problems.
- 4.3.25. Although it is outside of the Borough, the possibility of releasing Green Belt land for a northern expansion of Slough in the form of a "garden suburb" is being put forward. In addition to meeting the number of houses that we need, this would help to balance up the type of housing that is available to Slough residents.

4.3.26. Providing affordable housing to those who need it most

- 4.3.27. A key concern of the local plan is to provide affordable housing. House price inflation has increased 39% in the past three years and the average house price is now 11.1 times the average salary in the Borough. All other indicators such as the Council's housing register and increases in homelessness also point to the urgency of providing more affordable housing

- 4.3.28. The SHMA uses the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition that affordable housing is "social rented", "affordable rented" or "intermediate" housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The intermediate housing includes a range of shared ownership alternatives. Recent legislation and emerging government policy has indicated that this definition will be widened to include discounted price "starter homes" which will be required at a rate of 20% of new homes on each new development. As starter homes are unlikely to be affordable to those in most need, other affordable home tenures will be wanted in addition to any starter homes required as a result of national policy.
- 4.3.29. The current core strategy sets a target of 30%-40% of additional dwellings on developments of 15 or more homes to be "affordable". The capacity to deliver at this rate through planning permissions for new development has been hampered by claims of low viability. Viability testing of the proposed local plan policies will assess whether a requirement at this rate will be sound going forward. The percentage of affordable housing required will vary according to where the site is located. In particular a substantial proportion of affordable housing on greenfield sites is normally viable as the cost of the land is much less than previously developed land (brownfield). The affordable housing policy should also be balanced against the goal to improve the image of Slough through an improved environment and achieve maximum value for the "Slough Pound" which we hope will drive up overall viability over time.
- 4.3.30. Where affordable housing as part of a new private development is viable, 'on-site' affordable housing is a preferred option because of the difficulty in finding land. However provision off-site, by the developer, might be accepted if the mix of homes meets local needs and the location is acceptable.

A financial contribution towards affordable housing, in lieu of on-site provision, can be accepted for small sites or where the particular mix of affordable units wanted does not tie in with the proposed development.

- 4.3.31. The tenure and mix of affordable homes to be provided on private development sites will be guided by the Council's Housing Strategy.
- 4.3.32. The provision of sufficient affordable housing to meet the assessed need in the SHMA is therefore challenging. The active involvement of the council in building affordable homes through the Housing Strategy will make a crucial contribution to meeting need for affordable housing. The Strategy commits to going beyond the 190 homes already in the Council's own development program to build more affordable units over the next five years.

4.4. Fostering choices for communities

- 4.4.1. Our aspiration is to make Slough a place where people want to 'live locally' and are able to stay throughout the various stages of their life. The Plan therefore needs to provide for a full range of facilities and services to provide for peoples' changing needs and foster a sense of belonging. The major element of this is providing residents with opportunities that meet their aspirations to live and work locally.
- 4.4.2. **Encouraging neighbourhoods to say what they need**
- 4.4.3. One of the strengths of Slough is the number of diverse and distinct local neighbourhoods that it has. Although some are not as prosperous as others they all have something to offer their residents. The policies in the plan need to recognize this, and provide scope for residents to determine the character of their area and the way that it develops to suit their needs and those in the future. There is also the need to provide for additional facilities to meet the Plan's objective of providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.

4.4.4. In the absence of any emerging Neighbourhood Plans, the Local Plan can provide the opportunity for residents to have a say in the way in which their area is developed and can potentially adopt different approaches to suit different areas. Any new strategy would, however, have to prioritise improving the street scene and protecting the amenities of residents.

4.4.5. We want people to be able to live their whole life in Slough if they want to, and make the most of their existing family and social networks. This is not always possible at present due to a lack of housing that they need or aspire to, or the services, schools and jobs they need or want within their local area.

4.4.6. Providing more housing within existing neighbourhoods

4.4.7. Whilst there is an overall need to retain family housing within the suburbs there may be scope for some intensification of development. Additional housing is currently allowed only on infill site and needs to respect the character and scale of the area. Intensification or extensions on existing housing plots would still have to recognise the importance of protecting the overall character of the area and the street scene in particular. It would also have to take account of the need to provide adequate garden space, protect the amenities of neighbours and maintain the amount of greenery.

4.4.8. There may be a need to provide specialist housing for the elderly within the suburban areas to allow people to remain in the same neighbourhood through all stages of their life if they wish to.

4.4.9. Enhancing the green environment

4.4.10. Slough has a very low level of tree cover even compared to built up areas like London, and street trees can have a positive impact on wellbeing and air quality. At present the majority of these are in the suburbs and so if, like London, we want to increase the greenery of the town it will be important that we dissuade people from replacing trees and planting with buildings and hard surfaces.

Within new developments there should be more trees and landscaping where possible either on site or along the verges. This should increase the value of the new developments and the general street scene.

4.4.11. Living locally

4.4.12. We also want to enable people to meet many of their day to day needs without having to get in their car. This will mean a combination of policies to encourage provision of local facilities within individual neighbourhoods and better access to health, education, active leisure and other services. This will help to improve fitness and well-being, foster a sense of community and reduce congestion.

4.4.13. Local shopping facilities are an important part of this strategy. Whilst the Local Plan policies will direct all major larger retail and leisure facilities to the town centre, this will not prevent more local shops being provided which can provide day to day shopping as well as opportunities for smaller specialist food suppliers. These businesses provide employment and can also contribute to the entrepreneurial pool of business start-ups valued in economic development strategies.

4.4.14. Creating a sense of place in neighbourhoods

4.4.15. Existing parks, public open spaces and buildings of interest are important for creating a sense of place and belonging. The Plan will include policies which allow adaptation so they can accommodate more and varied uses. It will be important to ensure that existing neighbourhood parades, local shop and community facilities are utilised or re-provided in a way which optimises their use and community value.

4.4.16. The Spatial Options include proposals for new neighbourhoods. In most cases they can be designed in a way which creates their own character with a distinctive architectural style. It will, however, be important that they include all of the necessary local facilities that the new residents will need.

4.4.17. It is also important that our neighbourhoods feel safe and well connected to the jobs, services and facilities nearby, and to the town centre, which means that new developments should provide attractive local links between existing and new facilities in order to make them feel more connected. 'Smart' technologies, good design and place-making mentioned elsewhere will also help deliver this.

4.5. Making it easier to move around

4.5.1. Much of the highway network in Slough is currently at capacity during the peak periods. There will be a growing demand for travel as a result of economic growth and the rising population. If we don't do anything about it, congestion is likely to get worse and people will find it harder to move around.

4.5.2. As a result we need to find ways in which local people will be able to go about their business in as convenient a way as possible.

4.5.3. The current transport strategy set out in the Local Transport Plan (2012). This is being reviewed and emerging draft Transport Vision for Slough includes the following ambitions:

- A high capacity, integrated affordable public transport system, enabled by the use of smart technology, which is the mode of choice for longer journeys;
- High volumes of walking and cycling, also enabled by the use of smart technology, which is the mode of choice for shorter journeys;
- Efficient use of the scarce and valuable capacity on main roads. Prioritising space for those journeys which are the most important to Slough's success;
- Reliable journey times by road and by public transport;
- Enhanced strategic road and rail connectivity to Heathrow, London, the Thames Valley and beyond to support businesses;

- Networks which are resilient to irregular incidents and which have the capacity for the future growth of Slough;
 - Better air quality through lower transport-related emissions, and generally lower impacts of travel on communities.
- 4.5.4. The key to the new strategy will be to achieve a step change away from the use of the car for all trips.
- 4.5.5. Locating development in the most accessible locations**
- 4.5.6. One of the best ways of trying to reduce congestion on the roads is to reduce the need for people to use their car. We can do this by locating as much new development as possible close to existing facilities in places like the town centre. We can also make sure that we locate new development in the most accessible locations to railway stations and bus routes so that they become transit orientated developments.
- 4.5.7. We can also make existing residential areas more self-sufficient by ensuring that they have enough facilities to enable people to live locally without having to get in their car.
- 4.5.8. Using new development to create high quality public transport networks**
- 4.5.9. The development of major new sites provides the opportunity to improve the public transport system by increasing patronage and the scope for new investment and revenue support.
- 4.5.10. For example the northern expansion of Slough could be facilitated by the creation of a dedicated transit network running through development sites connected to existing residential areas, Wexham Park Hospital and the SMaRT network. New transport infrastructure would be expected to be funded by the up lift in land value as a result of allowing new development.
- 4.5.11. Removing pinch points**
- 4.5.12. There are some points on the road network which are more congested than others. We are currently in the process of constructing some major transport schemes to remove bottlenecks. These include the A355 Tuns Lane scheme which will improve traffic flow on this important north south route. The A322 Windsor Road widening scheme will make journeys quicker and more reliable on this strategic route.
- 4.5.13. There are proposals for further improvements to the roads which could provide additional capacity at “pinch points” and make the network operate more effectively. It has to be recognised that there is a limit to how far physical changes to the roads can be made given the fact that Slough is so densely built up and constrained. At the same time any additional capacity created will quickly be used up by the latent demand for travel.
- 4.5.14. Traffic management**
- 4.5.15. Many of the road junctions in Slough are at capacity. We have introduced traffic signal management schemes (SCOOT / MOVA) at key junctions and links. It should be possible to carry out further traffic management schemes in future which smooth the flow of traffic or hold it back from sensitive areas.
- 4.5.16. There is a limit as to what can be achieved. Ultimately it may be necessary to bring in traffic management measures which deter through traffic from coming through Slough. This could include a form of congestion charging in the town centre which would be applied to traffic that does not have an origin or destination there. The introduction of a Low Emission Zone would also have the effect of deterring some non-essential HGVs and light vans from coming through Slough.
- 4.5.17. Smart infrastructure strategies which improve traffic conditions.**
- 4.5.18. The introduction of new digital infrastructure and technology could in the future reduce the need for people to travel and smooth out the peaks.

Making real time travel information available to people will make them better informed as to when to travel and use public transport.

4.5.19. Travel planning

4.5.20. Involving all businesses and organisations in Travel Planning can also help to deal with the problems on the roads. These can include specific requirements to change travel patterns as well as including softer measures which seek to influence the "hearts and minds" of people with regards the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

4.5.21. One of the major causes of congestion in the morning peak is the number of children being taken to school by car. There is a need to try to tackle this problem through a number of initiatives including Travel Planning. One solution would be to encourage schools to introduce staggered opening and term times in order to reduce peak time car use.

4.5.22. High quality efficient and affordable public transport system

4.5.23. In order to ensure that as many people as possible can travel around Slough more easily will have to find ways of encouraging a modal shift away from the use of private car. This will require a step change in the quality of public transport.

4.5.24. Better bus service

4.5.25. It is recognised that the use of the bus service in Slough is not as high as it could be. We are carrying out the first phase of the Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) which is a bus lane and bus priority scheme. We will seek to extend the scheme by implementing further phases which will eventually connect with Heathrow.

4.5.26. Whilst this should increase patronage, further improvements to bus services will be required. We can introduce new bus links and make sure that new development is designed to accommodate bus service.

4.5.27. It may also be possible to provide strategic park and ride facilities close to the M4 motorway which could be linked to the Mass Rapid Transit system. This could reduce the use of local roads and the need for parking spaces within new developments.

4.5.28. Bus services will only be successful if they are convenient and affordable. As a result subsidies for bus services may be required, particularly when they are being set up. New developments that generate extra traffic should contribute to infrastructure for non-car modes of travel. It may also be necessary for the Council to become more directly involved in the way the services are run.

4.5.29. Better rail services

4.5.30. One of the reasons that Slough is one of the best connected locations in the Country is because of its rail service which makes it very accessible from London and the Thames Valley.

4.5.31. The new Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) service which comes in 2019. This will improve access to central London from all stations with Langley and Burnham in particular getting a better service.

4.5.32. The proposed passenger link to Heathrow (WRLth) will make access to the airport by train very attractive from Slough town centre.

4.5.33. We are also looking at improving the current rail service to Windsor by increasing the frequency of the service between the two towns. This should also improve connectivity with other rail services. There could be a new Halt at Chalvey on the Windsor Branch line which would improve accessibility from this area.

4.5.34. The issue as to how passengers will travel to the stations needs to be addressed along with how much parking needs to be provided.

4.5.35. Improvements will also be made to the attractiveness and accessibility of stations in order to encourage more rail use. Consideration will also have to be given to through ticketing in order to make journeys cheaper and easier.

4.5.36. Increased walking and cycling

4.5.37. If we are going to have a modal shift away from the use of the car there will have to be an increase in walking and cycling.

4.5.38. Despite its compact nature a walking and cycling culture has not yet been established in Slough. This could be due to a number of things such as the busyness of the roads, noise, fear of accidents, lack of permeable routes, the poor health of some residents or the view of the car as a status symbol.

4.5.39. New developments will have to make sure that they improve the public realm in order to create environments that are attractive to walkers.

4.5.40. We will have to facilitate the use of more ultra low emission vehicles in order to improve air quality for walkers and cyclists.

4.5.41. Developments will also have to contribute towards creating safe, continuous and convenient walking and cycling networks particularly where they can provide a missing link or remove a barrier. Compulsory purchase powers may be needed to acquire land for key links.

4.5.42. Parking restraint

4.5.43. There are a number of things that the Local Plan can do to help to bring about behavioural change that will be needed in order to reduce the use of the private car particularly for short journeys. In addition to the various measures that actively encourage this to happen there will have to be some that reduce the relative attractiveness of using the car when alternative modes are available.

4.5.44. There will have to be some form of parking restraint at the destination of the journeys. The evidence shows that car commuting to places with plentiful parking is much higher than to places where private parking is limited.

As a result selective parking controls will have to be introduced in order to reduce peak time car commuting.

4.5.45. In order to accommodate more high density development, parking restraint will have to be applied to all uses in places like the town centre. This will, however, have to ensure that the new homes remain attractive to a wide range of people.

4.5.46. Encouragement will be given to the establishment of Car Clubs within large developments which can provide resident's access to cars when they need them without having to own one and find somewhere to park it.

4.5.47. As travel patterns change it may be able to reduce the amount of public car parking available in places like the town centre and use the land for other purposes. Sufficient parking should be provided to maintain the attraction of the town centre as a retail or leisure destination.

4.5.48. Parking standards for new residential developments elsewhere need to recognise that most people will have a car and need to park it a way which has least impact upon local amenities. Initiatives to restrict car use, at peak times, rather than just car ownership need to be explored.

4.5.49. In order to reduce the use of the car there will have to be parking restraint at the destination of the journey. This will mean controlling the amount of car parking within new business developments.

4.6. *Insisting upon design quality and environmental standards*

4.6.1. One of the overarching themes of the plan is the need for good design in order to improve the image of Slough. This can improve the viability of development, enhance the wellbeing of residents and workers, and attract visitors and investors.

4.6.2. Good design is non negotiable

4.6.3. Good design should be not negotiable. We will not accept lower standards in Slough than anywhere else and in many cases expect better.

The Council has led the way with the design of public buildings such as The Curve and the new bus station and we expect other developments to follow this example. This approach will be backed up by the use of design guides and site development briefs. Local Plan policies will flag up to prospective developers that they need to factor in good quality design to their costing before they purchase sites.

4.6.4. We will assess new developments in accordance with the "Slough Pound" principle which will seek to ensure that investment delivers the maximum benefits in terms of the regeneration of an area. This will mean that good design will often be the top priority.

4.6.5. All new major proposals should demonstrate how the development will enhance the character of the built environment and contribute positively to the sense of place. In many cases this can involve the use of innovative architectural designs.

4.6.6. New buildings will be expected to be designed with active frontages at street level, which improve the street scene, to be constructed of high quality materials that will maintain their appearance over time, to respect the context and enhance any special features in the area.

4.6.7. In addition to having high quality external features we would expect to see high quality standards within buildings as well. Where these have been identified as additional costs within Viability Studies we would expect to secure an agreement that high quality specifications will be met. Approval of the quality of materials to be used will also need to be agreed at an early stage.

4.6.8. Enhancing key corridors and gateways

4.6.9. First impressions are very important. As a result main road corridors, gateways to the town and other entry points, such as railway stations, should be made as attractive as possible so as to enhance the image of Slough and also encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

4.6.10. The Council already has a policy for protecting key residential areas on main road corridors and it is considered that this could be extended to all key routes within the town where positive improvements to the appearance of the green and built environment will be sought.

4.6.11. The appearance of many of these corridors is improved by the existence of planted verges, roadside trees and views of open spaces and parks. As a result additional investment in these features will be sought. For long term success these features will need to be well specified and be maintained well. This can be achieved through policy, private development, or through the Council where it controls the land.

4.6.12. Quality in other public realm spaces

4.6.13. The quality of the urban realm will be particularly important in the town centre and the other district and commercial centres. The Heart of Slough already has high quality hard and soft landscaping which has set the standard of other developments to follow.

4.6.14. Where possible new development will be expected to create new public spaces. These should feel safe and attractive to use and not be overshadowed. They should be have good surveillance and be easy to clean and maintain.

4.6.15. Where a development is unable to create its own open space contributions will be sought to enhance existing ones in the vicinity.

4.6.16. Design priorities in residential areas

4.6.17. In considering proposed extensions or new developments in residential areas the top priority will be to protect and enhance the appearance of the "street scene". So front of extended or new infill homes will need to be well designed including their front garden areas. There will be an increased focus on greening in all streets (with emphasis on street trees where this is possible) so that these important public spaces mitigate the impacts of buildings and hard surfaces.

Pleasant streets can make people feel safer and provide a positive incentive for people to walk and cycle.

4.6.18. Achieving a sense of place in new neighbourhoods

- 4.6.19. Achieving high standard of design within the major new development areas which form part of the Spatial Options will be particularly important. The new neighbourhoods should be design to achieve a sense of place and be distinctive in appearance. What these areas look like could vary considerably. There could be traditional suburban type developments on the edge of the town. Sites near the centre of Slough can be higher density and metropolitan in style. Although it will be important that new neighbourhoods relate to and are linked with existing adjoining areas they will not have to reflect their appearance.
- 4.6.20. For higher density development to succeed good quality design is essential. The spaces around the base of big buildings and the prominent tops of tall buildings against the skyline warrant special attention. Higher density can also be achieved through street based development; the traditional street is an enduring feature of successful towns. Design policy can promote this to help quell fears about high density development. Functional design is equally important especially for high density housing. So strong policies are needed to control refuse storage, cycle stores, crime prevention measures etc.
- 4.6.21. A good design policy will cover the natural environment also. Landscaping can be an afterthought but well planned and specified planting and surfaces can make a big difference to the attractiveness of developments. A policy is needed to secure long term maintenance of communal amenity space.
- 4.6.22. One site specific policy needed, to enhance the image of an area and encourage investment, is removal of overhead power lines in north Slough, near the canal. This is relevant to the Canal Basin, Akzo Nobel and the Green Belt site at Rochfords.

Removal would benefit existing neighbourhoods also.

4.6.23. Residential standards

- 4.6.24. Good design in residential developments should address living conditions for residents and neighbours. This is important for the health and wellbeing of people. Key considerations will be access to garden/amenity space; day and sunlight; privacy and, if necessary, minimum space standards. Policies will need to be flexible enough to allow for high density development without compromising resident's essential needs.
- 4.6.25. Introduction of a minimum dwelling size policy can be explored. Government policy only allows Councils to adopt a nationally described space standard if there is evidence that this is needed in the area. However blanket adoption of this policy can mean fewer homes might be built.

4.6.26. Environmental protection policies

- 4.6.27. Policies will, as now, prevent exposure to unacceptable levels of pollution such as noise, soil contamination and artificial light. This will include reducing the impact upon homes, schools and other activities that are affected by excessive noise from roads, the railway and aircraft from Heathrow. However greater emphasis on improving air quality will be needed in order to meet health objectives. Transport policies to reduce car use will be important. Policies can also help to implement a low emission strategy through, for example, promotion of electric vehicle use and, where practical, requiring the use of less polluting vehicles (in particular diesel trucks) for large scale construction operations and distribution development. Measures will also have to be taken to protect residents in areas of poor air quality by, for example, requiring the fitting of air filters. Minimisation of carbon emissions from new buildings will be sought, within the parameters of new Government guidelines, to allow Slough to contribute to national and local climate change aims.

Promotion of decentralised energy e.g. district heating is one example referred to under the Investment section above.

4.6.28. Flood risk and watercourses

4.6.29. Existing policy on flood risk will be updated including on-site drainage (sustainable urban drainage) as this is still a significant issue in the town. The impact of all new development on watercourses should be assessed in terms of impact on and contribution to ecology landscape, and environmental amenity.

4.6.30. Ecology and biodiversity

4.6.31. Green infrastructure can be promoted via a number of policies - recreation space requirements, gardens, landscape, street trees/public realm quality etc. Biodiversity policy will protect key natural habitats but as important is the design of new landscaping to create new habitat that supports biodiversity. Whilst growth and intensification may mean loss of some existing green space and trees there is scope to help mitigate this loss even in an urban environment through careful design and appropriate management.

5. Section D: Spatial Options

- 5.1.1. Having established what the strategic issues are for the Local Plan and developed a possible policy response it is necessary to consider what the implications are for the future distribution of development around the Borough.
- 5.1.2. As a result we have produced a number of strategic Spatial Options as part of this Issues and Options consultation. Whilst these have not been fully worked up at this stage it is considered that they are realistic and meaningful possibilities which would benefit from public consultation.
- 5.1.3. There are 11 Options (Referenced A-K) that have been set out in a logical order but there is no preference for any of them at this stage. It should also be noted that it may not be possible to carry all of them out because they may not be compatible and there may be cumulative impacts which would have to be addressed. Some Options are outside of Slough and so are outside the control of this Council.

The Spatial Option

- 5.1.4. The Spatial Options being put forward for public consultation are as follows:
- 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

- 5.1.5. Details of these options and sub options are set out below. The generic options E. Estate Renewal, F.Intensification of the suburbs, G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing and K. Build in other areas outside Slough do not contain specific sites or areas of search because these are not identifiable at this stage.
- 5.1.6. All of the other options have been worked up in order to illustrate how they could be implemented. This includes identifying some of the key sites that could come forward for development as part of the option.
- 5.1.7. Where possible, a broad indication as to how much housing each option could produce has been provided. These figures are provided to help the public consultation exercise and should not be taken as a definitive assessment at this stage.
- 5.1.8. The reference numbers in the text, particularly in the Key Sites and Key Links sections, refer to sites included in the Adopted Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2010 (prefixed with SSA or SKL) and the Call for Sites Consultation Document June 2016 (prefixed with CFS, OTH or INF). Both documents are available on line at www.slough.gov.uk.
- 5.1.9. The NPPF states that Local Plans should be based upon co-operation with neighbouring authorities. Joint working should enable development requirements which cannot wholly be met within one area being met in another. Whilst the priority is for Slough to meet as much of its need as possible within the Borough the housing capacity study shows that the Borough has a lack of physical capacity to accommodate the scale of housing that is needed. As a result the options of building outside of Slough have to be considered and put forward for public consultation. This is why Options J and K have been included in this document. Publishing these will also help inform discussions with the relevant authorities under the Duty to Cooperate.

5.2. Option A: Expansion of Slough town centre

Background

The Spatial Strategy for the Core Strategy (2008) is one of “concentrating development” within a tightly defined “town centre area” which just consists of the shopping centre and the commercial core area around it.

This has resulted in all major office and retail developments being directed to locate in this area. Whilst the bulk of new residential permissions have also been within the tight boundary there have also recently been major permissions on the edge of the town centre.

The NPPF requires Local Plans to assess whether the predicted need for “main town centre uses” such as retail, offices, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism facilities can be accommodated in the town centre.

Although detailed studies have not been carried out it is considered that there is sufficient land available to meet these needs within the core area.

There are, however, a number of advantages in enlarging the scope of the centre in order to allow more higher density development in its immediate catchment area to enable more people to benefit from its facilities and transport links.

The Council’s Centre of Slough “Changing Views” Strategy (2015) assumed that the regeneration of the centre would have to be “residential led” because this is what the market was providing.

Since the strategy was produced there has been major investment in new offices, proposals for the regeneration of the Queensmere shopping centre have been agreed and it appears that former Thames Valley University (‘TVU’) site will become available for development.

The Council opened its new cultural centre ‘The Curve’ in September 2016 and there has been a general upturn in investment partly in anticipation of the new Crossrail service in 2019.

As a result there is now the opportunity to build on this by expanding the area defined as the town centre.

Proposed Option

This proposed option would involve increasing the amount of development that can take place in and around the town centre on the basis that it is a sustainable location with good transport links and a high provision of existing facilities. It is also an area which can potentially absorb higher density development better than others.

Refurbishment and redevelopment of the public realm and higher quality building design would also help to improve the environment, appearance and image of the town centre.

This option would therefore take the opportunity to transform the town centre so that it can become a major commercial and retail and leisure centre. It would also involve having more tall buildings in appropriate locations.

It is envisaged that the existing shopping area would continue to be the location for major retail and leisure uses. The Site Allocations Plan (2010) identified the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres (SSA14) as the location for new retail and leisure uses including restaurants and bars. It is also the proposed location for new residential development in the form of high-rise flats. It is considered that if the proposed investment takes place the Queensmere shopping centre could become the “centrepiece” which will be redeveloped/refurbished in order to be the prime retail and leisure area for the town centre.

5.2. Option A: Expansion of Slough town centre

The area south of the railway station which contains the new bus station was identified in the Heart of Slough Master Plan for major office development. Two large HQ buildings are currently under construction and it is considered that this area should be promoted as the “Central Business District” (CBD) for commercial offices. This will help to consolidate the role of the town centre and complement the reputation of the Trading Estate for international businesses.

There have been proposals to include some residential development in this area (CFS 7) but there would be a number of site specific problems with having flats here and it is considered that these sites should be reserved for new HQ offices in order to provide certainty for existing and new international businesses, and deliver a high quality public realm for the business community and its employees. .

The other key site within the town centre is the former Thames Valley University or ‘TVU’ site which forms part of the Heart of Slough comprehensive regeneration scheme (SSA13) This proposed major residential development of up to 1,500 units on the site along with other uses including some retail, leisure, offices and a partial replacement of the university. The University of West London (which is the new name for TVU) has decided not to replace any educational facilities on the site and is selling it for development. This provides the opportunity to provide a new mix of uses that can create vitality in this area. This could involve having major office development and some ancillary retail and leisure uses that complement those in the Town Centre.

If the Tesco superstore comes up for redevelopment during the plan period it is considered that this would be a good location for any additional town centre uses that are needed along with some residential above.

The Council carried out a major refurbishment of the High Street through the Art @ The Centre environmental scheme. With large scale high-rise development taking place in the town centre it is important that the High Street retains its current pedestrian friendly scale. There is, however, the opportunity to redevelop sites on the south side of the High Street in a comprehensive way which could provide more residential and commercial uses. This would have to be designed so that any high rise development is set back from the High Street frontage.

In addition to building more intensively in core area of the town centre there is the opportunity to develop sites around it predominantly for residential use. The Post Office Sorting Office is included in the Site Allocations Plan (SSA16) for residential or mixed business use as part of proposals to improve the Wellington Street frontage. The redevelopment of part of the Upton Hospital site and reuse of the Listed Buildings for residential was promoted as SSA15 in the Site Allocations Plan. This could help to enhance the “Herschel Village” and Herschel Park area. The site for a potential conference centre has also been identified west of Upton Court Park.

There is also the potential for residential development north of the town centre on the Horlicks Playing Field (OTH137), Stoke gardens (OTH138), Mill street north, Mill Street south, Albion Close and Petersfield Avenue. All of these developments would have to be comprehensively planned with improved links to the town centre.

Under the existing strategy we have already allowed some very tall buildings with the flats on the Queensmere shopping centre rising to 21 stories and similar sized development being envisaged upon the former TVU site. Tall buildings should only be allowed if they are of the highest standard of design, improve the urban realm and they do not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring uses. It is also important that they provide high quality living standards for their residents.

The opportunity should also be taken to exploit the great views of Windsor Castle and the surrounding countryside that can be obtained from Slough town centre not just for residents but also for visitors. This can involve providing penthouse flats and facilities with public access in high-rise buildings.

5.2. Option A: Expansion of Slough town centre

Constraints

There are a number of constraints to development in the town centre. It is currently congested at peak times and so some additional capacity for the transport system and the public transport system in particular will be required.

Parts of the town centre suffer from significant air quality problems. This means that new development will have to be designed to mitigate for the impact upon residents.

Developments will also have to be designed to reduce the impact of noise.

The compact nature of the centre of Slough also means that any new development will have to take account of the setting of and impact upon existing buildings.

There is also a shortage of open space in the town which means that new development will have to take the opportunity to create new public spaces where appropriate.

Landownership can also be a constraint in the town centre where owners are not willing to develop their sites in a comprehensive manner with adjoining ones.

Key Links

- Slough Mass Rapid Transit
- Windsor Road widening
- Western Rail Link to Heathrow
- Lansdowne Avenue to former TVU site (INF 155)
- Bridge over railway at Slough Station (east side) (INF 157)
- Improved pedestrian route to Herschel Park

Issues

One of the key issues for the review of the Local Plan to deal with is to decide what the future role of the town centre should be. This is important because it is the focal point of the town provides facilities for all residents and contributes to the overall image of Slough.

A major concern is the apparent decline of the shopping centre. Slough was previously classified as a “sub regional” shopping centre which reflected the recent household survey showed that the town centre’s catchment area had reduced to around 60,000 people which means that it is no longer serving the whole of Slough.

As a result there is a need to find a way of revitalising the shopping centre and increasing its role as a leisure attraction.

The recent acquisition of the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres presents an opportunity to increase its role as the main retail and leisure destination.

Slough town centre used to contain a number of major HQ type offices. Whilst the out of centre office market has continued to thrive, most of the major offices have moved out of the town centre and a lot of the office stock has been converted to residential. This means that it is not the commercial centre that it was.

At the same time the loss of cheaper Grade C office floorspace to residential means that there is only limited opportunity for “start-ups” and incubator space.

5.2. Option A: Expansion of Slough town centre

One of the problems facing the town centre is poor image which comes at least partly from the perception of its poor environmental quality. In order to transform the centre it will be essential that we insist upon the highest standard of architectural design and obtain good quality environmental standards. This high standard will be extended to the public spaces, increasing the offer and attractiveness of pavements, squares and parks.

The Centre of Slough Strategy also promotes the use of the "Slough Pound" concept which means making decisions based upon what produces the best overall regeneration benefits.

The design of Curve has enhanced the local street scene and way in which St Ethelbert's Church can now be appreciated by the public. There are a number of other existing heritage assets within areas such the 'Herschel Village' where a distinct sense of place can be created. The expansion of the area of search where major development could take place does not mean that it will be appropriate in all locations close to the centre. This will require a more fine grained approach when assessing development proposals.

Traffic congestion is a problem that will need addressed. This may require measures to deter the unnecessary use of the private car travelling to or through the centre.

The Centre of Slough Strategy also recognised the importance of promoting major development in locations outside of the currently narrowly defined town centre in a way which encouraged new residents to make use of all of the facilities and transport links that are available. This would mean ensuring that sites such as the canal basin on Stoke Road or the Akzo Nobel site east of Wexham Road are linked as well as possible to the centre along new or improved pedestrian/cycle corridors.

Capacity

- Key Sites 2175 homes
- Other related sites 1000 plus homes

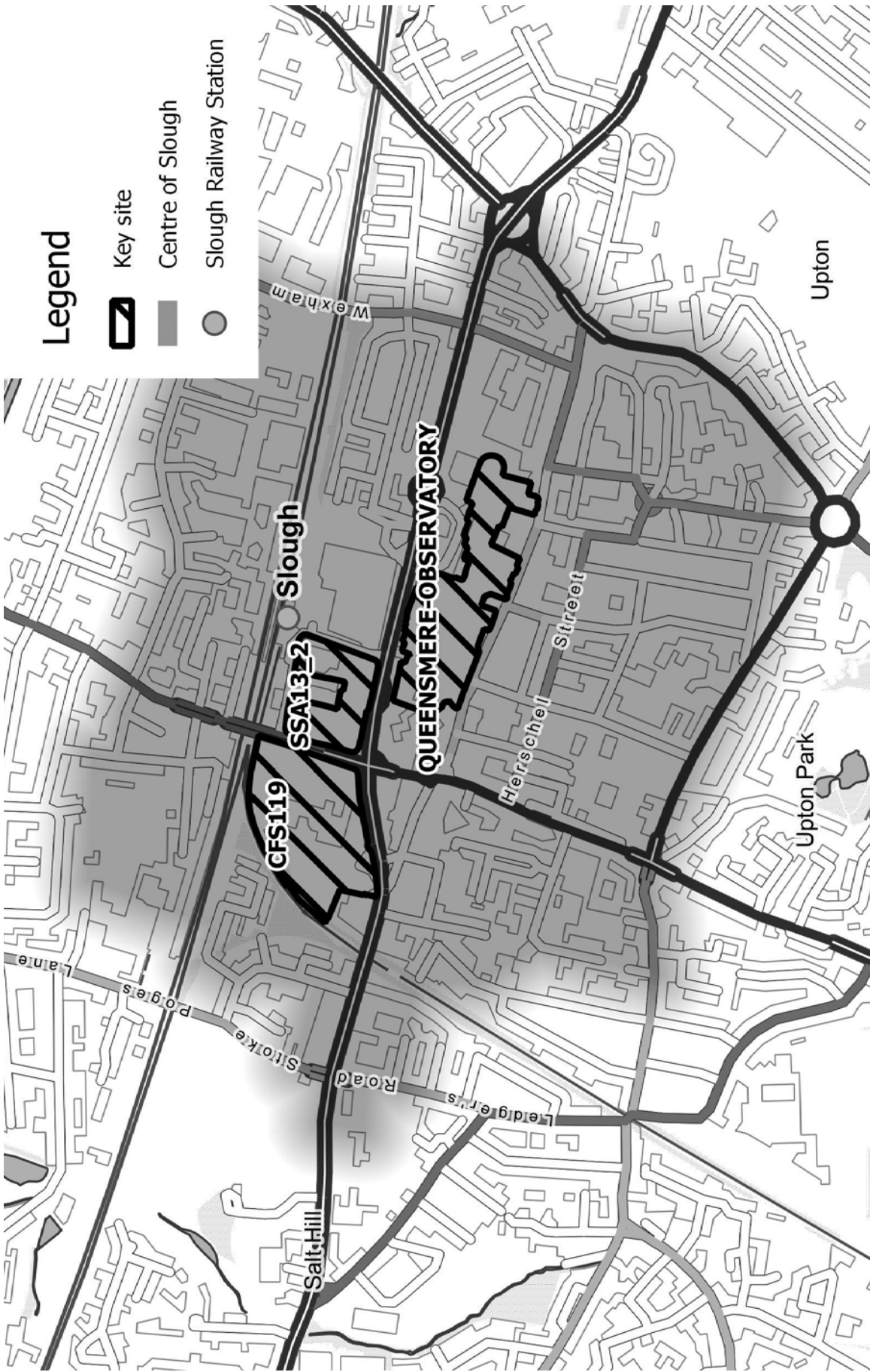
Key Sites

- Queensmere/Observatory shopping centre (SSA14)
- Former TVU site (CFS 119)

Related Sites/Areas

- Heart of Slough (Area south of the railway station) (SSA13)
- Post Office Sorting Office (SSA16)
- Upton Hospital (SSA15)
- Mill Street north side (OTH 140)
- Mill Street south side (OTH 141)
- South side of High Street (OTH 146 & 147)
- Slough Station North forecourt (INF 156)
- Slough Station east car park (INF 156)
- Railway Triangle Stranraer Gardens (OTH 145)
- Albion Close (OTH 143)
- Horlicks Playing Field, Plough Lees lane (OTH 137)
- Stoke Gardens (OTH 138)
- Aspire Site (Herschel St)

Figure 8: Option A - Town centre expansion



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016

5.3. Option B: Expand the centre of Langley

Background

It is considered that there is an opportunity to develop the area around Langley station in a way which will create new homes in an accessible location and provide new facilities as an expansion of the existing centre.

The Core Strategy recognised that there was limited scope for expanding the Harrow Market District Centre at Langley but stated that in the longer term there might be the possibility of expanding into the Langley Business Centre to the north.

The Site Allocations Plan subsequently identified part of the Langley Business Centre for a supermarket. It also recognised that the site could incorporate an element of residential, financial and professional services, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments or takeaways.

The Site Allocations Plan also included the former Langley Oil Terminal and car park to the north of the station as a "Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration" which would predominantly consist of family housing.

Neither of these proposals has been implemented. Although the landowner brought forward a proposal for 200 houses on the former terminal site this could not be pursued because this land is now going to be used as a new depot for the Heathrow Express depot which has to move from Old Oak Common in order to facilitate the construction of HS2.

A proposal for a Morrison's supermarket on the Business Centre site was not considered to be acceptable for design and layout reasons and has not been subsequently pursued.

A new bridge with lifts will be constructed as part of the Crossrail scheme and the Council is proposing to improve pedestrian access from the south.

Proposed Option

This option would involve developing the area around the Langley railway station as a new high density residential area which would also contain some employment, retail and leisure uses which would complement the Harrow Market District Centre.

The development would be concentrated upon three major development sites which would form the core of this option. These are the Langley Business Centre (CFS13), part of Waterside Drive (OTH 150) and the Canal Warf industrial area (OTH 151).

The Langley Business Centre would contain the proposed new ancillary retail and leisure uses with flats above. This would be linked by an improved pedestrian link to the Harrow Market Centre to the south. It would also retain or re-provide some business uses. The Canal Warf site would have to be developed comprehensively with high density flats and family units. The design of this would have to enhance the canal. It is not proposed that Waterside Drive should be the subject of wholesale redevelopment but there is the opportunity to convert or redevelop some of the business units for residential.

There is also the potential to build on the land north of the Canal but this is Green Belt land which is not within Slough Borough and so could only be brought forward as a result of Duty to Cooperate discussions with South Bucks District Council.

The Government is encouraging Councils to increase the density of development around Commuter Hubs such as Langley and so, if appropriate opportunities arise, this will be encouraged on sites outside of the identified sites. Such development will not, however, be allowed on a piecemeal basis.

5.3. Option B: Expand the centre of Langley

Constraints

It is recognised that this part of Langley can suffer from traffic congestion. It is, however, a highly sustainable location because of its proximity to the railway station and existing facilities. As a result any development in this area is likely to be less reliant upon the use of the private car than elsewhere. Nevertheless measures may have to be introduced which can seek to deal with the problems of local traffic problems.

The railway bridge over Station Road is not high enough for high sided vehicles and so only a limited number of HGVs are able to use the road.

Key Links

- New pedestrian bridge at Railway Station
- Improved footway link with Harrow Market
- Improved Pedestrian access to Railway Station
- Canal footpath/cycleway

Issues

It is important that the proposal doesn't undermine the viability of the Harrow Market District Shopping Centre. The Site Allocations Plan (2010) proposed a supermarket with a sales floor of up to 2,500 m² which was found to be acceptable by the Inspector. Although this option would include retail and leisure uses it is not envisaged that there would be a single unit as large as the supermarket that was previously proposed. As a result it is envisaged that the new facilities will complement the existing centre and increase the choice for local residents which will reduce the need to travel.

It is acknowledged that the local area can suffer from traffic congestion. It is envisaged that many of the new residents will live there because of the proximity to the railway station and that the new retail and leisure facilities would be orientated towards meeting local needs. Nevertheless there is likely to be an increase in trip generation which will require appropriate mitigation measures.

There will be a loss of employment land. Parts of the Langley Business Centre have been vacant for some time and it is proposed that there should be some employment generating uses retained or replaced in the development. The introduction of prior approvals for the conversion of offices to residential means that this can happen without needing permission from the Council.

5.3. Option B: Expand the centre of Langley

Capacity

- Approximately 600 additional homes

Key Sites

- Langley Business Centre (CFS13)
- Part of Waterside Drive (OTH 150)
- Canal Warf Industrial Area (OTH 151)
- Langley Railway Station (INF 159)

Related Sites/Areas

- Langley District Shopping Centre
- Heathrow Express Depot

5.4. Option C: New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/ national grid site

Background

The Akzo Nobel site comprises the former ICI paint manufacturing plant and associated research and development buildings on the eastern side of Wexham Road. Manufacturing is due to move to the north of England. Research and development may stay on the site or move to the adjoining site which will retain the offices and laboratories. The site abuts the canal to the north and the railway line to the south. The owners indicate that development could take place within 5 years.

The National Grid site is the former gas works. It now comprises a gas company depot accommodating a mixed range of office and storage buildings, open storage and parking areas with a gas holder in the north-west corner of the site. The site is currently operational but the owners say it may become available for redevelopment in the long term (more than 10 years).

The landowners have put the two sites forward as part of the recent 'Call for Sites' exercise. The combined sites provide a rare opportunity for a substantial new neighbourhood to be created near the town centre. The fact that only two land owners are involved should simplify the process of getting comprehensive development.

Proposed Option

The proposed option is to comprehensively redevelop the two sites primarily for residential plus supporting uses (local retail, education, open space, community facilities) and some employment use. A mixture of family homes, small homes and flats including affordable housing. The canal-side north end is expected to be houses with flats near the railway end. Whilst street based housing and flat development is wanted there may be scope for some taller flats (over 5 storeys) on the southern part of the site. This could optimise the use of the site to help meet housing demand but control of the quality and mix of house types and tenures will be crucial if this type of development is chosen. The site is large enough and sufficiently separated from other neighbourhoods for the new development to have its own character.

Wexham Road and Uxbridge Road can be used for access. The existing Uxbridge Road site access may not be suitable as it is or it may need to be relocated away from the railway bridge to improve safety. To assist town wide travel it will be important to have a link through the site from Wexham Road to Uxbridge Road for cyclists, buses and local traffic.

Constraints

In the unlikely event that the gas holder is not removed the associated safety zone will significantly limit the area available for new residential development on both sites. Employment uses could take the place of the area of residential use lost.

5.4. Option C: New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/ national grid site

Key Links

Pedestrian and cycle route to railway station via Petersfield Avenue and to the town centre via either the latter or Wexham Road bridge.

Access to the canal to access local recreation spaces and the tow path out to the Colne Valley Regional Park.

A link through the site from Wexham Rd to Uxbridge Road for cyclists and buses. Possibly for traffic also if this can relieve congestion elsewhere without significant consequences on other roads.

Issues

Dealing with soil contamination. Contamination is linked to predecessors of the current owners and it is expected that they will deal with any contamination before selling the sites. Bearing in mind the past uses over a long period of time remediation may take some time.

Loss of employment land. The sites are 'Existing Business area' on the Slough Local Development Framework Proposals Map 2010.

Consequences of extra traffic flow over and above existing levels. The combined sites are in a reasonably sustainable location because of their proximity to the railway station and town centre. Consequently residents in any new development are likely to be less reliant upon the use of the private car than elsewhere.

Encouraging walking and cycling in particular creating a convenient and attractive route to Slough railway station and the town centre and ensuring adequate retail and community uses are accessible in or near the development. Improvements to Petersfield Avenue and Wexham Road will be crucial so that new residents feel they are connected to the town centre. This applies to the western part of the Akzo Nobel site in particular as the edge of this site is only an 800 metre walk to the station.

Ensuring comprehensive development i.e. both sites considered together but also ensuring each site can be developed individually in case redevelopment of one site is delayed.

Provide education, retail and community uses on the site.

Ensuring a wide mix of house types and high quality design to make it attractive to a wide range of people.

5.4. Option C: New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/ national grid site

Capacity

1,000 to 1,400 homes dependent upon the number of flats included. These figures will be lower if substantial areas are retained for employment use. Substantially less if the gas holder is not removed.

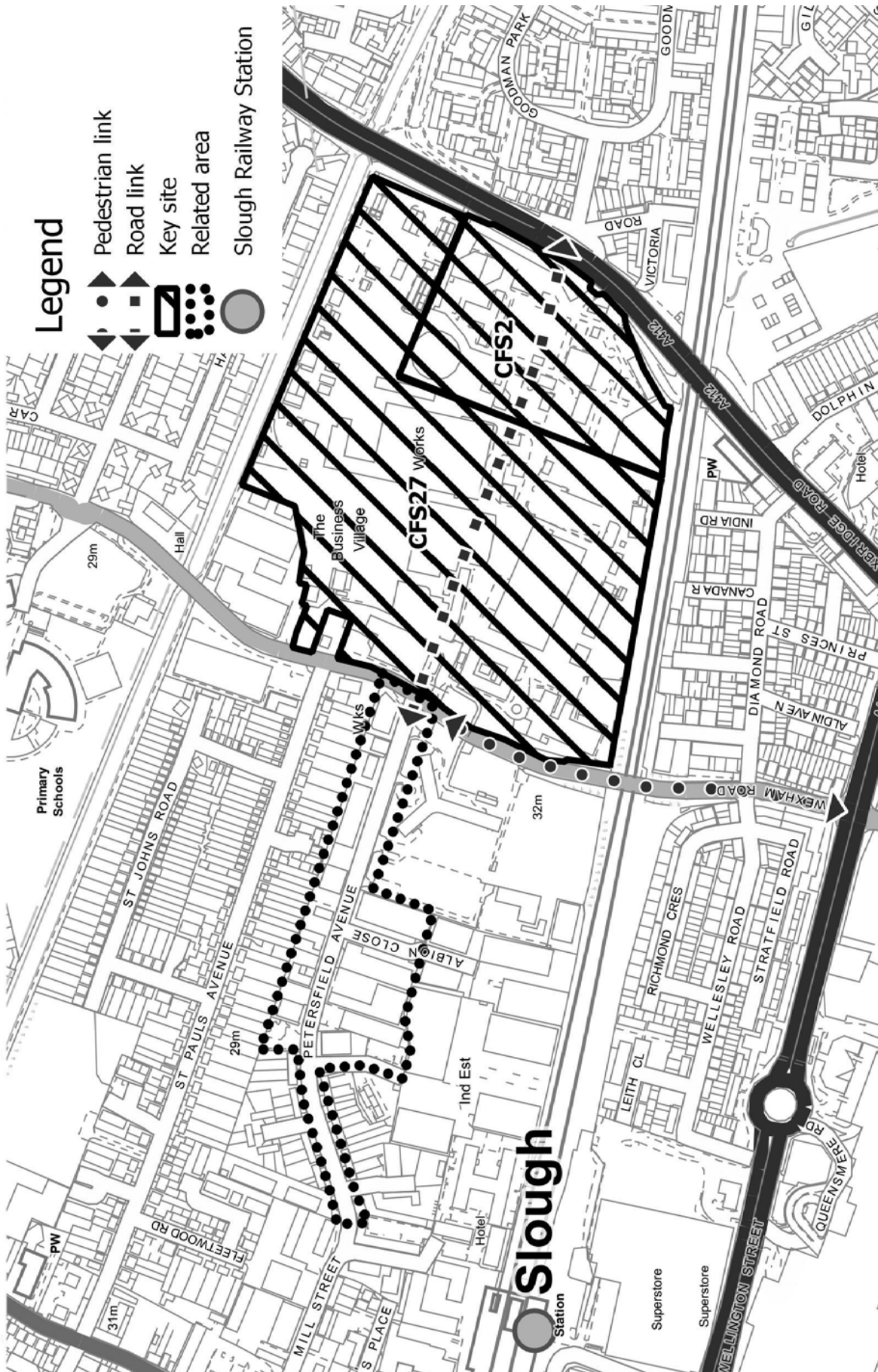
Key Sites

- CFS 27 Akzo Nobel, Wexham Road 12.73 ha
- CFS 2 National Grid; Uxbridge Road 3.88 ha

Related Sites/Areas

- OTH 144 Petersfield Ave (north side) existing commercial buildings.
- Residential led redevelopment and street-scene enhancement
- OTH 143 Petersfield Ave (south side) review potential for comprehensive redevelopment for business and residential development plus street-scene enhancement.

Figure 10: Option C - New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/national grid site



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019446.

5.5. Option D1: Canal Basin

Background

There has been a long standing proposal to redevelop the canal basin in Stoke Road.

The main reasons for promoting development in this area is the desire to promote the basin as a visitor centre and focal point for users of the towpath and canal. Redevelopment of the existing unattractive commercial buildings would also greatly improve the appearance of the site and act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area.

The Site Allocations Plan (2010) identified the site (SSA17) for redevelopment primarily for residential development including:

- Provide facilities that will attract visitors and form a focal point
- for users of the towpath and canal
- Open up views from Stoke Road to the Canal Basin
- Retain and enhance the winding hole and pedestrian and cycle access to the basin
- Retain and take opportunities to enhance the nature conservation value of the canal
- Consider the provision of visitor moorings and the north side of the canal
- Provide residential development
- Enhance recreational facilities within the Bowyer Playing Fields

Development has not come forward so far because of land assembly problems. These have now been resolved so that all of the land is under the control of a consortium of potential developers including the Council.

Proposed Option

The proposed option is to redevelop the area around the canal basin with a residential scheme and ancillary retail/leisure uses. This would have a high quality public realm which would create a focal point which would attract canal boats and local residents to use this part of the canal.

The proposal includes having residential blocks along the northern part of the Bowyer Playing Fields fronting onto the canal. The remaining parts of the public open space will be landscaped and improved so that there is an overall increase in the recreational value of the land.

Although the site will be predominantly developed with flats some family housing should be provided along with affordable housing.

Access will be from the Stoke Road which will open up views of the canal basin.

Constraints

The impact of extra traffic on Stoke Road will have to be addressed.

Limitations on layout options if overhead power cables are not removed.

The main physical constraint to the development of the site is the electricity pylon and cables which cross the northern part of the site which limits what can take place upon this area. Investigations have taken place as to whether the cables could be put underground but this would be very expensive. As a result development may have to take place on a phased basis.

5.5. Option D1: Canal Basin

Key Links

- To canal for recreation and access to the countryside.
- Stoke Road to the town centre and alternative pedestrian and cycle access to the railway station and town centre.

Issues

The principle of the loss of part of the Bowyer Playing field has been established through the Site Allocations Plan (2010). This would be subject to development being carried out in a sensitive way which would enhance the overall recreational value of the area which would be available to residents in the wider area.

It is important that the development encourages walking and cycling in particular creating a convenient and attractive route to the station and town centre. The site is an 800 metre walk from the station. Improvements to Stoke Road or an alternative route will be crucial so that new residents feel they are close to the town centre.

Gaining Local Economic Partnership funding to place overhead power cables underground.

The scheme will also have to encourage the use of the towpath for walking and cycling.

The Site Allocations Plan has accepted that the site will predominantly be developed for flats but a residential units will be requires which will be built to a high standard of design.

Attracting canalside uses to make the basin an attractive and distinctive focal point.

Capacity

Around 250 new dwellings could be built as part of the main proposal. It may be possible to build more in future if the pylon and overhead cables were removed.

Key Sites

CFS 76 & 77

Related Sites/Areas

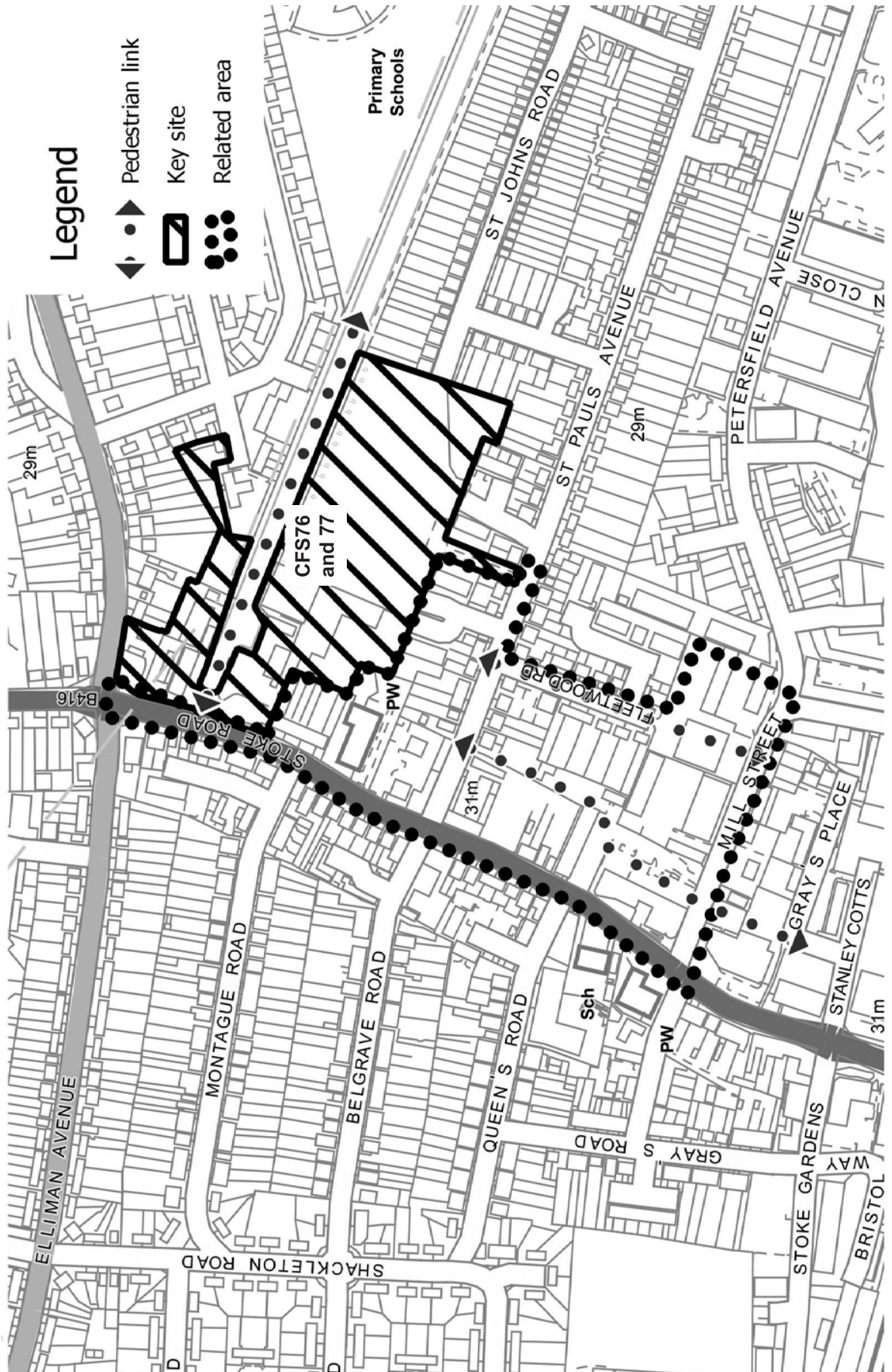
OTH 139 Stoke Road east side (south of Canal Basin and North of

Mill Street). Residential led comprehensive redevelopment including pedestrian/cycle link north south from Canal basin redevelopment site towards Slough Station.

Land east of Stoke Road and Fleetwood Road - an alternative pedestrian/cycle link could go via Fleetwood Road if a link to Mill Street is achieved. See site OTH 140 Mill Street (north side) and site INF 157 Slough Station (east side) bridge over railway (pedestrian/cycle access from Mill Street to town centre).

The nearby emerging new Community Sports Stadium and Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy; are 300 metre walk to the north along Stoke Road.

Figure 11: Option D1 - Canal Basin



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019446.

5.6. Option D2: New central Cippenham strip

Background

The section of the A4 Bath Road west of the Slough Trading Estate, which contains amongst other things the former Trade Sales site, is characterised by a mix of commercial uses and housing. This part of the Bath Road also doesn't have the tree lined avenue that runs through the Estate. As a result it is one of the least attractive main road corridors in Slough.

Apart from having good access to the M4 junction 7, this part of the Bath Road is close to Burnham station (650m walking distance) which will have the Crossrail service from 2019. There is also potential for the Rapid Mass Transit service to be extended which would provide an improved bus service to the town centre.

Although the area currently contains a number of employment uses such as retail warehouses, car show rooms and car/van sales, it is not considered that it is essential for these to be in this location.

The area was identified in the Site Allocations Plan (2010) as a "Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration" where major residential or mixed use development could take place. This has not been implemented so far. A new car showroom has recently been constructed on 392 Bath Road.

Proposed Option

The proposed option would be to comprehensively regenerate this area in order to provide new housing and an improved environment of this part of the A4 corridor.

It is considered that new residential development could take place upon the sites which would consist of flats along the road frontage. Family housing could be included at the rear of the sites on the southern side of the Bath Road. Development should be comprehensively planned in a way which improves the appearance of this important main road frontage.

The opportunity should be taken to introduce some major landscaping along the frontage.

There may be the opportunity to include other adjoining sites along the Bath Road within comprehensive redevelopment proposals.

Constraints

Part of the site is liable to flood and so the design and layout of any development would have to take account of this and drainage issues.

It would also have to take account of the juxtaposition of adjoining residential properties.

Development along the road frontage would have to take account of noise and disturbance from traffic along the A4.

There are road widening proposals within the vicinity of this area.

5.6. Option D2: New central Cippenham strip

Key Links

The Mass Rapid Transit scheme could potentially be extended along this part of the A4.

Improved pedestrian links to Burnham Station and Cippenham Recreation Ground would also make the site more sustainable.

Issues

There has not been any indication of redevelopment taking place since the area was identified in the 2010 Site Allocations Plan. Although much of the area is understood to be in a single ownership it is not clear how the site could be brought forward on a comprehensive basis.

The proposal would involve the loss of employment land but much of this is quite low key or consists of retail type jobs which could be accommodated elsewhere.

Capacity

Approximately 200 additional homes

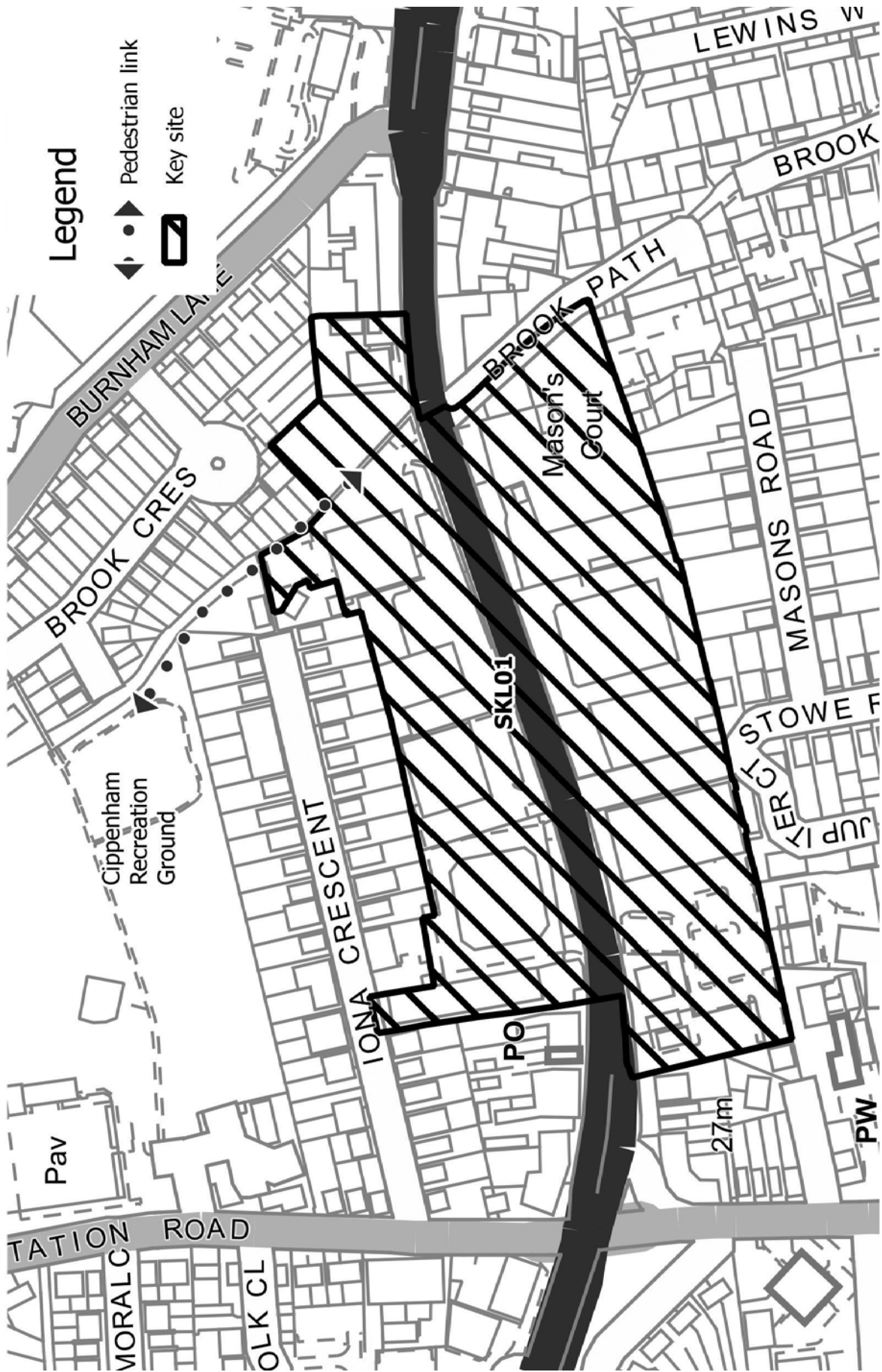
Key Sites

Bath Road Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration (SKL1)

Related Sites/Areas

Burnham Station (INF 152)

Figure 12: Option D2 - Cippenham central strip



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019446.

5.7. Option D3: Chalvey regeneration area

Background

The Chalvey area is going through a period of change. Planning permission has already been granted for a number of developments which together with a group of identified sites will help improve the appearance of the area, provide more housing for local needs and key community facilities including a new school. An enhanced Salt Hill stream and associated land that runs through the area can be a linking feature - a walking/cycling route and a green corridor.

All these changes need to be supported with public realm enhancements and continued support from local public authorities to tackle crime and to assist community support networks. The aim of these improvements, beyond providing new homes and facilities, is to encourage existing owners to invest in their properties thus improve the overall image of the area, create a sense of confidence and hopefully encourage existing residents to stay in the area.

Proposed Option

The Montem Leisure Centre site will become a new residential neighbourhood with family homes and some smaller properties alongside an enhanced streamside green corridor with a foot and cycle link connecting it to Salt Hill Park to the north and south to Chalvey Centre. Plus improved link to Seymour Road with links to the recreation ground beyond.

For the area around the Thames Valley Community Centre site a new primary and secondary school including retained or replacement community facilities will provide a new focal point for this part of the neighbourhood. As part of this scheme there is an opportunity to include and remove the unsightly old shopping centre and office building on Chalvey High Street. This provides the scope to create a new built frontage along the prominent north side of the High Street.

The provision of a Chalvey railway halt in the future will enhance accessibility for the local community and reduce reliance on the car at peak times.

Where Salt Hill stream runs under Chalvey there are opportunities to open it up as a local feature.

Constraints

A key constraint to new building is the need to avoid flood risk. Areas close to the M4 motorway and main roads are subject to significant air quality and noise problems.

There is also traffic congestion within the area.

There have also in the past been viability and ownership problems which have prevented development coming forward.

Key Links

- Possible new Chalvey Halt on the Windsor Branch Line
- New bus link
- Salt Hill Stream corridor
- Footpath Cycleway link to the Jubilee River

5.7. Option D3: Chalvey regeneration area

Issues

The key issue is how the development of a number of individual sites in the Chalvey area can take place in a way which maximises the overall regeneration benefits for the area as a whole.

There is a need to improve the environment of some parts of the area including the public realm.

The shortage of green spaces in Chalvey means that there is a need to improve access to the Jubilee River to the south and along the Salt Hill corridor to the north.

Traffic congestion is also a problem within the area as a result it may be necessary to control the amount of car parking to be provided and encourage non car modes of travel. It will also be necessary to limit exposure to main road air quality problems.

It may be necessary to consider using Compulsory Purchase powers to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment.

Capacity

220 new dwellings.

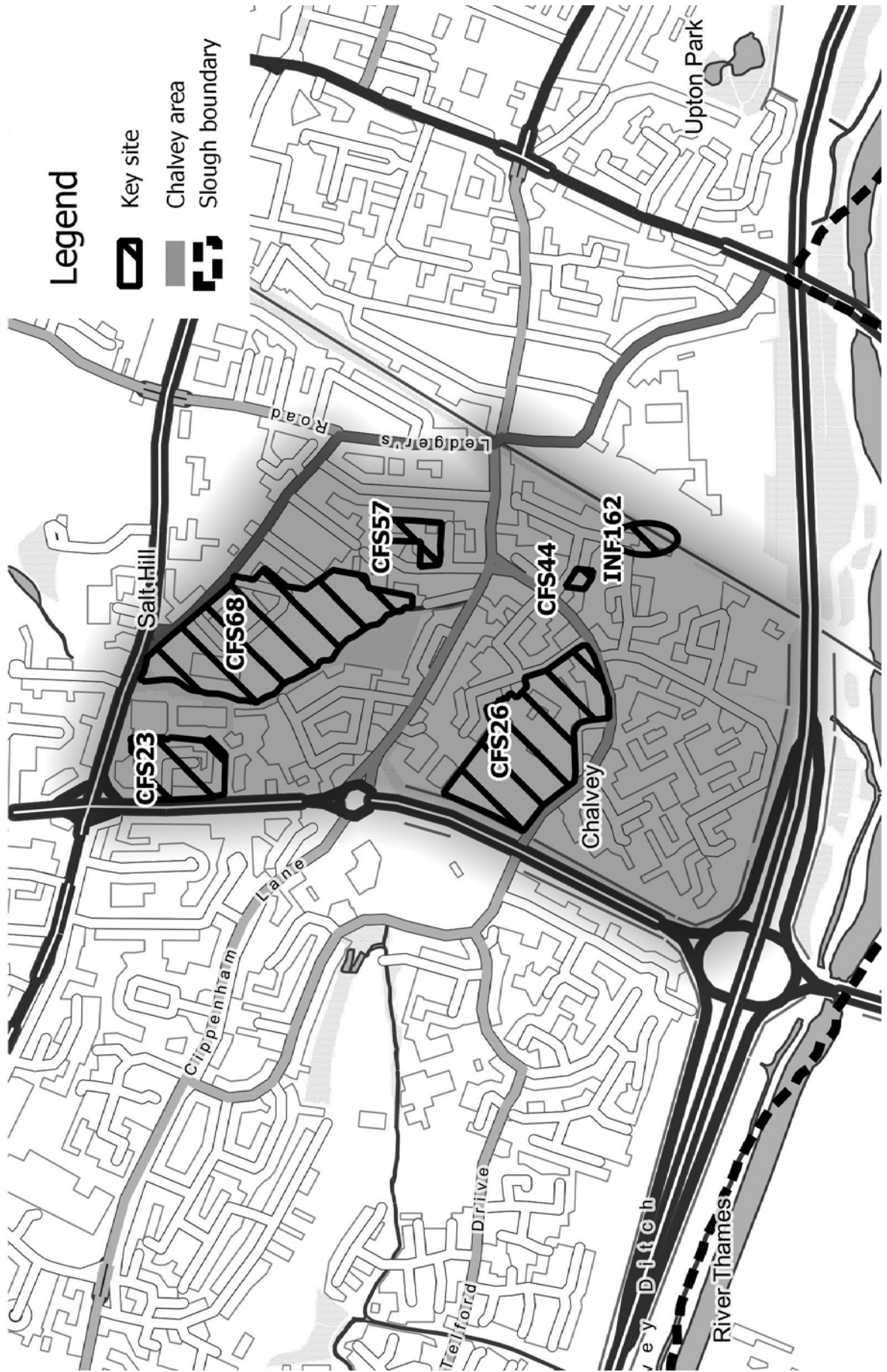
Key Sites

- CFS 68 Montem Leisure Centre - redevelopment for housing
- CFS 26 Chalvey Community and shopping Centre plus recreation ground - redevelopment for a secondary school including community centre space.
- CFS 23 Fire Station/Land east of Tun's Lane - new fire station and flats.
- CFS 57 Darvill's Lane (community and day centre) - residential development
- CFS 44 Garage Compound Turton Way - new flats

Related Sites/Areas

- INF 162 Chalvey Halt proposal (new station on Windsor branch line)
- CFS 56 Former Cross Keys pub - residential development (planning permission granted)
- CFS 1 Salt Hill Stream and tributaries - green corridor and water quality improvement.
- Primary Road/Greenwatt Way - propose health centre and extra care housing (planning permission granted).

Figure 13: Option D3 - Chalvey Regeneration Area



5.8. Option E: Estate renewal

Background

There are over 6,000 Council Houses in Slough located in a number of Estates throughout the Borough. The Council has an on-going programme of improvements to make sure that they meet the “decent homes” standard and continue to improve the public realm in these areas.

As part of this the Council has carried out some major Estate Renewal projects. These have included demolishing two of the blocks of flats at Common Road Langley and replacing them with family housing. The Britwell regeneration scheme has involved demolishing the flats and shopping centre and replacing them with new facilities and family housing. It is proposed to demolish the Tower and Ashbourne flats in Chalvey.

In addition the Council has carried out a programme of redeveloping unused garage courts for housing which makes better use of unsightly areas. Further phases of this are planned along with proposals to redevelop some old peoples units which do not meet modern needs.

Most of the Council Estates in Slough such as Wexham Court, Trelawney Avenue in Langley and the Britwell have been built to a high standard. The Council will, however, be carrying out a stock condition survey to see whether there are areas which will need major investment or could benefit from being partially redeveloped during the plan period.

Proposed Option

This option would involve selectively redeveloping parts some of the housing Estates in Slough in order to improve the appearance and environment of the areas and increase the number of units as well as the quality of housing that is available to meet local needs.

This would be carried out through a combination of schemes across the Borough which would range from the infilling of available small sites, to the demolition and redevelopment of large tower blocks.

Constraints

There may be physical constraints to the development or redevelopment of sites as a result of flooding, drainage, noise, air quality or other environmental problems.

There may also be a number of practical constraints to development.

The main constraint is the shortage of available land.

5.8. Option E: Estate renewal

Issues

There are a number of issues associated with this option.

Any refurbishment or redevelopment would inconvenience residents in the short term.

New development would also have to be at a higher density than at present and so it would have to be carefully designed to make sure that it fitted into the existing neighbourhood. The type of new accommodation may also change with more apartments being provided.

There is also a potential problem in carrying out comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment schemes where some properties have been sold or leased to the occupiers. If it is not possible to buy properties back it may be necessary to use Compulsory Purchase powers on a selective basis.

The critical issue is whether schemes will be economically viable taking account of the constraints to what the Council can do with its housing stock.

Capacity

It is not possible to assess what the capacity is of this option at this stage.

Key Sites

Whilst some key sites for redevelopment in the short term can be identified, such as Tower House and Ashbourne House, this option will be made up of multiple sites over the course of the plan period.

5.1. Option F: Intensification of the suburbs

Background

Much of Slough's existing housing is found in suburban streets. This option explores the potential for creating more housing within these areas.

National planning policy includes a strong preference for the reuse of previously developed land before greenfield sites are considered. Therefore an option to intensify the development of housing within existing suburban areas would meet this requirement. However policy also warns against the loss of garden spaces to new housing and includes strong policies to ensure high quality of development which respects and reflects local context and ensures that the existing character of an area is adequately considered.

Slough is already quite densely developed with parallel streets of houses separated by gardens. The gardens are for the most part narrow and over most of the Borough, the gap between rows of houses is less than 60m. This pattern provides little scope for significant traditional "backland" development by inserting new developments between rows of houses. But there may be some limited opportunities for a single row of mews houses in isolated instances. Household occupation is generally high and the use of garden space to accommodate extensions and ancillary buildings is already quite intensive. There are observable impacts from this optimisation in terms of loss of trees. There are relatively few gap site opportunities left to infill between houses or to develop on underused land or corner plots, as these have been taken up already in recent years.

These suburban areas have already absorbed a lot of the population growth that has been taking place. This can be seen from the large number of extensions that have taken place and the existence of a large numbers of outbuildings which are accommodating what are known as "beds in sheds."

The call for sites in January 2016 did lead to some sites being identified as potential housing development sites. Some of larger sites have been considered and included in other options proposed for specific key site development. The small sites that came forward had limited capacity to accommodate significant amounts of housing.

Proposed Option

In the context of Slough, there are three main options for intensifying development within the existing suburbs:

- by permitting comprehensive redevelopment of several plots to create a whole new development at a more intensive density and a design that does not necessarily follow the traditional street pattern, or
- by amalgamating land from several plots to insert a new row of mews type houses whilst keeping the existing houses.
- by allowing piecemeal infill of new houses between existing houses or through small scale redevelopment on gardens.

Comprehensive development would be based on the need to assemble several properties into a viable redevelopment block by demolishing the existing houses and replacing them. This could offer potential for a new type of higher density development to be inserted within the suburban context without altering the character of the area overall, provided the resulting development was sympathetic in scale. This could make a significant contribution to providing additional housing and could also allow for a range of house types and extend the availability of non- family sized accommodation within existing communities.

5.1. Option F: Intensification of the suburbs

The “insert” development option is dependent upon the availability of land where the gardens between existing homes are sufficiently long that a new access drive and manoeuvring area and houses can be satisfactorily accommodated between rows of housing without undue loss of amenity for either the existing or proposed homes. As stated above the opportunities for this are very limited given the development pattern in Slough where rows of houses are mostly parallel and less than 60 m apart.

Studies looking at the availability of land suitable for infill between existing buildings also show that there are relatively few sites that can be identified. The trend for optimising the living space of family homes through extensions or ancillary buildings have reduced the number of sites where a new residential unit could be infilled. Where they do exist, the capacity of individual site is also limited both by the size of these sites and the need to respect the character of the existing neighbourhood.

Constraints

Both the “comprehensive” and the “insert” options rely on site assembly. Given that houses are in separate ownership, the difficulties involved in site assembly are a practical constraint on whether such development is likely to come forward.

A consequence of site assembly issues is that the land costs will be inflated by the need to achieve willing sellers. Even assuming willing sellers, the existing value of family homes is such that the viability of a development at an acceptable density is questionable.

For developments where the number of additional units is greater than 15, we would be looking for affordable housing to be provided. Most “infill” developments will produce fewer than 15 additional units as will the “insert” option and therefore will not be required under government policy to contribute towards either affordable housing or to other community infrastructure. For larger comprehensive developments, affordable housing and other policy requirements would be sought, but this will depend upon viability.

Intensification of development in suburban areas will place greater demands on the housebuilders. Careful planning and design and attention to the local context are needed to ensure an increase in density can be successfully accommodated in a form that will make the changes acceptable to the communities in which they are located

An objective of the plan will be to preserve and enhance the amount of green space within Slough’s suburbs. New developments at an increased density would have to provide green landscaped areas including trees for the use and enjoyment of residents, as a contribution to the environment and as a buffer to the existing neighbourhood.

Such developments could potentially add to the overall number of dwellings, but would more likely be in flats/maisonettes rather than traditional family homes with private gardens.

Key Links

Developing new homes near existing facilities and infrastructure would minimise the need for or cost of providing additional facilities to serve new development. Most new homes would be in places where there is reasonably good access to jobs, transport, services and facilities. This proximity to local services such as schools and shops would reduce the travel distances and also foster a modal shift away car usage.

5.1. Option F: Intensification of the suburbs

Issues

This option needs to balance the positive aspects of the contribution that it could make to the provision of additional homes in a sustainable location to meet the needs of a growing population against the on the character of the existing suburbs, the impact on the quality of life for existing residents and the impact on trees and green space. To be a viable option, it also needs to be demonstrated that schemes for new housing are likely to come forward.

The objectives of the Plan include ensuring that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place. The council has a history of successfully defending appeals in respect of proposals for infill housing where the proposal would adversely impact on the character of the area, including green space, or the amenities of the neighbouring properties. In the context of neighbourhood planning, the plan will also support the potential for distinct neighbourhoods to define the character of their area and what kind of place they want to see in the future, although this should also acknowledge the need to plan positively for growth. New developments, whether comprehensive redevelopment, insertions into the existing suburban fabric or infills, will have to be designed to fit into the character of the area without negative impact on character or amenity and enhancing the provision of trees and greenspace. This is quite a challenge for developers, but has been successfully done in schemes around the country.

Intensification of the suburbs can have a positive impact on provision of community facilities if and support for existing facilities, as with support for local shops etc. This can be part of the living locally policies. Ideally it would also be that larger comprehensive schemes could contribute directly to the provision of new facilities that the existing community can also use.

Overall however, the scarcity of sites that are suitable for either infill or insert developments and the limited capacity for each to add substantially to the number of homes mean that these options will not make a significant contribution to the total number of homes needed to meet the OAHN target. Neither will they contribute to the provision of affordable housing.

Comprehensive redevelopment proposals could potentially provide a greater number of additional residential units. There is also a chance to provide specialist housing for a wider groups of people, such as the elderly or disabled people within their communities. However these sites still need to carefully considered in order to ensure that the resultant proposal respects the context of its suburban location and especially, retains sufficient open area for the use of residents, to contribute to greening and environmental objectives and to provide a buffer to its neighbours.

The Slough Housing Strategy includes proposals for delivery of up to 200 new homes per year through estates renewal and will also use this programme to deliver additional affordable housing.

The major question is whether such development would be deliverable from the private sector. The attractiveness of such schemes to developers is particularly uncertain given the costs and difficulty of assembling a parcel of land for development. It is also questionable whether even at this scale viability would permit affordable housing to be provided and for community facilities to be funded through developer contributions.

The conclusion is that while intensification could be achieved on suitable sites if good design principles are applied. The scarcity of sites, questionable viability due to site assembly costs makes this option unlikely to contribute significantly to satisfying housing need.

5.1. Option F: Intensification of the suburbs

Capacity

Although there may be the potential to significantly increase the density of homes on a given site, this will not necessarily cumulatively significantly increase the net number of units.

Infill housing opportunities are limited and therefore the capacity to provide a significant contribution to meeting housing need may be no more than that provided by windfall sites. The Housing Trajectory assumes that 60 dwellings a year will come forward upon small sites most of which will be within the suburban areas. It is not possible at this stage to estimate how much this option would increase this figure.

5.2. Option G: Redevelop existing business areas for housing

Background

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), has indicated that 927 dwellings a year should be built during the plan period to meet the unconstrained need of our projected population. Our Objective is to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises. Even if all of the Options (A-F) set out above come forward there will still be a shortfall of some 8,000 homes overall during the plan period. Consequently consideration has to be given to changing the use of more land from its existing use to residential. There is a lot of land in employment use within the Borough and so the redevelopment of some of this for housing has to be considered as an Option.

National Planning Policy also states that the Local Plan must give due consideration to the need to support businesses and economic development alongside meeting social needs and mitigating significant negative impacts from these on the natural and built environment. With the pressures for development in Slough there is a need to find a balance between the provision of land for housing and employment to ensure there is sufficient of both to provide for the local population and meet the needs of our business community.

The Core Strategy (2008) has a presumption against the loss of any of the defined Existing Business Areas as part of a strategic strategy to concentrate growth in defined areas and in order to ensure that Slough has a diverse economic base. This policy has been successful as it protects the land values in these areas and provides certainty for businesses choosing to locate and invest that they can invest in specialist buildings and operate in ways and at times that may not be compatible with residential uses (such as manufacturing, storage and distribution and datacentres or those that may require 24 hour operation).

The recent announcement of Government support for the extension of Heathrow through a third runway could result in 77,000 new jobs being created during the plan period in the east of the Borough. This supply of new jobs could potentially justify the release of existing employment land in Slough for housing.

Four of the Spatial Options propose housing development upon current employment land. These are Option B expanding centre of Langley, Option C Akzo Nobel/National Grid, Option D1 Canal Basin and Option D2 Cippenham Central Strip. Consideration should be given to whether any other sites could be changed to residential use.

The largest concentration of existing businesses is within Slough Trading Estate. This 156 Ha site is the location of over 400 companies across a wide range of business sectors. Most of the estate is covered by a designated Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) which has successfully given SEGRO, the major owner of the estate, the opportunity to respond to business development needs without the need for getting planning permission in the normal way. As a result the Estate has seen major redevelopment and regeneration over the past 10 years. The Poyle Trading Estate in the east of the Borough, which is in multiple ownership, mainly serves the needs of Heathrow airport. It is not envisaged, nor would we wish that either of these will cease to be employment areas during the plan period.

The town centre is another major employment area having a number of office developments alongside retail and other town centre uses. Whilst there will be a mix of uses in the centre, including a lot more residential, it is envisaged that this will provide an increased number of jobs over the plan period particularly in new HQ offices.

The other smaller existing business areas are generally spread along the A4 at the western end of the Borough and in Langley.

In addition to these concentrated business sites, there are some individual employment sites spread around the town which provide a network of uses that support the local economy.

5.2. Option G: Redevelop existing business areas for housing

Proposed Option

This option explores the potential for meeting housing need by allowing redevelopment for housing on existing business areas over and above the land affected by options B,C and D above.

Constraints

There are a number of constraints which will affect the ability of more employment land being redeveloped for housing.

Other Options have already proposed the use of some employment land for housing and there is only a limited supply of land.

It may not be viable for employment land to be converted to residential either because of the high value of existing uses or the cost of demolition, remediation and construction.

Finally some employment areas may not be suitable for residential use either because of environmental constraints or a lack of amenity.

Issues

The main issue in relation to this option is finding the balance between competing Objectives. On the one hand we are aiming to meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs. At the same time we have the objectives of creating 15,000 new jobs and ensuring that Slough's economy creates wealth and retains its role as an economic powerhouse.

The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (published in November 2016) has projected there will be a demand for 83-180 hectares of new employment land over the plan period in order to accommodate some of the additional 15,000 jobs that it envisages being created during the plan period (Table 4.2 EDNA).

The only area where new employment land could be created is at Colnbrook and Poyle. This is considered as Option I. At the same time Options B,C, D1, and D2, which between them could deliver around 2,000 houses, would involve the loss of about 35 hectares of employment land.

There has also been a significant loss of employment land as a result of recent changes in government policy that allows changes from offices and other Class B uses to residential through the Prior Approval process. Although this has played a positive part in re-using some redundant offices there is a risk that the further loss of offices through this process will have a negative impact on the supply of lower grade commercial premises needed by small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) or 'back-office' businesses.

In order to support the diverse and buoyant economy of Slough it is still important to foster opportunities for a wide range of businesses to stay and grow and for other businesses to be attracted into the Borough. The various economic strategies have identified a key to success as access to a suitable workforce and to suitable premises (from grade A office accommodation through warehouses, technical premises to small business workshops and shop fronts).

Existing business areas outside the main concentrations in the trading estates and the town centre provide a valuable source to satisfy requirements for the full range of business needs.

5.2. Option G: Redevelop existing business areas for housing

For example Information Technology and Commerce ('ITC') is identified as a leading sector of the Slough economy (five times the national average). The Slough Business Focus Study (Regeneris May 2015) shows a very wide distribution with businesses dotted throughout the Borough in addition to the areas of concentration. This sector also has a high number of small and medium sized enterprises with a similarly high number of people who are self employed. This type of business clearly draws from the resident population. It is a good example of the way in which premises within residential and district locations can help to both support the economy and help people to live and work locally.

The retention of a supply of employment premises within suburban and district centres also enables residents to access the services that they need more easily and without the need for a car journey. Having employment premises helps specialist businesses, such as those associated with the various ethnic communities in Slough, to be close to their markets which will help them to establish and grow.

There may be some employment premises that are suitable to be converted to or redeveloped for residential use and will become available during the plan period. Where such sites are brought forward for mixed use redevelopment including both residential and employment, a flexible approach that takes account of circumstances could be explored, provided issues such as residential quality, transport and contamination could be satisfied.

However, the option of encouraging a more comprehensive change from employment to residential would be unlikely to actually deliver a substantial contribution to residential need because of the disparate nature of the sites. Most of the sites are in separate ownership and where occupied by thriving businesses are unlikely to be brought forward for development. Future development for housing would be piecemeal. The high existing use values will make the land expensive for redevelopment and possible contamination problems will further reduce the development viability of such sites. In practice many of the employment sites have high existing use values by virtue of the buoyant business environment of Slough and this would mean that most of the employment land would probably remain in employment use.

Capacity

Because this Option is so wide ranging it is not possible to assess how many new houses it could produce.

Related Sites/Areas

No specific sites have been identified at this stage.

6.3. Option H: Release of Green Belt land for housing

Background

In order to meet the Objective of meeting our objectively assessed housing need within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises and meet the objective of providing an appropriate mix of housing for Slough's population, it is necessary to consider releasing Green Belt land.

Changes have been made to the Green Belt in Slough in successive plans. The Local Plan for Slough (2004) identified a shortfall of 1,000 houses compared with the overall requirement. As a result it was agreed that there were sufficient exceptional circumstances for the plan to release six sites from the Green belt to provide for these 1,000 houses. It also released two other sites on the basis that they no longer had a Green Belt function and these have subsequently been granted planning permission for housing.

The Core Strategy (2008) subsequently made changes to the Green Belt boundaries by putting back into the Green Belt any open land which had no further development potential but could perform a Green Belt function.

The Strategic Housing Land Assessment (2016) has identified that Slough has an Objectively Assessed Housing Need of 927 units a year which is almost three times higher than the requirement of 315 in the Core Strategy. At the same time the pool of land available for housing development has reduced as a result of past developments. As a result, in line with Government Guidance, it is necessary to consider the option of releasing further Green Belt land in order to meet local housing need.

Slough is characterised by its family housing in suburban areas. However most of the sites now coming forward for development and those proposed in other options are closer to the centre and the majority of new homes are in blocks of flats. Consequently, there is likely to be a more limited range of new homes available for people with fewer family homes in the future. The SHMA has identified continuing demand for 3 plus bedroom homes. Building upon greenfield Green Belt land will provide the opportunity to provide more family housing to meet that need. Lower remediation costs and land values will potentially increase the viability to allow a high proportion of affordable housing to be provided. This is a further justification for considering this Option.

The largest area of Green Belt in the Borough is in Colnbrook and Poyle. It is not, however, considered that this area is suitable for new housing because it is subject to a number of environmental constraints. The Government has announced its support for building a third runway in this location which would make it even less appropriate to build new housing here. Any available land would be considered for employment use in Option I.

There is also an area of Green Belt land south of the M4 in Slough, but once again this is not considered suitable for housing development because it contains the Jubilee river and the sewage works. It has very poor access and most of it is liable to flood.

A number of other small pockets of Green Belt land have also been ruled out as possible housing sites because they are not considered to be suitable for residential development for a variety of reasons in each case.

6.3. Option H: Release of Green Belt land for housing

Proposed Option

This option proposes the development of a number of Green Belt sites around Slough for housing. The possible sites that have been identified are:

- St Antony's Field, Farnham Lane (CFS 54)
- Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street (CFS 30)
- Land to rear of Opal Court, Wexham Street (CFS 29)
- Land east of Wexham Park Hospital
- North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane
- Land east of Rochford Gardens
- Bloom Park, Middlegreen Road (CFS 6)
- Land east of Market Lane
- Land south of Castleview Road
- Upton Court Farm

It is considered that all of the sites should be predominantly developed for family housing and that a full quota of affordable housing and all of the necessary infrastructure contributions will be provided.

Constraints

At this issues and options stage, it has not been possible to undertake studies that would identify all of the possible constraints to the development of every site. There may be flooding, drainage, access, ecological, contamination or other environmental problems which could affect the design and the capacity of the sites. These will be considered in due course.

Some of the sites are subject to policy constraints. Bloom Park is for instance public open space and the land south of Castleview Road is within the Ditton Park Historic Park and Garden. The land east of Market Lane is within the Colne Valley Regional Park and the Strategic Gap identified in the Core Strategy.

St Antony's Field, Farnham Lane, could be considered to have a particular role in preventing the coalescence of settlements.

6.3. Option H: Release of Green Belt land for housing

Issues

The biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.

The NPPF states that once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan (para.83). It is recognised that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts (para.79) and there have to be very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt (para.88).

It will therefore be necessary to demonstrate that the overall need for housing, the need for family housing and the need for more affordable housing constitutes the very special circumstances that are needed to overcome the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

It will also be necessary to consider whether there are physical or policy constraints as to why individual sites should not be developed.

Capacity

It is estimated that all of these sites could produce around 680 dwellings but this would have to be subject to detailed testing.

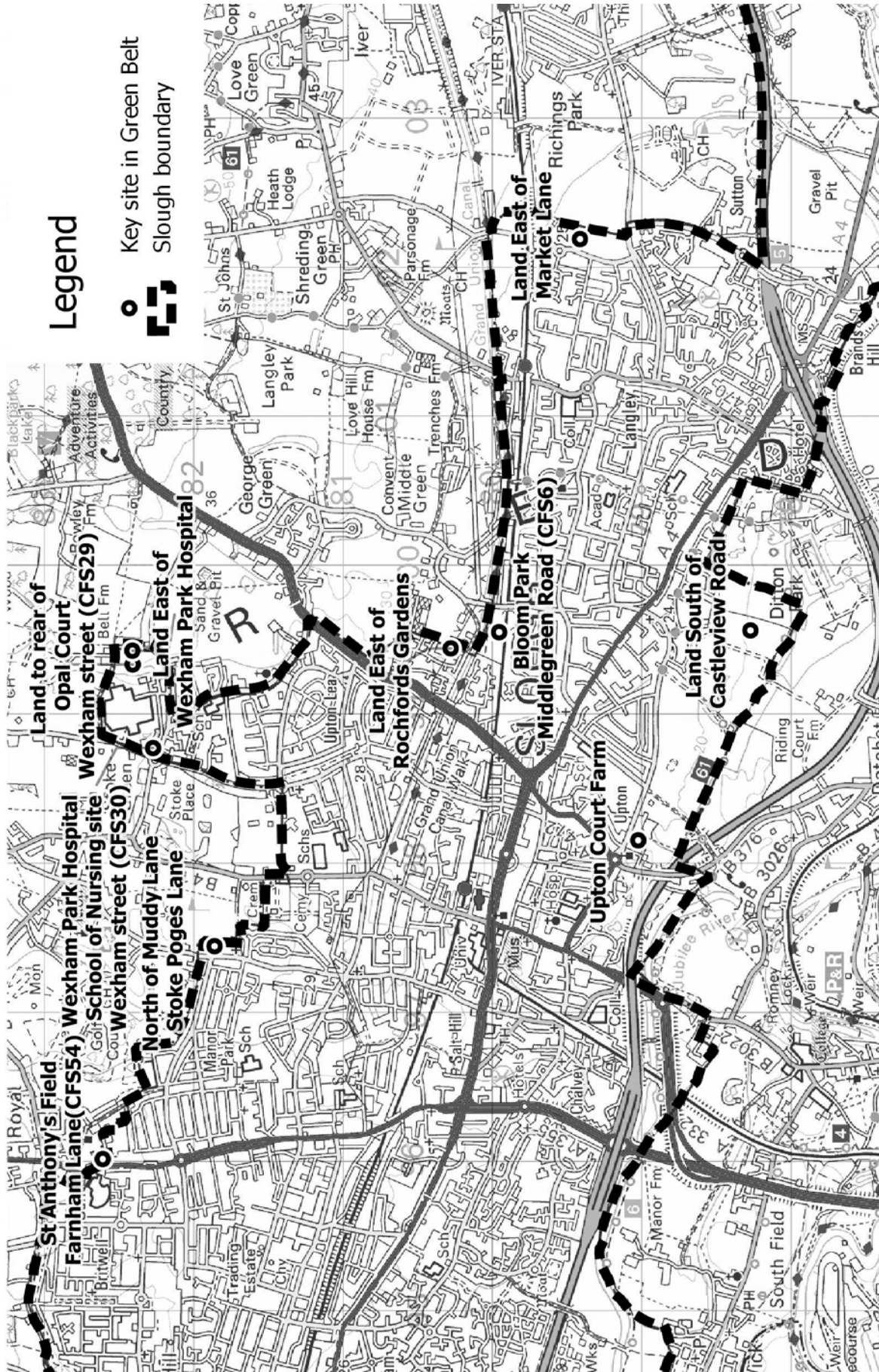
Key Sites

The Key Sites which make up this option are listed above.

Related Sites/Areas

Many of these sites could be affected by Option J which proposes meeting some of Slough's housing need in a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks.

Figure 14: Option H - Green belt release for housing



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019446.

5.4. Option I: Release of Green Belt land for employment (in the Colnbrook and Poyle area)

Background

One of the Objectives of the Plan is to create 15,000 jobs in Slough. Another is to deliver the benefits that growth at Heathrow can bring.

The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (published in November 2016) has calculated that there will be a demand for 83-180 hectares of new employment land in Slough in order to accommodate the projected growth in jobs.

Slough has twin pressures of a very limited supply of unbuilt on land in Borough and the need to accommodate high housing growth at levels. Other options set out above propose the change of use of sites currently or recently in employment use to residential (options B,C,D and G). but the proposals for the town centre would increase the amount of employment floorspace for office development. In this context, the only significant option for providing additional employment land is to release land from the Green Belt.

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belt land but it is appropriate to carry out a review of the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan Process in order to determine whether there are very special circumstances sufficient to justify its release.

Changes to the Green Belt in Slough in the 2004 Local Plan and 2008 Core Strategy were justified on the basis of housing need. Option H has looked at the potential for release of sites within the Green Belt around Slough for residential development in order to meet the objectively assessed need for housing close to where that need arises. The sites proposed in that option are considered to be more suitable for housing rather than employment use.

There are two "Major Developed Sites" in Green Belt which are currently in employment use. These are at Slough Sewage Works and Wexham Park Hospital. The only other Green Belt land with any potential for employment use is within Colnbrook and Poyle in the east of the Borough. This area contains the Poyle Trading Estate and a number of other industrial and commercial areas. It also contains the Grundon's Energy from Waste plant and a number other large infrastructure uses.

Although it is not very accessible by public transport commercial uses have been attracted to the area because of its proximity to Heathrow airport and accessibility to the motorway network.

The Government has announced its support for the proposal third runway at Heathrow which would be built on Green Belt land in Colnbrook north of the A4 Colnbrook bypass. The Grundon's plant and part of the Lakeside Road industrial area would have to be demolished to facilitate the proposed plans for Heathrow. These and other displaced uses may have to be replaced. There would also need to be extensive changes to the road network and requirements for land for associated infrastructure.

Taking into account the analysis of the Economic Development Needs Assessment that substantial additional land should be made available for employment plus the need to support the growth of Heathrow, it is considered that the Local Plan review should consider options to identify additional employment land in the Colnbrook and Poyle area with the intention that this land would be used for more airport related employment development.

5.4. Option I: Release of Green Belt land for employment (in the Colnbrook and Poyle area)

Proposed Option

This option would involve releasing land from the Green Belt in the Colnbrook and Poyle area for airport related employment development.

In order to safeguard land that may be needed for the proposed third runway and its associated development there will be an embargo on any development taking place in the short term unless it meets the “essential to be in this location” test set out in the Core Strategy. The relocation of essential infrastructure or facilities, such as the Grundons energy from waste plant, may be allowed in advance of the new runway in order to ensure continuity of service. The need for any other development in the Colnbrook and Poyle area will be reviewed once a detailed planning consent has been granted for the proposed third runway. Priority will be given to the relocation of existing uses. Proposals for the release of additional land for airport related development would then be considered at this stage.

If the third runway at Heathrow does not go ahead consideration will still be given to whether any additional airport related development is needed in the Poyle area to support the planned growth at Heathrow with the existing two runways. This would have to be justified by the results of the Employment Needs Assessment and be limited to meeting airport needs only.

Constraints

As well as being in the Green Belt, the area is currently protected from development because of its location in the Strategic Gap and Colne Valley Park; a policy in the Core Strategy. A proposal for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange north of the A4 Colnbrook bypass has recently been refused by the Secretary of State who gave great weight to the Strategic Gap policy.

The Colnbrook and Poyle area has a number of possible constraints to development. A large part of it is in an area liable to flood. Much of the remaining open land has been landfilled.

The area suffers from significant noise and air quality problems. There is a Public Safety Zone west of the northern Heathrow runway and there will be another one for the proposed third runway if this goes ahead. Public Safety Zones restrict what type of development can go within them.

The Colne Valley Park runs north to south in the Green Belt, the centre of Colnbrook village is a Conservation Area and there is a need to protect the amenities of residents and the need to protect the environment from the impact of any future development..

Parts of the area also suffer from traffic congestion and there is a need to keep HGV traffic out of residential areas.

5.4. Option I: Release of Green Belt land for employment (in the Colnbrook and Poyle area)

Issues

One of the key issues is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.

The Colnbrook and Poyle area is currently highly protected from development because of the pressures it faces. The Core Strategy currently makes a distinction between different parts of the Green Belt within the Borough by identifying the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London and the Colne Valley Park as an area where development will only be allowed if it is "essential to be in that location". This has been accepted by the courts and the Secretary of State as a "higher bar" than the "very special circumstances" test for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The development of the proposed third runway at Heathrow would have a major impact upon the Strategic Gap and so the continuation of this policy will have to be considered in due course.

The key issue is whether or not additional development will be needed to provide more jobs and support the growth of Heathrow. The Council has supported the expansion of the airport on the grounds that this is in the national as well as local interest. Even if the proposed third runway doesn't go ahead there will still be growth at Heathrow and so there may be a need for some development in the Poyle area to facilitate this.

The impact of the proposed development upon the environment and upon congestion will also have to be considered.

If the third runway does go ahead there will be a need for a comprehensive Master Plan for the whole area.

Key Sites

No specific sites have been identified at this stage

Related Sites/Areas

Proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport

5.5. Option J1: Northern expansion of Slough (into South Bucks)

Background

One of the Objective of the Plan is to meet our objectively assessed housing need within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises. Another is to provide an appropriate mix of housing for Slough's population.

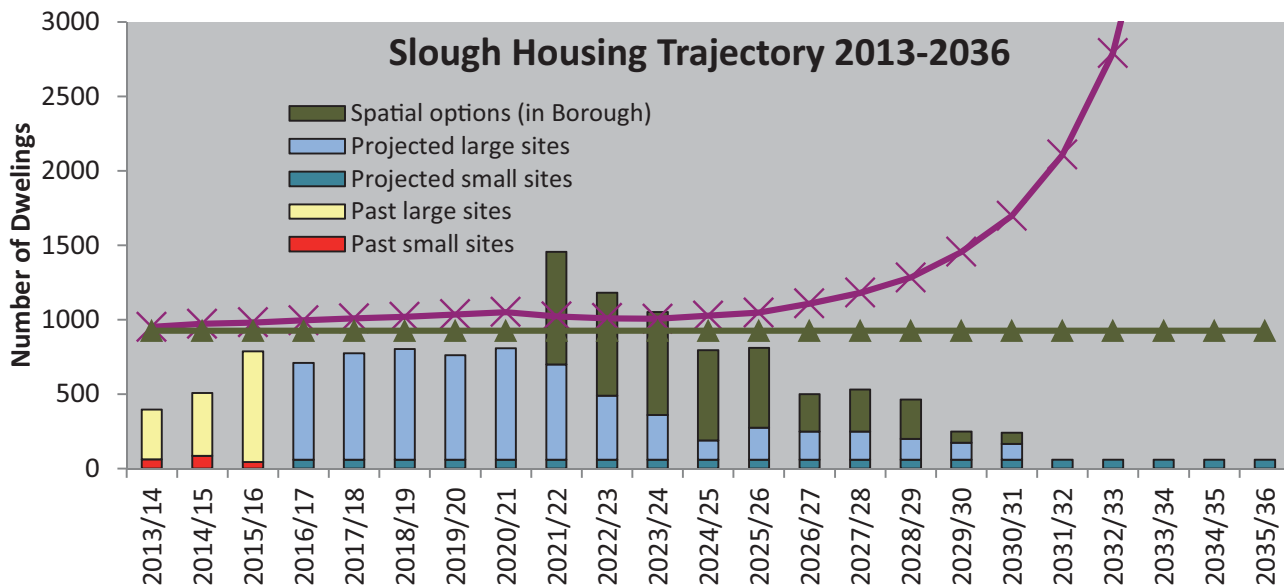
The Housing Capacity Study shows that it will not be possible to meet Slough's Objectively Assessed Housing need of 927 units a year within its boundary. The Housing Trajectory shows that even if all of the Options A to K within the Borough were to be developed there would still be a need for around 8,000 more houses predominantly the last ten years of the Plan period. As a result we have to consider the further expansion of Slough into land outside of the Borough.

Because of physical constraints such as the M4 motorway the main opportunity to do this is to the north although there is a small to the south in Windsor & Maidenhead which could be developed as Option J2.

The possibility of land to the north of Slough, which is in South Bucks District, being used to meet Slough's needs was originally raised in the South East Plan. The much higher housing figures that have emerged from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment means that this option has to be looked at again.

As a result the option of building a northern expansion of Slough is being put forward. This will be considered within the context of the option of providing the necessary housing elsewhere outside of the Housing Market Area.

Figure 15: Housing Trajectory



5.5. Option J1: Northern expansion of Slough (into South Bucks)

Proposed Option

This option would involve building a major new residential development with the entire necessary supporting infrastructure such as shops, community facilities, schools and open spaces. The area of search as shown in the attached plan stretches from land north of Farnham Lane in the west across to land east of Market Lane in Langley.

It is suggested that the development could take place in the form of a “garden suburb”. This means that it would predominantly consist of family housing which would be fully integrated with the surrounding countryside, parks and golf courses. Using the principles of the “Garden City” movement the development would capture some of the uplift in land prices to ensure that the development can fully fund all of the necessary infrastructure and planning requirements such as the provision of affordable housing.

It will be important that the proposed development takes place in a sustainable way which means that it has the critical mass that will be necessary to provide facilities and public transport services. The location of Wexham Park hospital within the area is important because this is already a major destination for visitors and employees.

Part of the area of search is also close to Langley Railway station which will have the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) service and could be developed in conjunction with the Option to expand the centre of Langley around the station.

The location of any new development will also have to take account of the availability of transport links from Slough. One option would be to develop along the B416 Stoke Road corridor another would be to develop along the A412 Uxbridge Road corridor. Use of Wexham Road would be another option.

There would have to be a modal shift towards non-car modes for existing trips to avoid traffic congestion worsening. The high quality transit network will have to be provided which is capable of improving public transport connectivity for all of Slough, not just the development areas.

Constraints

There are a number of major constraints to the development of this Option. These include the normal issues about flooding and drainage, landscape, conservation, ecology and other environmental considerations. It is recognised that some areas have been and are being worked for minerals and some have been subject to landfill operations.

There is need to take account of the impact of development upon Burnham Beeches, Stoke Park, Conservation Areas and the high quality landscape and ecological value of the area.

The capacity of the road network both within Buckinghamshire and Slough is also a possible constraint to development. This will require the promotion of non-car modes of transport.

5.5. Option J1: Northern expansion of Slough (into South Bucks)

Key Links

- A412 Uxbridge Road
- B416 Stoke Road
- Wexham Road
- Road Network in southern Buckinghamshire
- Langley Railway station
- Canal footpath
- The northern expansion would require the provision of new multi-modal transport corridors to provide links to key public transport hubs at Slough and Langley and around the north of Slough.

Issues

Clearly the biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.

The other major issue is how this Option can be progressed given that it is on land outside of Slough Borough Council's control. The Council has already made representations to the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan that this area should be considered for development in the form of a "garden suburb" in order to meet local housing needs. It has also made representations under the Duty to Cooperate. These have not yet been considered by the Joint Chiltern South Bucks and Committee. Despite this it has agreed where sites could be released for the Green Belt in its Preferred Options which were the subject of public consultation in October/November 2016. These options did not contain any sites within the area of search for the proposed northern expansion of Slough.

Sites within the area of search for the northern expansion have been considered in the Chiltern & South Bucks Part 2 Green Belt Assessment. (<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/planning/greenbeltpart2>). This concluded that all of the sites in this area should remain in the Green Belt.

We will continue to promote the option of the northern expansion of Slough through the on-going Duty to Cooperate process and by making representations to the Local Plan. The position is complicated by the fact that the two Local Plans are on different timescales. As a result, if the issue cannot be resolved through the current review of the South Buck/Chiltern Plan, it may be necessary to have an immediate partial review of the South Bucks/Chiltern Local Plan just to consider the proposed "Garden Suburb" which, depending upon timing, could be conjoined with the Inquiry into the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.

5.5. Option J1: Northern expansion of Slough (into South Bucks)

Capacity

The Northern Expansion could contain around 5,000 houses.

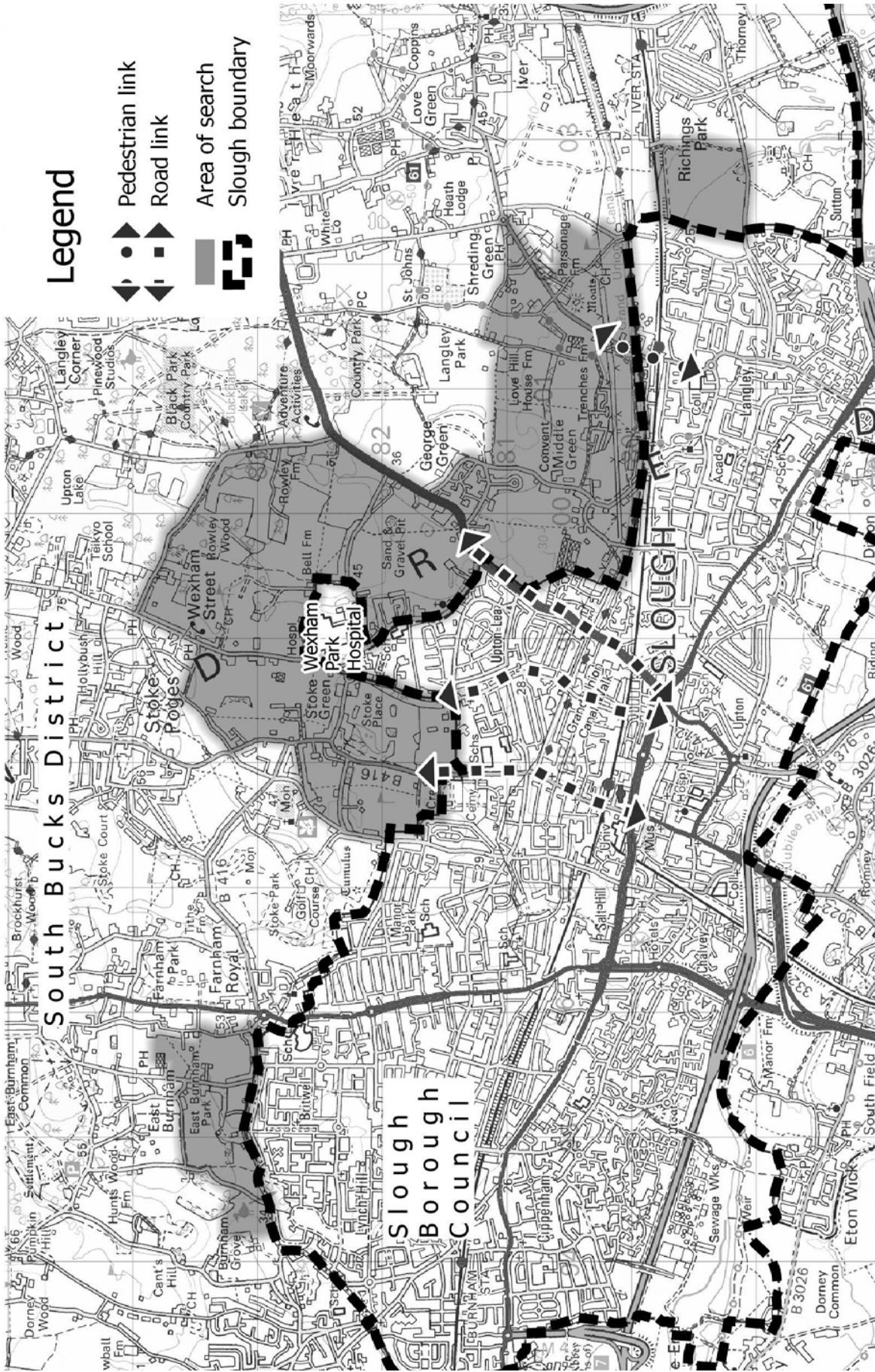
Key Sites

The area of search is set out in the Map

Related Sites/Areas

Any development would have to take account of any proposed development sites in the South Bucks/Chiltern Local Plan. It would also have to take particular account of any development which took place as a result of Options C and H.

Figure 16: Option J1 - Slough Northern Expansion



© Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019446.

5.1. Option J2: Southern Expansion of Slough (into Windsor and Maidenhead)

Background

In addition to considering the northern expansion of Slough in Option J1 above it is necessary to consider whether it is possible to expand the town to the south. The M4 motorway prevents the southern expansion of western half of Slough and the only unconstrained areas of open land that abut the urban area are at Ditton Park in Langley and Brands Hill.

Land at Riding Court Farm is currently being worked for gravel extraction. Most of the land at Ditton Park forms part of a Historic Park and Garden and so is not appropriate for development.

To the east of this is a parcel of land south of Austen Way which is in the Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This was considered in Part 1 of the Windsor & Maidenhead of the Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014). This concluded that the parcel made a "lower" contribution to meeting the purposes of Green Belt policy. As a result it was brought forward as Site D7 - Land south of Austen Way - for further consideration in the Part 2 Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment (July 2016).

Whilst it is recognised that there are some constraints to the development of the site, including noise and air pollution from the M4, it is considered that it should be considered as an area of search for residential development as part of Option J2. The site has not, however been included in the latest Borough Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation document (Dec 2016).

Further east there is another small parcel of land in Windsor and Maidenhead Borough between the Queen Mother Reservoir and Brands Hill. This was also considered in the Windsor & Maidenhead of the Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014). This concluded that the parcel made "lower" contribution to meeting the purposes of Green Belt policy. As a result it was brought forward as Site H2 - Land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill - for further consideration in the Part 2 Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment (July 2016).

This found that that the site was the subject of some constraints which included flooding on the southern part of the site and was subject to noise and air pollution from the M4 and Heathrow.

The site has now been included for proposed housing development in the latest Borough Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation document (Dec 2016).

Proposed Option

The proposed Option would involve investigating a southern expansion of the urban area of Slough by building housing on open land that is in the administrative area of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The areas of search is limited to those parcels of land which adjoin the built up area which have identified by Windsor and Maidenhead as land south of Austen Way, Langley and the land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill.

Constraints

Part of the southern section of the land west of Crown Meadow is located within Flood Zone 3a and is at high risk of flooding. Part is also in Flood Zone 2 which has medium risk of flooding. It suffers from noise and air pollution from the M4 and Heathrow Airport.

Land south of Austen Way suffers from noise and air pollution from the M4.

5.1. Option J2: Southern Expansion of Slough (into Windsor and Maidenhead)

Key Links

- Slough Linear Park

Issues

Once again the biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.

The sites are also outside of Slough and so cannot be brought forward through the Review of the Slough Local Plan. The site at Crown Meadow is now being promoted for housing development in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan. Slough Borough Council has made representations that the site at Austen Way should also be considered for housing development and we will continue to pursue this through the Local Plan and Duty to Cooperate.

Both sites would potentially be affected by the proposed third runway at Heathrow in that they would be directly under the flight path.

Key Sites

- Site H2 - Land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill
- Site D7 - Land south of Austen Way

Figure 17: Option J2 - Slough Southern Expansion



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2016

5.2. Option K: Build in other areas outside of Slough

Background

Para 179 of NPPF states that Local planning authorities should work together to meet development needs which cannot wholly be met within their own areas because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of the Framework.

The work that we have done so far shows that Slough has both physical and policy constraints which are likely to mean that it cannot meet its housing or employment needs within its boundaries.

Option H involves removing one of the main policy constraints to building more houses by proposing to release the remaining open land on the edge of Slough from the Green Belt.

Even if all of these sites were to be built upon there is still not enough capacity within the Borough to meet identified needs.

Option J1 therefore involves having a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks in the form of a new "Garden Suburb" and Option J2 involves a small southern expansion of the built up area of Slough into Windsor and Maidenhead. All of this land is in the Green Belt and so would involve overcoming the clear policy objection set out in the NPPF.

Para 47 states that Local Plans should ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the Housing Market Area as far is consistent with the policies in the Framework. As a result having considered the expansion of Slough it is necessary to look elsewhere in the Housing Market Area which, for the purposes of this exercise can be considered to be the rest of South Bucks and the rest of Windsor & Maidenhead.

It is then necessary to see whether other nearby Authorities could accommodate any of Slough's unmet need.

Proposed Option

This option would involve firstly asking authorities in the Eastern Berks and South Bucks Housing Market Area whether they can accommodate any un met housing need in addition to the urban expansions of Slough proposed in Options J1 and J2.

The four authorities in the Western Berkshire HMA have published a "West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework" which shows how they could deliver their collective Objectively Assess Needs by allocating land for 20,000 to 25,000 homes on sites that are currently not identified for housing. Discussions will now take place under the Duty to Cooperate to see whether any additional housing could be provided to meet Slough's un met needs.

Discussions will also take place with all other authorities in the vicinity.

Constraints

All of the adjacent authorities are likely to be constrained in physical or policy terms to some extent which may make it difficult for them to identify additional land for housing.

Providing housing accommodation in locations which are more remote from where the need arises is also likely to be less sustainable if it results in increased travel.

5.2. Option K: Build in other areas outside of Slough

Issues

Clearly this Option depends upon obtaining the cooperation and agreement of an adjacent authority or authorities that they are prepared to build additional houses to meet some of Slough's unmet need..

Aylesbury Vale's agreement to take some of the unmet housing needs from Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe show that it is possible to redistribute housing between areas using the Duty to Cooperate.

Obtaining agreement that some of Slough's unmet need could be met elsewhere within the Housing Market Area is complicated by the fact that Chiltern and South Bucks Councils do not agree that South Bucks District is within the same Housing Market Area as Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead. This is because the latest study by ORS Atkins concluded that, as a result of the decision to prepare a joint plan for Chiltern and South Bucks which were previously in separate HMAs, the new "best fit" is to include them in the Central Buckinghamshire HMA with Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. The report made it clear however that these "best fit" groupings do not change the actual geography of the functional housing market areas that have been identified - they simply provide a pragmatic arrangement for the purposes of establishing the evidence required ..."

As a result this should not preclude considering this Option of meeting some of Slough's unmet needs within South Bucks. The Council made representations to the consultation on the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan that it should develop a strategic planning option which included selective growth around Taplow and Iver stations. The Green Belt Preferred Options consultation document includes sites at Iver and so further development around these stations could be considered.

The situation with London is also complicated by the fact that it has been decided that for plan making purposes the whole of London is a single Housing Market Area. Once again this should not prevent cross boundary discussions taking place.

Studies have shown that there is a significant link between the various Berkshire authorities. In the past central Berkshire has been the growth area for the County because of Green Belt constraints in the east and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west.

The four Councils which form the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area are currently working together to agree a strategy for the area which will feed into their individual Local Plans. It will be necessary to engage with these authorities through the Duty to Cooperate to see if they have the capacity to accommodate some of Slough's unmet housing need.

We will also have to talk to any other Council in the vicinity to see if it has any additional housing capacity.

Key Sites

No sites or locations have been identified at this stage.

6. Section E: Questions

1. Do you agree we should plan to meet our local housing needs in or around Slough?
If not, where should new housing go?
2. Do you agree that we should be building more high quality homes to meet future aspirations of local people?
If not, what type of housing would you want?
3. Do you agree that we should continue to promote Slough as a major employment centre?
If not, how should we provide new jobs for local people?
4. Do you agree that Slough Town Centre should be revitalised as a Commercial, leisure and Retail Centre?
If not, what should the future of the town centre be?
5. Do you agree that we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development?
If not, what sort of development should we allow in the Suburbs?
6. Do you agree that we should plan to get the maximum benefits and mitigate the environment impacts of the growth at Heathrow Airport?
If not, what should our approach to Heathrow be?
7. Do you agree we should use strong measures to discourage people using their car for short journeys?
If not, how should we try to stop congestion getting worse?
8. Do you agree that we should insist on better design to improve image of Slough?
Can do you think of other ways we could improve the image of Slough?
9. Which Spatial Options do you support and why?
10. Which Spatial Options do you object to and why?
11. Any other comments?

Issues and Options Consultation Document - 16 January-27 February 2017