Slough Local Plan 2016-2036

Protecting the Suburbs Strategy

June 2020

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Slough Borough Council

Protecting the Suburbs Strategy

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Executive Summary

Slough has a significant need for new homes especially family housing and as part of the work of developing a new Local Plan, the Council has been exploring all reasonable options on how it can provide enough new homes to meet need.

The purpose of this document is to support the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan for Slough and inform future policies.

In the Issues and Options consultation document 2017, a series of options were put forward for how Slough could grow and develop in the future. Option F in the Issues and Options document proposed intensification of the suburbs as a way of delivering new homes in the Borough. Option F identified three different ways that intensification of the suburbs could be delivered and the challenges associated with their delivery.

We have assessed the potential for growth in the suburbs and the evidence shows that the suburbs in Slough have already accommodated much growth through additional built space. This has either been through extensions to homes or through the development of outbuildings in gardens which are being used for living accommodation or for other purposes. The analysis showed that there is very limited opportunity to intensify suburbs via infill development and it would not deliver large numbers of new homes and would therefore only make a minimal contribution towards meeting the significant number of new homes needed.

We already have an existing planning policy approach which protects the suburbs from inappropriate intensification and protects family housing. Core Strategy Policy CP4 (Housing Type)[1] is a robust and effective policy. A series of successful planning appeals won by the Council demonstrate that the policy is compliant with National Planning Policy Framework and provides the justification for the continued application of this policy in our emerging Local Plan. Crucially it shows that, even in the absence of a five year housing land supply, the policy continues to be given full weight in planning appeal decisions.

Our strategy to protect the suburbs supports the Council's growth ambitions and corporate strategies.

Our assessment of the evidence shows that there are five key reasons why we should protect the suburbs from inappropriate intensification.

1) Delivering Sustainable Development - protecting the suburbs from intensification supports our strategy to locate development in the most accessible locations and regenerate previously developed land.

2) Slough's Housing Needs - intensifying the suburbs will not make a significant contribution towards meeting our housing needs.

3) Why it won't deliver the homes we need – there are very limited opportunities for backland development coupled with practical issues around site assembly and multiple ownership means it is often not viable to intensify the suburbs.

4) Protecting the Environment - intensifying the suburbs will result in a loss trees and vegetation and will have a negative impact on the environment.

5) Supporting Sustainable and Liveable Communities – intensifying the suburbs could disrupt existing local communities and their community cohesion, changing the balance of communities. It could also have a negative impact on residents living conditions and health and wellbeing.

The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for Local Plan recognises the important role our suburbs have by protecting the suburbs through managed change to enhance their distinct local character, environment and sense of place. The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy focuses the delivery of major growth in the centre of Slough and other key locations around the Borough. It also promotes the northern expansion of Slough in form of a garden suburb to provide major new residential development.

[1] *Core Strategy was adopted in 2008.*

The future strategy for the suburbs envisages they will continue to develop organically and will accommodate new growth where feasible. There will be some growth of living accommodation continuing via limited extensions and outbuildings but not large scale new dwellings via unsympathetic infill or redevelopment. These additional built spaces will provide increased living space for families living in the suburbs. The suburbs will therefore accommodate Slough's housing need in a different way by providing extra bedrooms rather than providing large scale new dwellings.

This document does not replace any of the existing policies in the Local Plan, Core Strategy or Site Allocations DPD.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for Slough 2016-2036. This will guide development in the Borough for the next 20 years and will create a place where people want to live, work and stay.

1.1.2 One of the biggest challenges facing Slough is its significant need for new homes. Slough needs an average of 893 new homes per year as per the Government's standard methodology[2]. Slough also has a significant need for family housing and affordable homes as evidenced in its Local Housing Needs Assessment[3].

1.1.3 In the past, Slough has been very successful in accommodating growth and we want it to continue to do so in the future. Slough's population is young and is set to continue to grow. Slough has very little available land for growth and therefore a new approach to accommodating development is needed.

1.1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that the purpose of the planning system is achieving sustainable development. This means supporting strong and healthy communities by providing new homes that meet the needs of present and future generations and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

1.1.5 The Local Plan Issues and Options document was the subject of public consultation in 2017. This document formed the first stage in the Local Plan review process by setting out the major issues facing Slough along with a range of possible options for the future development of Slough. Option F proposed the intensification of the suburbs and set out the challenges of this growth option.

1.1.6 In response to the Issues and Options consultation document, the Council has considered in further detail whether the suburbs in Slough could accommodate a more intensive use of the land and provide more homes. This document sets out the methodology used to assess the growth potential of the suburbs, the key reasons why the suburbs need to be protected, the existing successful policy framework protecting the suburbs and how this supports our emerging preferred Spatial Strategy and the Council's ambitions and priorities.

1.1.7 This document together with the Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework, further evidence base studies and the Sustainability Appraisal supports the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan.

1.2 Context of Slough

1.2.1 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 is a densely built up area surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt.

1.2.2 The Borough has a small geographical area just 32.5 km^2. This means that with a population of approximately 149,000 people, it is densely built up in a way that is more comparable with London rather than its neighbouring local authorities. Table 1 opposite shows how dense Slough's population per hectare is in comparison to London Boroughs and how this density per hectare will increase further in the future[4]. This also means the availability of land supply for more homes is much more limited.

1.2.3 Slough in 1995 (Plan A[5]) and Slough 2019 (Plan B) shows the large amount of urban growth that has taken place in Slough over the last 26 years. It clearly highlights that apart from the Green Belt land located on the edges of the Borough boundary along with the public open spaces located throughout the Borough, that there is not much potential for growth within the existing developed areas in Slough.

[2] *Slough Housing Delivery Action Plan 2019, http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx*
[3] *Local Housing Needs Assessment RBWM, Slough and South Bucks Local Authorities, October 2019, GL Hearn, http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx*
[4] *Housing Topic Paper 2017, page 38,*
[5] *Plan A shows the developments in Slough in 1995 and excludes the buildings redeveloped since 1995.*

Table 1: Estimated and Projected Population Density 2016 and 2036

	Area hectares	Population projection 2016	Density (number of persons per hectare) 2016	Population projection 2036	Density (number of persons per hectare) 2036
Slough	3,254	147,821	45.4	169,611	52.1
Windsor and Maidenhead	19,651	149,409	7.6	167,043	8.5
South Bucks	14,128	69,749	4.9	81,811	5.8
Hillingdon	11,570	304,218	26.3	380,184	32.9
London	157,215	8,832,370	56.2	10,740,505	68.3
South East	190,6965	9,024,481	4.7	10,343,529	5.4
England	13,027,843	55,218,701	4.2	62,403,948	4.8

1.3 A History of Suburban Growth

1.3.1 Compared to other towns that are the same size of Slough, the suburbs in Slough have formed in a different and unique way. As Slough is primarily a 20th century town, it has only a small area of Victorian and Edwardian development compared to post 1920 suburban development. Some of the interwar suburbs are located quite close to the town centre. Employment in the Slough Trading Estate developed from 1920 onwards and this generated a high demand for new homes and led to a substantial interwar growth of suburban homes. Many of these homes were quite small in size with far fewer detached homes than many of the towns located near London. Much of this growth was to the north and west of the town centre and adjacent to Farnham Road near the Slough Trading Estate.

Figure 1:
Interwar - Farnham Road - Essex Avenue

1.3.2 Slough's new home occupants were more likely to work locally than commute to London. Suburban growth continued in the post war period reaching all parts of the town and this period also saw some of the more typical but small areas of private suburban estate forming particularly in the eastern side of the town which are known as Upton, Langley and Cippenham in the west.

Figure 2:
Post-war Private Suburban - Upton - Upton Court Road

Figure 3:
Post-war - Private Suburban - Langley - Thames Road

1.3.3 From the mid 1950's to the mid 1970's municipal housing estates at Britwell, Langley, Wexham and elsewhere, provided the bulk of suburban growth in the Borough.

Figure 4:
Municipal 50s-70s - Britwell - Travic Road

Figure 5:
Municipal 50s-70s - Wexham - The Frithe

1.3.4 Much of the suburban growth since 1970 has been of a medium density with mainly terraces and flats and with only a very small proportion of detached homes being built. Garden sizes of these suburban houses are smaller than those gardens in the earlier suburban development. Overall these suburban neighbourhoods contain very little, low density development.

Figure 6:
Suburban post 1970 - Cippenham - Dunster Gardens

Figure 7:
Suburban Post 1970 - Langley - Harding Spur

1.4 Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Consultation 2017

1.4.1 In the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Consultation document 2017, we identified the key issues facing Slough, such as how can we provide enough homes to meet our needs, create more jobs and transform the town centre.

1.4.2 The Issues and Options document set out a range of spatial options on the future development of Slough for public consultation. This document and the Sustainability Appraisal were consulted upon for 6 weeks in 2017.

1.4.3 Option F in the Issues and Options document proposed intensification of the Suburbs, identifying the key issues and constraints. It set out three options for intensifying development in the suburbs. They were the following:

1) 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.

2) By amalgamating land from several plots to insertion of a new row of mews type houses whilst keeping the existing houses.

3) By allowing piecemeal infill of new houses between existing houses or through small scale redevelopment on gardens.

1.4.4 After the close of consultation, Option F: Intensification of the Suburbs was identified as a key consideration in the preparation of the new Local Plan for Slough and has been examined in further detail in this document.

2. Is there Potential for Growth in the Suburbs?

2.1 Organic Growth in the Suburbs

2.1.1 The suburban areas of Slough have already absorbed a lot of organic unplanned growth. Large numbers of extensions and outbuildings buildings have been built in gardens in the suburbs of Slough. Household occupation is generally high and the use of garden space to accommodate extensions and outbuildings is already quite intensive.

2.1.2 An aerial thermal survey was carried out to see which outbuildings were being heated and used for residential purposes (Plan C)[6]. Many of these outbuildings were being used for habitable accommodation and are known as "beds in sheds". The Council has taken action against outbuildings that are being used independently and those that have poor standards, such as those which are unsafe, with little or no heating, and non compliant with building or fire safety regulations. In all other cases the Council seeks to ensure that "beds in sheds" are incidental to the main house and comply with all planning regulations.

2.2 Is there Potential for Growth in the Suburbs?

2.2.1 The residential areas of Slough are mainly characterised by fairly homogenous suburban development with individual homes (detached, semi-detached or terrace housing) within individual plots of land. These follow the street pattern with homes generally located near the front of the plots and gardens to the rear. There are also a number of Council housing estates, some of these consist of two storey terraces or semi-detached properties that have a different architectural form, layout and density to private market housing. In both the privately owned and the Council housing estates, there are some blocks of flats.

2.2.2 Slough is already quite densely developed with parallel streets of houses separated by gardens. Detailed analysis has shown that there is very little opportunity for traditional backland development. Unlike many suburban areas in other towns, few Slough houses have very long or wide gardens. The gardens are for the most part narrow and over most of the Borough, the gap between rows of houses is less than 60 metres. This pattern provides little scope for significant traditional backland development by inserting new developments between rows of houses.

2.3 Assessing the potential of Infill Development in the suburbs

2.3.1 The potential of infill development in the suburbs in Slough was first assessed in the Housing Capacity Study 2017 which was published to provide the background evidence for the housing capacity elements of the Issue and Options Consultation document. The work carried out in the Housing Capacity Study 2017 has been reassessed and figures updated where necessary.

2.3.2 The Wycombe District Council's Housing Intensification Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2011 was used as a guide to estimate the housing capacity from intensification in Slough[7]. This SPD was designed to raise the quality of new development built within existing residential areas and since 2005 it has been nationally recognised as an example of best practice.

2.3.3 The SPD contains a set of questions designed to exclude sites too constrained for development. Those questions come in three groups, the first regarding the site selection, the second related to site feasibility and a third related to site design.

[6] The thermal survey was conducted by an aeroplane which picked up heat signals being emitted from outbuildings (including sheds and garages) in 2013. The analysis of the thermal imaging revealed over 6,000 suspicious outbuildings that were emitting heat and were possibly being used as "beds in sheds" and required further investigation.

[7] Wycombe District Council Housing intensification SPD 2011 Update, https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/Planning-and-building-control/Planning-policy/SPDs-and-guidance.aspx

2.3.4 Our assessment focuses on identifying sites where infilling development is possible and therefore only question 2.1 about physical dimensions was considered in the assessment. Question 2.1 looks at the distance between the back of existing houses and depending on the available space a new development could be fitted in. Based on this guidance, the following categories were defined (Table 2):

Table 2: Depth Categories

Depth Categories
Depth between dwellings is smaller than 60 metres: no type of intensification is possible[8].
Depth between dwellings is between 60 metres to 80 metres: possible new perpendicular street or mew.
Depth between dwellings is between 80 metres to 100 metres: possible new two sided street.
Depth between dwellings is larger than 100 metres: possible new short cul-de-sac.

2.3.5 To calculate the capacity for potential growth the following steps were performed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Methodology

Step 1	Residential blocks in Slough were defined.
Step 2	For every block: - All distances between residential buildings were calculated. - All distances across existing roads were ignored; only distances across rear gardens were used. - Blocks were classified using the categories above.

2.3.6 Table 4 below shows our updated assessment which concluded that only 9.1% of the Slough area has the potential for possible intensification.. Our assessment focuses on the area potential rather the number of housing blocks (Plan D). This is because it is easier to see how many houses fit in 1km2 rather than the number of housing blocks as they come in different shapes and sizes.

2.3.7 The mews type development has the most potential for intensifying the suburbs whilst the potential for new two side streets as a way of intensifying the suburbs is extremely low.

Table 4: Potential Housing Capacity from Infill development in the Suburbs

	Slough Area	% Area of Residential Blocks
Residential Developments' Blocks	11.57 km²	--
Not possible for Intensification (Depth < 60 metres)	10.5 1 km²	90.8%
Possible Perpendicular Street or Mews (60 metres < Depth < 80 metres)	1 km²	8.6%
Possible New Two Side Street (80 metres < Depth < 100metres)	0.06 km²	0.5%

2.3.8 The assessment shows that there is very low potential for growth in the suburbs. This is reflected in the Housing Capacity Paper 2017 which concluded no specific housing capacity figure through infilling development within the overall capacity assessment total. It determined that any sites that do come forward would be treated as windfall sites or small sites that are accounted for in the overall capacity study assessment.

[8] *This category was used because it is not practical to get good quality intensification if there is a depth between dwellings that is smaller than 60 metres as this would result in wide buildings with very short gardens.*

3. Current Planning Policy Framework

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The current development plan for Slough consists of the Core Strategy adopted in 2008, the saved Local Plan 2004 policies and the Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted in 2010. These planning policy documents provide the planning policy framework for current development management decisions.

3.1.2 The housing policies set out in the Core Strategy 2008 were based on a previous housing requirement of 315 new homes per year. This has significantly changed and is now 893 new homes per year as per the standard methodology set by the Government.

3.1.3 Core Policy 4 (Type of Housing) sets out the planning policy approach to housing type (see Appendix 1 for the full policy). The key principles of this policy are that there should only be limited infilling in the suburban residential areas and that it will be family housing that enhances the character and identity of the area. High-density housing should be located in Slough's town centre and there should be no net loss of family accommodation as a result of flat conversions, changes of use or redevelopment. This housing policy has been successfully implemented since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2008.

3.1.4 The Core Strategy sets out the need for residential extensions to be of high quality design, to meet criteria on height, scale and style, and to be respectful of the location and the street scene. This residential extension guidance is a 'Supplementary Planning Document', and as such, aims to provide greater detail on the requirements set out above.

3.2 Appeal Decisions

3.2.1 There has been a number of recent planning appeal decisions on planning applications submitted on sites in the suburbs for redevelopment which the Council have won. These development proposals would have resulted in a loss of family accommodation or a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

3.2.2 The application of Core Strategy Core Policy 4 has been successful in protecting the suburbs and retaining family housing. This shows the strength and effectiveness of the policy in implementation. There are a number of appeal decisions that have been dismissed by the Planning Inspector because they have not been compliant with Core Policy 4. The relevant appeal decisions are available to view in full in Appendix 2.

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework

3.3.1 Core Strategy Core Policy 4 has been assessed as being consistent with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in terms of identifying the type of housing that is required in different locations. The Planning Inspector stated in the planning appeal decision for 19 Nash Road **(Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3167659)** that:

"There is no evidence before me to suggest that CS Core Policy 4 is not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Make reference to in particular, paragraph 50 of the Framework advises that in order to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities Councils should, amongst other matters, identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand .As a result therefore, CS Core Policy 4 should be given full weight."

3.3.2 The Inspector references NPPF paragraph 50 which advises that in order to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, Councils should, amongst other matters, identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand. Therefore having a policy that allows only flats in town centre locations and protects the suburbs from the loss of family accommodation is viewed as being compliant with the NPPF.

3.4 Five Year Housing Land Supply

3.4.1 NPPF paragraph 73 requires all local authorities to identify and update annually a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Currently Slough does not have a five year supply of new housing. Despite the absence of a five year housing land supply and a high need for housing, the Council has still won appeals where CS Core Policy 4 has been applied.

3.4.2 At a recent planning appeal at 24 Bell Close **(Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3242013)** the Inspector stated:

"The Council has confirmed that it cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply…..the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. I therefore find the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits."

3.4.3 This appeal decision along with others shows how Inspectors have applied the planning balance in making appeal decisions, concluding that these prospective development proposals would only make a small contribution to the overall housing supply. They also highlight that the adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area outweighs the benefit of this additional housing.

3.5 Impact on the character and appearance of the area

3.5.1 There have been a number of appeals the Council has won where the Planning Inspector has concluded that the adverse impacts on the character of the area outweighs the benefits of the additional housing.

3.5.2 An appeal was dismissed by the inspector for six houses on back land at Bayliss Road. The Inspector concluded that the impact on the character on the areas was adverse and would not result in a sustainable form of development. This is highlighted by the quote below from the Inspector for 33-41 Bayliss Road **(Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3232021)**,

"I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the area, living conditions, and the associated conflict with the development plan, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. Therefore, the proposal would not be a sustainable form of development."

3.5.3 The Inspector dismissed the appeal for a 2 bedroom dwelling on land adjacent to a house on 14 Belmont Road **(Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3174339)** on the basis that the

"..introduction of a detached house would appear awkward and out of keeping with the existing terrace. It would fail to respect the pattern and layout of the estate with the front gable being a distinctive feature of a number of the corner properties."

"However, I have found that it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The benefits that would accrue from the provision of one dwelling would not outweigh this harm".

3.5.4 These appeal decisions highlight that protecting the character of the area and the family housing is vitally important and these would not contribute a significant amount to the housing supply. Inspectors have also dismissed appeals where there is loss of green space in the suburbs. At the appeal for land between 16 and 18 Layburn Crescent **(Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3232544)** the Inspector said the following:

"The loss of this space to residential development would have an erosive effect on the area and diminish the valuable contribution the undeveloped green spaces provide. Although the appeal site is not allocated as a formal area of open space, it is evidently an intrinsic part of the original estate layout and makes a positive contribution to the amenity of the area."

3.5.5 This Inspectors quote shows the importance of retaining green open spaces in the suburbs for amenity purposes.

3.5.6 In summary, CS Core Policy 4 (Type of Housing) is a robust and effective policy that has been implemented by the Council for more than 10 years. These recent planning appeal decisions demonstrate that CS Core Policy 4 is NPPF compliant and even in the absence of a five year housing land supply is still being given full weight by the Inspector. These successful appeal decisions provide sufficient justification to continue to apply this planning policy in our emerging Local Plan for Slough to protect the suburbs.

4. Delivering sustainable development

4.1.1 This section and the following sections focuses on the five key reasons why we need to protect the suburbs of Slough from major growth.

4.1.2 After the Issues and Options consultation closed and the consultation responses analysed, an emerging preferred Spatial Strategy was formed using basic spatial development principles that inform where new development should go. A key principle of this is the optimisation of development land and reuse of brownfield land in line with the National Planning Policy Framework policies. The centre of Slough contains many brownfield sites which can be regenerated without having a significant environmental impact whereas the suburbs contain very little brownfield sites for regeneration.

4.1.3 An important part of delivering sustainable development is to locate new development in the most accessible locations as possible. To identify the public transport accessibility levels of different locations in Slough, a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) Study was undertaken[9]. PTAL is a well-known method used by Transport for London and London Boroughs. The PTAL model uses an indicator from 0 to 6, where 0 represents the least accessible and 6 the most accessible. The levels of 1 and 6 are also divided into two groups "a" and "b".

4.1.4 The Slough PTAL Study identified the centre of Slough as the most highly accessible location within the Borough with parts of the town centre scoring a PTAL rating of 5 and 6a (see Plan E). The rest of the Borough is much less accessible by public transport and scored values lower than 2. The findings of the PTAL Study support the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy to not allow intensive redevelopment in the suburbs as they have poor public transport accessibility and that the centre of Slough should be the focus for major redevelopment.

4.1.5 Developing new homes near existing facilities and infrastructure in the centre of Slough minimises the need and cost of providing additional facilities to serve new development. Delivering major housing development in the centre of Slough enables residents to have good access to jobs, transport, services and facilities.

[9] *Public Transport Accessibility Report 2018, https://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/emerging-local-plan---key-reports-and-strategies.aspx*

5. Slough's Housing Needs

5.1 Slough's Population Growth

5.1.1 Slough is one of the fast growing places in the UK which is largely due to an increase in the population under the age of 15 as a result of having higher birth rates[10]. The latest 2018 mid-year population estimates (see Chart 1) published in June 2019 shows that Slough's population is now at 149,112. The Government Office of National Statistics (ONS) projects that Slough's population will increase to around 169,600 in 2036[11].

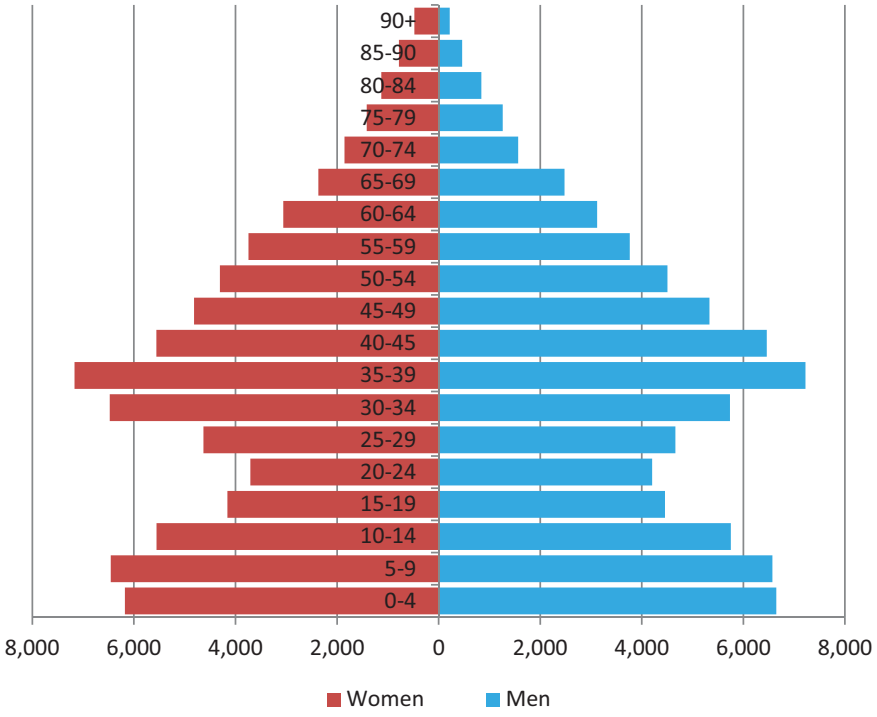
5.1.2 Slough is the youngest place in the UK in terms of population age, with an average age of 33.9 years old and only one in 10 people aged 65 years old and over[12]. The largest age group category is between 45 to 66 years old with 35% of Slough's residents falling within this age category, this is followed by 29% of population being in the 0-17 year old age group then 26% of population falling in the 30 to 44 year old age group[13].

5.2 Slough's Diverse Communities

5.2.1 One of the reasons that Slough has a need for larger accommodation is that it is one of the most culturally diverse areas in the country with 36% of the population deriving from black and minority ethnic communities. The figures from ONS 2011 for household size in Slough indicated that 12% of existing households have 5/6 members and 2% have 7 or more members[14].

5.2.2 Overcrowding is acknowledged as a problem in Slough as the housing stock in Slough has relatively few purpose built homes of a size that can accommodate large households. The proliferation of ancillary buildings in suburban gardens was often found to be providing accommodation to members of the main household in response to the need for large housing types that are hard to find at affordable levels.

Chart 1: Mid 2018 Population Estimates for Slough



[10] *2008-2018: An uneven geography of population growth in UK cities, 26th February 2020, Centre for Cities, https://www.centreforcities.org/blog/2008-2018-an-uneven-geography-of-population-growth-in-uk-cities/*
[11] *Annual Monitoring Report 2018-2019, page 18,*
[12] *Where are the UK's youngest and oldest city populations? 19th March 2019, BBC News, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43316697*
[13] *Slough Factsheet, latest data, Centre for Cities, https://www.centreforcities.org/city/slough/*
[14] *Housing Topic Paper 2017, page 32*

5.3 Slough's Local Housing Needs

5.3.1 Slough's housing target in the Core Strategy is 315 new homes per year. However since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008, Slough's Objectively Assessed Housing Need is now 893 homes per year. This is a significant increase from the Core Strategy housing target.

5.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to undertake an objective assessment of the need for market and affordable housing working jointly with neighbouring authorities who share the same housing market area. Slough's Local Housing Needs Assessment (2019, GL Hearn) was carried out jointly with Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) and South Bucks District Council to inform their emerging Local Plans[15].

5.3.3 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2019) identified the housing mix (size of homes needed) for Slough. The housing mix is influenced by a number of factors including the demand for different sizes of homes, demographic changes, future growth in real earnings and households' ability to save, economic performance and housing affordability. The evidence presented in Table 5 below demonstrates the size of homes needed in Slough and these are 2 bed, 3 bed and 4 bed homes, with the highest need for 3 bed homes.

5.4 Housing Delivery in Slough

5.4.1 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2018-2019 noted that there are around 55,000 houses in the Borough, mostly in suburban areas built in the last century[17]. In the 2011 census, the data showed that the housing stock in Slough was split into the following categories: 10% of dwellings were detached homes, 28% semi detached, 28% terraced , 30% flats in purpose built blocks, 3% flats in converted houses or a shared house such as an HMO and 1% flats in a commercial building[18].

5.4.2 Despite the evidenced need for 2 bed, 3 bed and 4+bed homes, the vast majority of new homes being built in Slough are one and two bedroom flats. In the AMR, it recorded that 83% of new homes that were built were flats and 17% that were built were houses[19]. This is largely in response to the increased value of sites as well as market conditions.

5.4.3 The data in the AMR demonstrates the important role the suburbs have in providing family housing, as the numbers of new homes being built in the Borough is very low. It is estimated that if present trends continue approximately 80% of new homes would be flats[20].

Table 5: Modelled Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure[16]

Slough	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4+ Bedrooms
Market	5%	19%	57%	20%
Affordable home ownership	33%	32%	26%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	44%	27%	25%	4%

[15] *Local Housing Needs Assessment RBWM, Slough and South Bucks. 2019, GL Hearn, http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx*
[16] *Local Housing Needs Assessment RBWM, Slough and South Bucks, page 54, 2019, GL Hearn, http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx*
[17] *AMR 2018-2019, page 20,*
[18] *Housing Topic Paper 2017, page 32,*
[19] *Annual Monitoring Report 2018-2019, page 3,*
[20] *Housing Topic Paper 2017, page 34,*

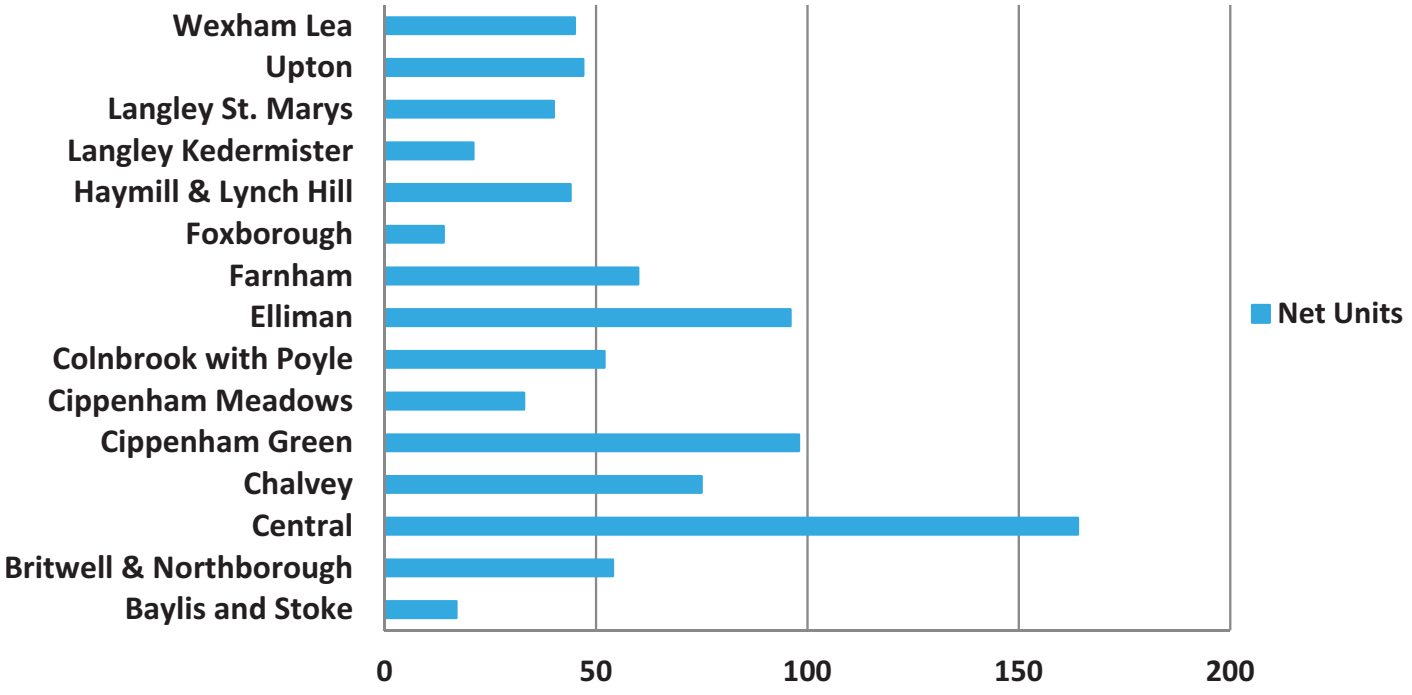
5.4.4 This low supply of new houses puts increased pressure upon the existing housing stock to be extended or adapted to meet the demand for larger family housing in the Borough. The suburbs therefore have an important role in absorbing incremental growth because housing growth is not keeping pace with population growth.

5.5 Slough's Housing Land Supply

5.5.1 Slough is an urbanised area with almost the whole of the area within the Borough's boundary already occupied by some form of development. The dense housing layout means garden sizes are small and limit the space for new homes to be developed. The exceptions to the urbanised area are the pockets of open space within the town, some remaining Green Belt land on the edges of the Borough and land at the Colnbrook and Poyle areas which is subject to flood risk and other environmental or technical constraints.

5.5.2 The trend for optimising the living space of family homes through extensions or ancillary buildings has reduced the number of sites where a new residential unit could be infilled. Where sites do exist, the capacity of an individual site is also limited both by the size of these sites and the need to respect the distinct character of the existing neighbourhood and the living conditions.

Chart 2: Small sites completions by wards since 2006



5.6 Small Sites Completions Data

5.6.1 Chart 2 below shows the small sites net completions (under 10 units) by ward from 2006 to 2019. The data shows that the Central ward has made a significant contribution of 19.07% towards net completions for small sites (developments under 10 units). Almost 40% of net completions of the small sites between 2006 and 2019 came from the Central, Elliman and Chalvey wards. These three wards spatially cover the area known as the "Square Mile" in the centre of Slough. It shows that the small sites completions follow a similar trend as the large site completions in the centre of Slough.

5.6.2 The data shows that after the Foxborough ward[21], the Baylis & Stoke ward has the least number of small site completions (developments under 20 units). Whilst the assessment undertaken in Section 2 above, showed that lots of outbuildings and large house extensions had occurred during this time period in the Baylis & Stoke ward.

5.6.3 The assessment undertaken in Section 2 revealed that the Langley Kedermister ward is one of the rare areas in Slough where there are opportunities for intensification, in contrast the small site completions statistics show residents are still reluctant to intensify their houses/convert their relatively medium to large size houses into smaller ones.

5.6.4 This data emphasises the vital role the centre of Slough has in delivering new homes in Slough. It also emphasises that the suburbs do not have the capacity to significantly contribute towards housing needs. Overall the data shows that small sites do not make a significant contribution towards meeting our housing need which is an average of 893 new homes per year.

5.6.5 Table 6 opposite, sets out, the number of small sites housing completions that have taken place in back gardens and adjacent land to homes. The data covers the last five years. It show that back garden development delivered 40 units (11.66%) and land adjacent to a dwelling provided 36 units (10.5%). These figures demonstrate that this type of development make up a very small proportion of the overall small site housing completions.

Table 6: Net completions for back garden and land adjacent only (2015-2019)

	Number of units	Percentage
Back garden development	40	11.66
Land Adjacent in the curtilage	36	36

5.6.6 The small sites housing completions data and the assessment work we have undertaken demonstrates the lack of suitable sites available for housing development in the suburbs but also the limited ability of these sites to add substantially to the number of homes Slough needs. Intensifying the suburbs will not significantly increase the number of new homes that are needed to meet needs.

5.6.7 The suburbs provide the main supply of family houses in the borough, which in many cases have to accommodate extended families. It is imperative that family housing in the suburbs is protected as its meeting an identified need and the opportunities to build family housing elsewhere in the Borough is likely to be limited with the majority of new development delivering new flats in the centre of Slough.

[21] *It is important to note that the Foxborough ward is much small geographically than the rest of the wards in the Borough and only has one Councillor whereas all of the other wards have three Councillors.*

6. Why the suburbs won't deliver the homes we need

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Issues and Options consultation document identified three main options for intensifying development within the existing suburbs. It included a discussion on the main issues and constraints for each option proposed as set out below.

6.2 Comprehensive Redevelopment

6.2.1 The first option involves intensifying the 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.

6.2.2 Comprehensive development is achieved by assembling 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.

6.2.3 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 development proposal respects the context of its suburban location and especially, retains sufficient open areas for the use of residents, contributes towards greening and environmental objectives and to provide a buffer to its neighbours.

6.3 Insert Development

6.3.1 The second option is based on "insert" development that 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 metres apart.

6.3.2 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.

6.4 Infill Development

6.4.1 The third option proposed intensification of the suburbs by allowing piecemeal infill of new houses, also known as backland development between existing houses or through small scale redevelopment on gardens. Our analysis shows that the availability of land suitable for infill between existing buildings is small. The suburbs have already absorbed a lot of unplanned growth through the addition of large extensions to homes and the building of ancillary buildings in residential gardens (as discussed in Section 5.5).

6.5 Delivery Constraints

6.5.1 For developments where the number of additional units is greater than 15, the Council would be seeking affordable housing provision. 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.

6.5.2 Intensification of development in the suburbs 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.

6.5.3 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.

6.5.4 The conclusion is that while intensification could be achieved on suitable sites in the suburbs if good design principles are applied. The scarcity of sites in the suburbs plus questionable viability due to site assembly costs means that any proposals to intensify the suburbs is not likely to deliver very many additional units over and above the current level of small site completions that we have at present. Intensifying the suburbs is therefore unlikely to contribute significantly towards meeting the number of new homes that we need.

7. Protecting the environment

7.1.1 Slough is already very urbanised and lacks the green infrastructure that many other boroughs have. One of the indicators of the state of the environment in is the lack of tree cover. Slough has fewer trees per hectare than London boroughs. The Slough Tree Density Map (Plan F) shows that our trees are mainly located in the suburbs but also in parks and unbuilt areas across the borough[22].

7.1.2 Most of Slough's residents live in the suburban areas and one of their distinctive qualities is the amount of greenery that they have compared to other parts of the borough.

7.1.3 A Guide to the Benefits of Urban Trees sets out the many benefits that trees provide[23]. Highlighting the vital role trees play in built up areas by tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions because they absorb carbon and release oxygen back into the atmosphere. They can form part of climate change mitigation strategies as they create shade and can reduce energy use by lowering air temperatures.

7.1.4 They also remove and store harmful pollutants that are associated with poor urban air and soil quality as well as having an impact on the water cycle and reduce storm water run-off. Trees in urban environments reduce noise pollution by creating barriers and baffles. Plus they help maintain biodiversity by providing natural habitats for birds and other wildlife.

7.1.5 Trees improve the quality of living and they bring visual impact to the environment. They contribute to the natural environment by creating liveable and sustainable places. Trees along with green spaces foster community cohesion by creating a sense of place, a local identity and a system of landmarks. They provide a space for leisure and community activities and help residents to take pride in the attractiveness of their location. They have beneficial effect on the wellbeing of the local population.

7.1.6 In 2019, the Council commissioned Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) to carry out a study called 'Valuing the Benefits from Trees in Slough'. This study used aerial photography to classify land cover types to estimate tree cover. It estimated that Slough has a tree cover of 16.8%. Forest Research sets a minimum target of 20% for urban tree canopy cover[24] which means Slough's tree cover needs to increase to in order to meet this target.

7.1.7 This tree study values the services that trees provide by calculating the costs of society providing these services in another way without the benefit of nature. It focusses on carbon sequestration[25] and air pollution removal. It showed that residents and businesses in Slough benefit from the removal of air pollutants and carbon dioxide by trees, the value of which is estimated at £381,267 each year. A further study has been commissioned for TVERC to produce an estimate of the tree cover in Slough and estimate the ecosystems provided by trees and their value which is due to be completed by end of this year.

7.1.8 The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for new Local Plan for Slough has to ensure that the most important and valuable parts of the built and natural environment are protected from adverse development. Protecting the suburbs from intensification will deliver multiple environmental benefits helping address climate change and pollution levels.

7.1.9 By protecting any further loss of trees and vegetation they will continue to contribute towards tackling climate change, health and well-being of communities living in suburban areas as well contributing towards the amenity and attractiveness of neighbourhoods and streets.

[22] *Planning Committee Report on Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan for Slough 2013-2036, 01.11.2017, page 18, http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=111&MId=5744&Ver=4*

[23] *Booklet 1: A Guide to the Benefits of Urban Trees, 2015, GreenBlue Urban*

[24] *Valuing the benefits from trees in Slough, March 2019, page 8*

[25] *The amount of carbon dioxide a tree can hold is called carbon sequestration. They sequester this carbon dioxide by storing it in their trunks, branches, leaves and roots; the best trees for carbon dioxide absorption will have large trunks and dense wood.*

8. Supporting sustainable and liveable communities

8.1.1 The distinct local character of the suburbs plays an important part in the image and attractiveness of Slough and is one of the reasons why residents choose to live in there. The suburbs are important for social reasons, therefore it is essential that large scale growth takes place in a way that is as least disruptive as possible for established residents and communities and is focused on the centre of Slough where it has the capacity to deliver major housing and employment growth.

8.1.2 Mixed design of new buildings could have a cumulative impact that could damage the character of the suburbs. Intensifying the suburbs could cause significant and irreversible change to the character of existing neighbourhoods.

8.1.3 At recent planning appeals (see Section 4 above) the character and appearance of proposed new developments in the suburbs is an issue for consideration by the Planning Inspector. Development proposals are required to be sympathetic to local character and to their surroundings in terms of design, scale and density.

8.1.4 Overdevelopment of the suburbs through intensification could result in poorer living conditions for existing and new residents. This could have a negative impact on the health and well-being of residential communities and could impact upon public services. This has been a significant point of assessment by Planning Inspectors at recent planning appeals (see Section 4 above). Planning Inspectors have considered prospective development proposals in terms of their potential harm on living conditions and supporting the wider social objectives of achieving sustainable development. Development proposals were evaluated in terms of their potential impact on the living conditions of existing neighbouring occupiers, outlook, privacy, noise, disturbance and the effect upon the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed dwellings in terms of amenity space and privacy.

8.1.5 Intensification could result in a loss of community cohesion as intensification could increase the provision of flats, a loss of family housing and an increase in the numbers of those living in rented accommodation. This would mean fewer private home occupiers and an increase in the presence of a more transient population. Protecting the suburbs through managed change will ensure there are balanced communities living in the suburbs.

8.1.6 The suburbs contain distinct communities with their own network of facilities. The Council recognises the importance of the suburbs and how they provide a good basis for "living locally". This is reflected in the Accommodation and Hubs Strategy 2017-2020 that aims to bring a range of services to a neighbourhood level[26]. These 'hubs' will provide local services to meet local needs of individuals, families and communities and will support 'living locally'. This strategy will help foster a sense of community and reduce the use of the car and local congestion.

[26] *Accommodation and Hubs strategy 2017-2020, http://www.slough.gov.uk/Moderngov/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=33615*

9. The emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy for Slough Local Plan

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Following on from the Issues and Options consultation and the consideration of the public consultation responses, an emerging preferred Spatial Strategy was formed and agreed at Planning Committee in November 2017[27].

9.1.2 The Issues and Options consultation questionnaire asked a series of questions on the issues and options put forward. For Option F it asked the following question "Do you agree that we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development?" The majority of the responses (68%) agreed with the approach to protect the suburbs from major development. Respondents felt that the suburbs were already oversubscribed and there was a need to protect their sense of place. However there were objections disagreeing with this question but most of these came from South Bucks residents who were objecting to the Northern Expansion of Slough and are of the opinion that Slough should meet all its housing requirements within its borough boundary.

9.1.3 The Issues and Options consultation concluded that there were no reasonable options which could accommodation all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough boundary.

9.1.4 The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy was developed using the guiding principle of locating development in the most accessible location, regenerating previously developed land, minimising the impact upon the environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and deliverable.

9.1.5 The Spatial Strategy in the Core Strategy 2008 directs high density development towards the town centre whilst protecting family housing in the suburbs. The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan continues to apply this approach by directing development towards the Centre of Slough but at a greater density then before whilst protecting the built and natural environment including the suburbs.

9.1.6 Following these principles, the evidence supports the centre of Slough for major comprehensive development delivering significant housing and employment growth. This option meets the majority of the Local Plan Objectives set out in the Issues and Options consultation document. The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy recognises there is scope for development outside of the centre of Slough in selected locations and that the existing suburbs should be protected from intensive development for sustainability, environmental and social reasons.

9.1.7 The emerging preferred Spatial Strategy (Plan G) has five key elements that are summarised below:

1) Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the "Centre of Slough."
2) Selecting other key locations for appropriate development.
3) Protecting the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs.
4) Accommodating the proposed third runway at Heathrow.
5) Promoting the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a "Garden Suburb."

9.1.8 As a result the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy adopts the approach of protecting the existing residential suburbs from major intensive redevelopment. This does not prevent them from continuing to grow organically and adapting to meet residents needs so that people can "live locally". It does mean that they are unlikely to provide a significant number of new houses to meet the Local Plan objectives.

[27] *Planning Committee Report on Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan for Slough 2013-2036, 01.11.2017, page 4.*

9.2 Interim Sustainability Appraisal

9.2.1 An Interim Sustainability Appraisal (2018)[28] for the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy was carried out to assess the extent to which the emerging Spatial Strategy will help to achieve a set of environmental, economic and social objectives. This shows how sustainability issues have informed the development of the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy.

9.2.2 The initial findings of the Interim Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy led to a policy decision not to carry Option F: intensification of the suburbs forward because of the negative effect it will have on delivering the Local Plan objectives as a whole.

[28] *Interim Sustainability Appraisal, February 2018, http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx*

10. Protecting the Suburbs Strategy

10.1.1 The suburban residential areas of Slough will continue to develop organically and will accommodate growth where feasible. This will mainly be through the continued growth in living accommodation through the use of limited extensions and outbuildings but not large scale new dwellings via infill or redevelopment.

10.1.2 By protecting the suburbs through managed change this will ensure that the suburbs are a liveable and sustainable place with a sense of place and retain a community feel. The strategy will support 'living locally' which seeks to enable people to meet their day to day needs within their individual neighbourhoods by having local facilities that are easily accessible. This will lead to a reduction in car use and congestion.

10.1.3 The suburbs will continue to accommodate Slough's housing needs in a different way by retaining large family homes and providing extra bedrooms for families rather than providing significant numbers of additional housing units. The suburbs will therefore continue to be the main source of housing for families and larger sized families in Slough. Extensions to homes will provide increased living space for families and outbuildings in residential gardens will be used in a manner that is incidental to the main dwelling house.

10.1.4 There will be very limited backland development within the existing suburban area. This will be carried out at a density related to the character of the surrounding area, the accessibility of the location and the availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure. There maybe some scope for redevelopment associated with suburban centres such as shopping areas.

10.1.5 The existing planning policy framework; the Core Strategy (2008), the saved Local Plan policies (2004) and Residential Extension Guidelines SPD (2010) will continue to be successful and effective in implementation by protecting the distinct local character of the suburbs, the environment of the neighbourhoods and retaining much needed family housing.

11. Council's Five Year Plan and Strategies

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Protecting the suburbs from intensification will support the delivery of the Council's corporate strategy, the Five Year Plan. This sets out a vision and ambitions to be achieved over a five year period. By preventing major growth in the suburbs this will help achieve the following Five Year Plan (2020/21-2024/25[29]) Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Slough children will grow up to happy, healthy and successful and;
- Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay and;
- Outcome 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.

11.1.2 Our strategy will contribute towards ensuring Slough is an attractive place to live in by protecting the character of the suburbs, their visual amenity and minimising the loss of trees. It will ensure our suburbs provide a sense of place for our current and future communities. By protecting the family housing in the suburbs from intensification it will help meet needs locally by making Slough a place where our residents feel a sense of belonging and are able to live in good quality and affordable homes. This will also support the Council's Locality Plans to deliver integrated services from the heart of communities.

11.1.3 The strategy to protect the suburbs from intensification supports the Council's growth ambitions to deliver major housing and employment growth in the centre of Slough, This growth ambition is reflected in the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan for Slough. Our strategy will support the emerging Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework which will establish a vision for the redevelopment of the Square Mile in the Centre of Slough, that could deliver up to 9000 new homes and new retail, leisure and cultural offerings.

11.2 Housing Strategy 2020

11.2.1 The forthcoming Housing Strategy update[30] aims to increase the supply of homes through new build affordable housing, the better use of existing homes and improve access to homes to support Slough's residents and improve health and well-being.

11.2.2 Protecting the suburbs from major growth will not prevent the Housing Strategy from delivering new homes or redeveloping existing homes on Council land to support neighbourhood regeneration and increase the supply of affordable homes. Increasing the number of homes through the Council's housing delivery programme can take place in a number of ways such as redeveloping surplus garage courts through to redeveloping Council owned housing which is not fit for purpose. There may be the capacity to build additional stories onto existing low rise blocks through a process known as "top-hatting".

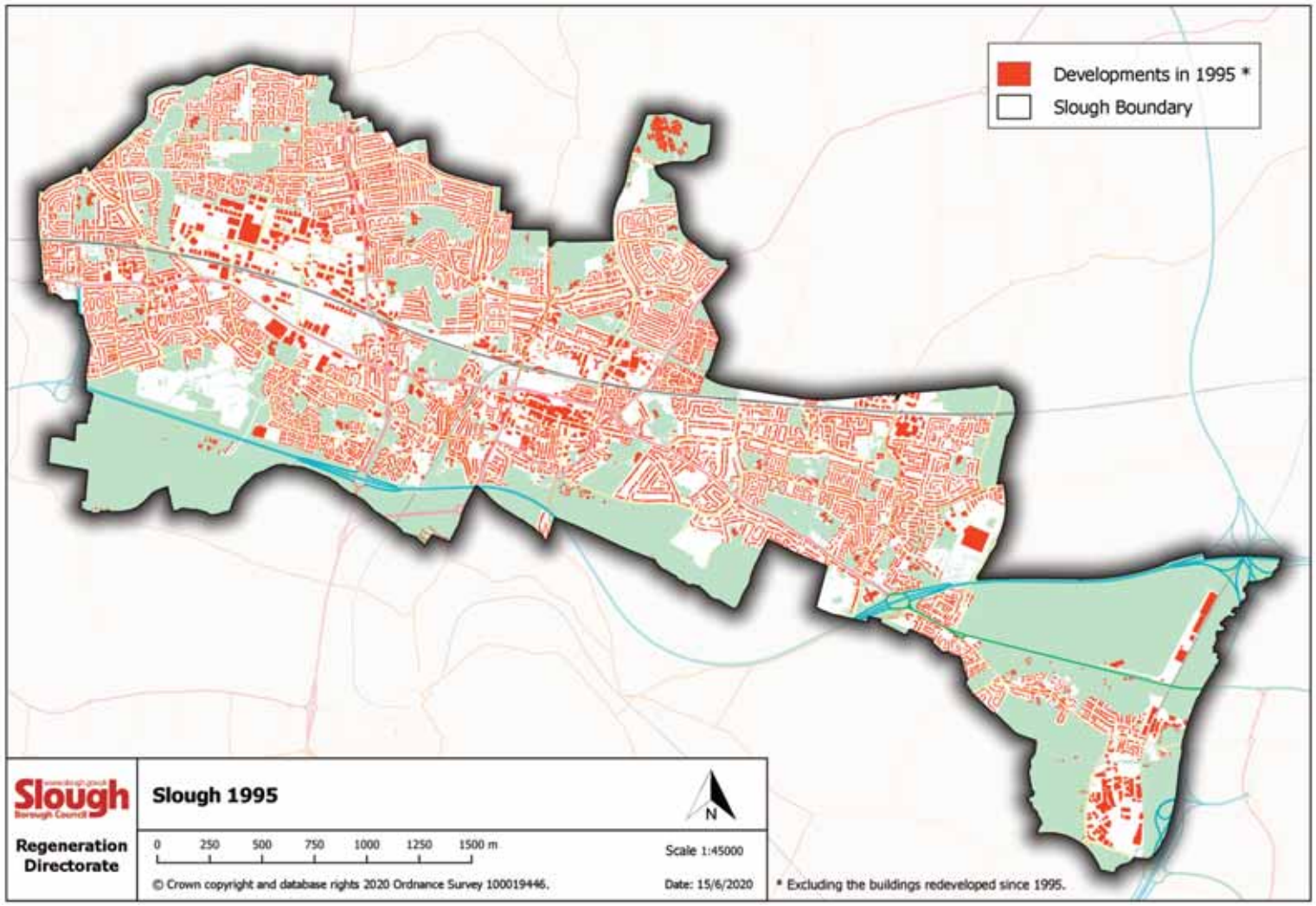
[29] *Five Year Plan 2020/21-2024/25 http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=6343&Ver=4*
[30] *Housing Strategy Update, 17th March 2020, for the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel, http://sbcarvmodgov01/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=6499&x=1*

12. Next Steps

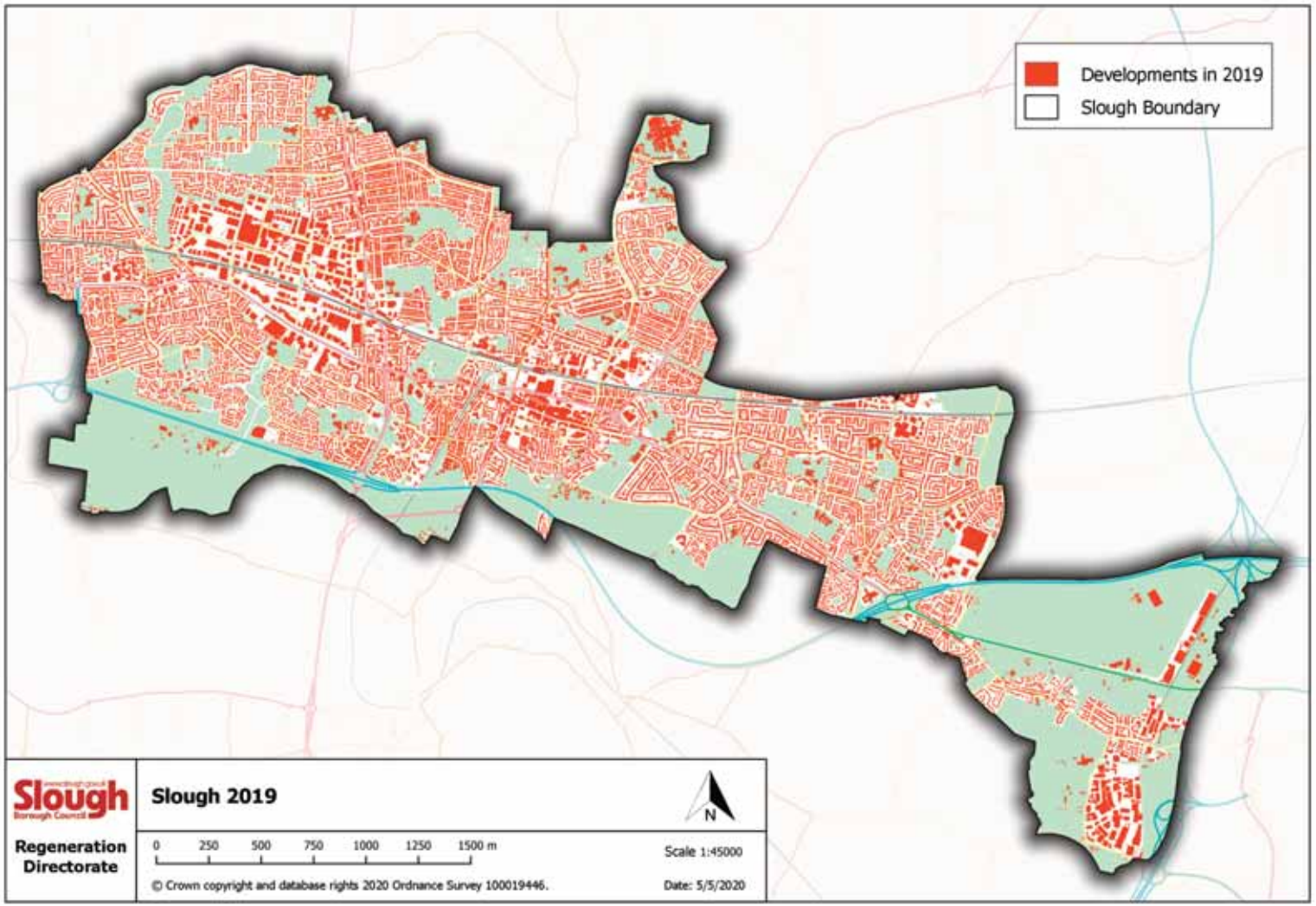
12.1.1 This document together with other evidence base studies, future consultation responses to the Local Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal will inform the Council's preferred approach for future development in the new Local Plan for Slough.

Plans: A to G

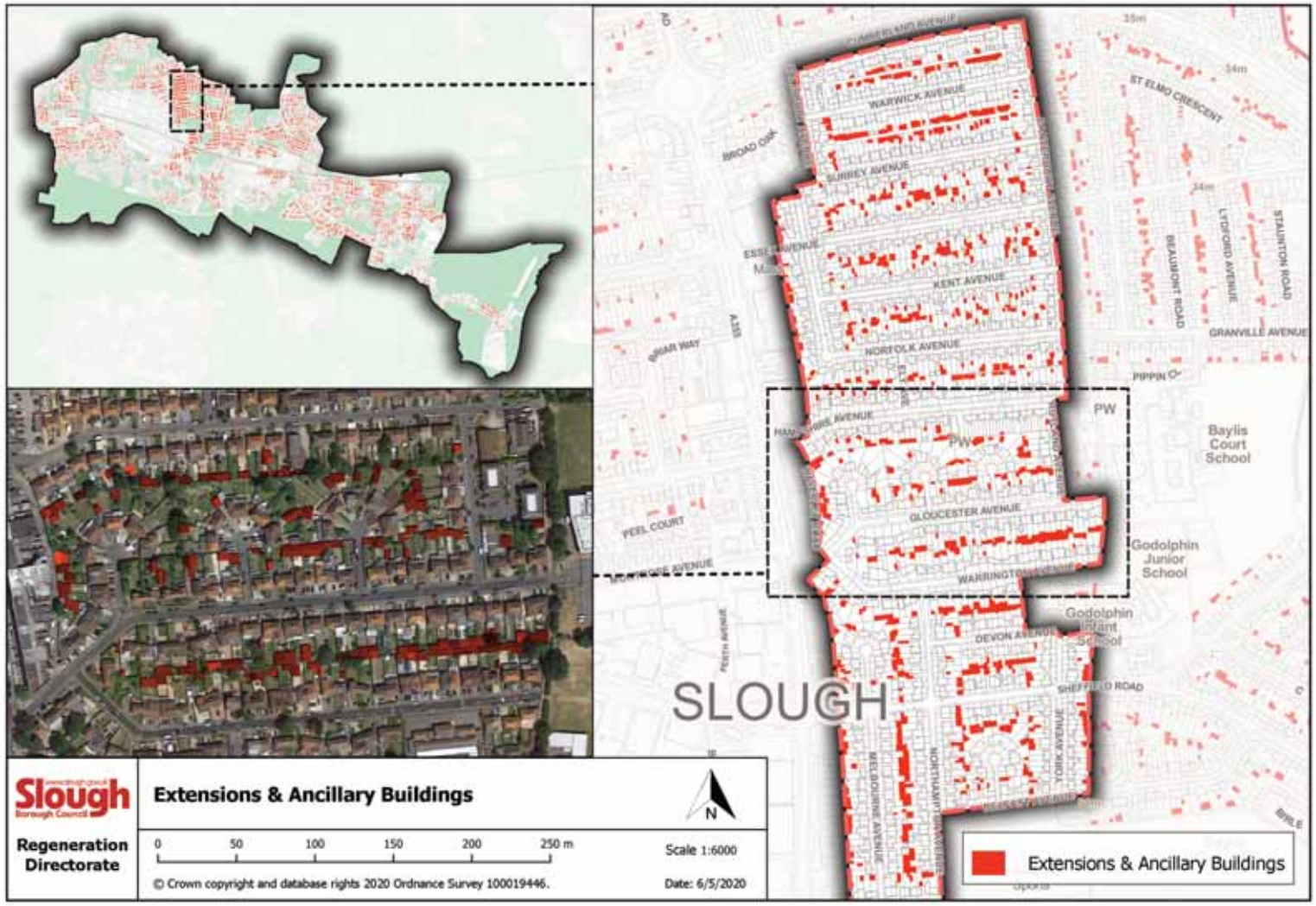
Plan A: Slough 1995



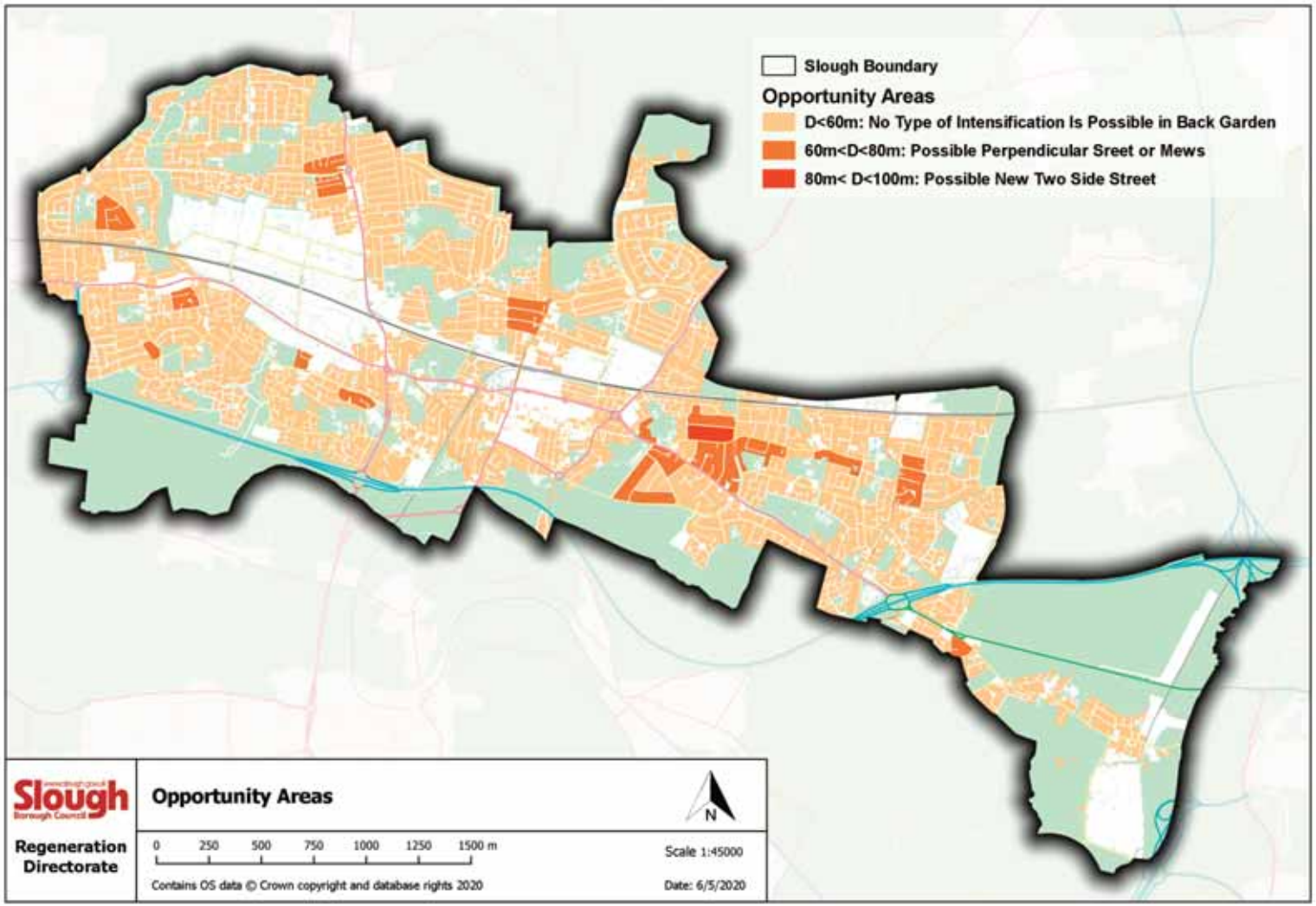
Plan B: Slough 2019



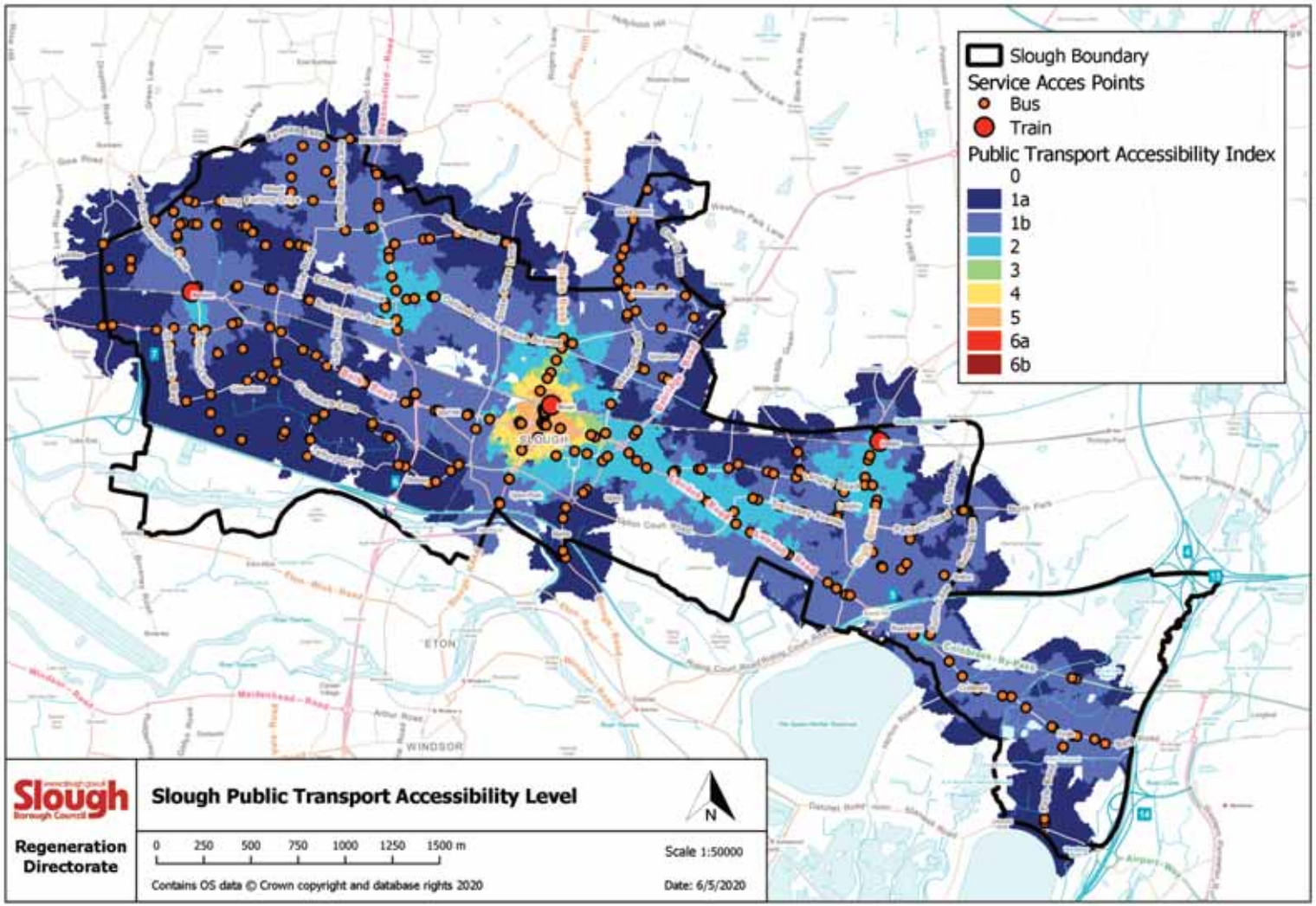
Plan C: Extensions and Outbuildings



Plan D: Opportunity Areas



Plan E: PTAL


Slough Boundary
Service Acces Points
Bus
Train
Public Transport Accessibility Index
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1a
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2
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4
5
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SLOUGH
ETON
WINDSOR
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Borough Council
Regeneration Directorate
Slough Public Transport Accessibility Level
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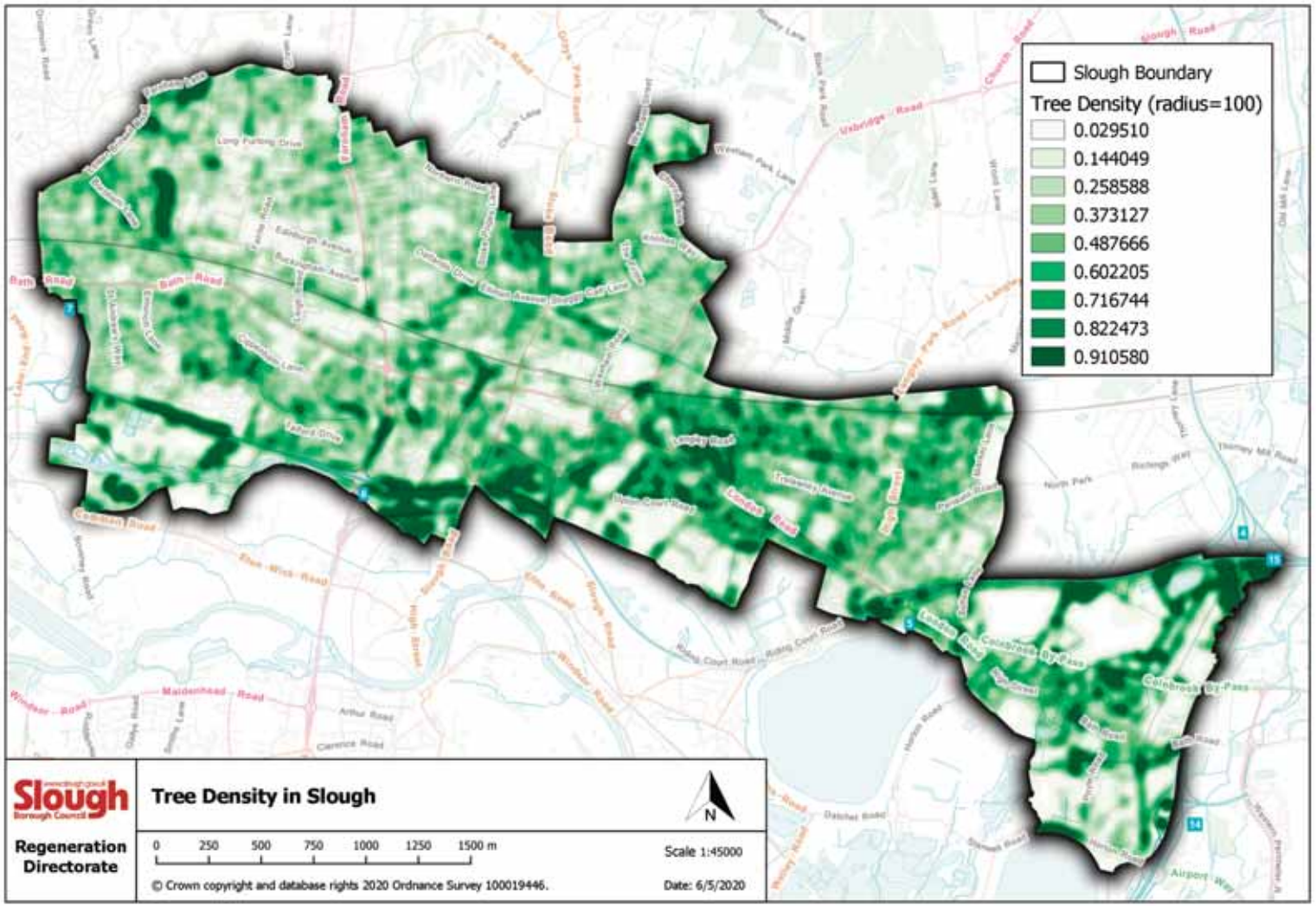
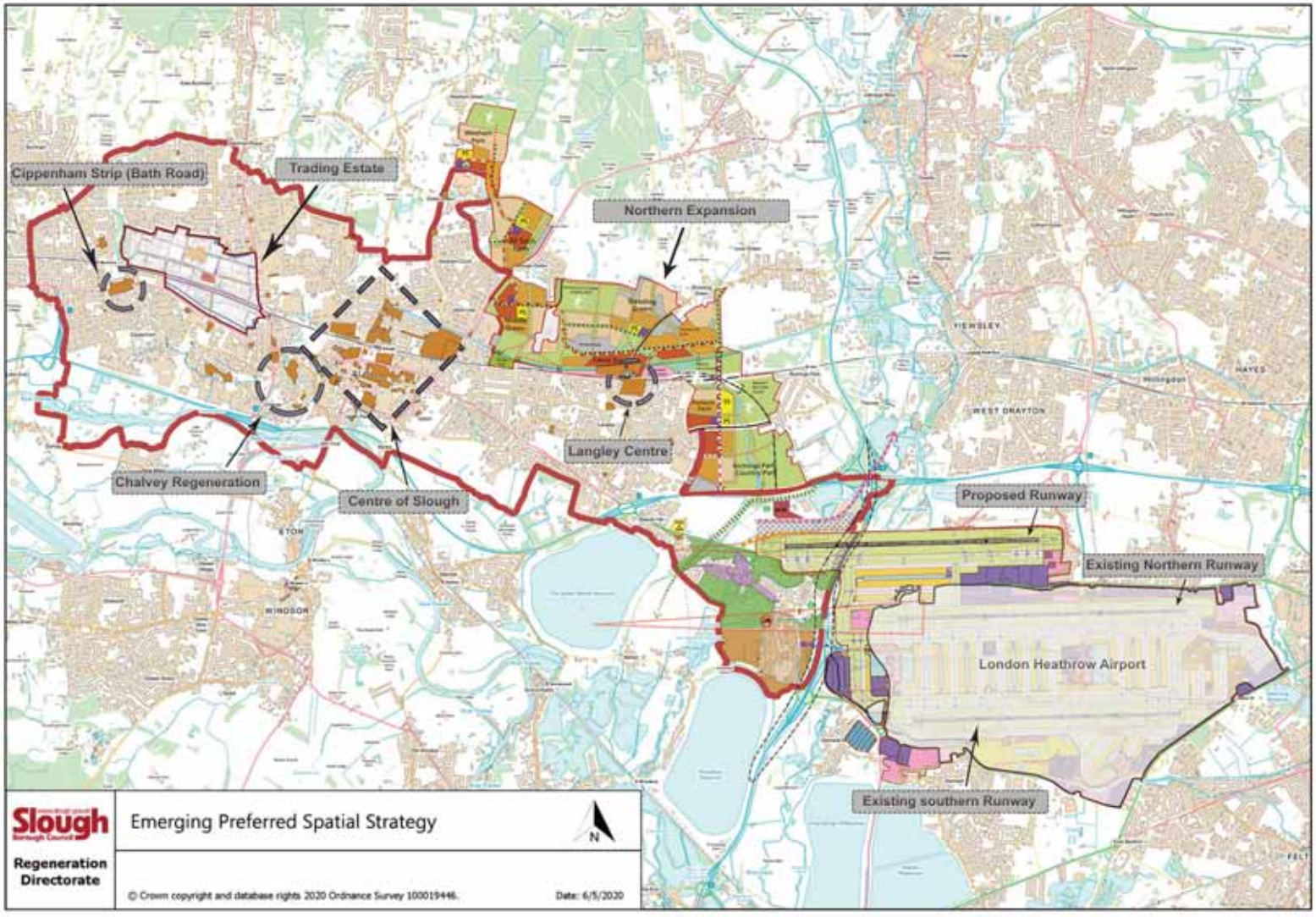
Scale 1:50000
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2020
Date: 6/5/2020

Plan F: Slough Tree Density



Plan G: Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy



Appendix 1: CS Core Policy 4 (Type of Housing)

High-density housing should be located in Slough town centre. In the urban areas outside the town centre, new residential development will predominantly consist of family housing and be at a density related to the character of the surrounding area, the accessibility of the location, and the availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure.

Within existing suburban residential areas there will only be limited infilling which will consist of family houses that are designed to enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area.

All new residential development will be constructed at a minimum net density of 37 dwellings per hectare. Densities less than this may be permitted on small sites, where the character is low density or where there are other site constraints.

There will be no net loss of family accommodation as a result of flat conversions, changes of use or redevelopment.

All sites of 15 or more dwellings (gross) will be required to provide between 30% and 40% of the dwellings as social rented along with other forms of affordable housing.

Proposals for gypsy or traveller sites will not generally be permitted in the urban area. If there is a proven need for a gypsy or traveller site or sites in Slough, this could be considered to constitute exceptional circumstances that would justify the relaxation of Green Belt policy.

Implementation

7.65 This policy will be implemented, in conjunction with the other policies in the plan, through the determination of planning applications for residential development and the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents and Development Control Guidelines. It will take account of the Housing Strategy (Doc.26), the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Doc.3) and the Housing Needs Survey (Doc.29). It will be monitored in the Annual Monitoring Report.

7.66 Further detail as to how this policy will be implemented, including the identification of the relevant "town centre", "urban" and "suburban" areas, will be set out in the Development Control Policies and Site Allocations DPD. A specific Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared for affordable housing.

7.67 The density part of the policy will be implemented using the following indicative density ranges which have been adapted from those set out in draft Planning PPS 3, in order to reflect the specific local circumstances in Slough. It will also ensure that Slough will significantly exceed the overall regional target of 40 dwellings per hectare set out in the draft South East Plan (Doc.10)

Table 1: Indicative density ranges for Slough

	Location		
	Town Centre	Urban	Suburban
Density Range (Dwellings per hectares)	Above 70	40-75	37-55

7.68 In some parts of the town centre, such as the Commercial Core Area defined in the Local Plan Proposals Map (Doc.24) and the area north of the railway station, densities in the range of 500 dwellings per hectare have been permitted. The actual density that will be permitted on an individual site will be dependent upon the overall strategy for that location and upon achieving a high standard of design which creates attractive living conditions.

7.69 The main impact of the implementation of the policy will be in the town centre where there are likely to be large numbers of high density flats built during the plan period. These will be expected to be built to very high design standards that will enhance the quality of the environment and improve the image of the centre.

7.70 Key selected areas outside of the town centre will also be subject to comprehensive redevelopment as discussed in relation to the Spatial Strategy (CP1). Individual sites will continue to be redeveloped for housing in the more accessible "urban" areas of the town such as the edge of centres, some main road frontages and other mixed use medium or high density areas that are well served by public transport.

7.71 The existing residential neighbourhoods in Slough will remain as suburban areas with their own individual characteristics. There will be no need for backland development or large scale infilling. The implementation of this policy will therefore significantly reduce the amount of development that will take place in the neighbourhoods and provide the opportunity to enhance their distinctive suburban character and create sustainable communities where people will want to live.

7.72 The council will review its existing Development Control Guidelines in the Development Control Policies and Site Allocations DPD. The fundamental issue that this will have to resolve is how the use and appearance of the existing housing stock will be managed in the future. The policies will therefore have to balance the needs of extended families and the differing lifestyles of the diverse communities in Slough with the need to protect the amenities and appearance of the area.

7.73 The Policy also sets out a range for the amount of affordable housing that will be sought from major sites at between 30% and 40%. This is not intended to prevent schemes coming forward with a higher percentage if the developers want to. The aim would be to meet the regional average of 35% of all dwellings being affordable. Because of Slough's specific needs the priority will always be for social housing provided by Registered Social Landlords to people on the council's waiting list. The exact type and amount of affordable housing that will be sought on any particular development will depend upon a number of site specific factors and will be complicated by the need to obtain large family accommodation, which may affect the overall percentage of units. As a result the detail as to how this will be implemented in practice will be set out in the Development Control and Site Allocations DPD and a Supplementary Planning Document.

7.74 The identification of a possible gypsy or traveller site will take place though the Development Control Policies and Site Allocations DPD. If a new site is needed in the Borough in accordance with this policy it is likely that this will be within the Colnbrook or Poyle area. The siting and design of the site would have to minimise the impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Any proposals for a gypsy or traveller site in the Green Belt would be contrary to PPG2 and Circular 1/06 (ODPM) and would have to be treated as a departure from the plan.

Appendix 2: Appeal Decisions

The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 May 2017

by Stephen Hawkins MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 6th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3167659
19 Nash Road, Slough SL3 8NQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mrs Navpreet Thaman against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/05948/002, dated 22 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2016.
- The development proposed is a double storey side extension and conversion of dwelling into 2 x 2-bed self-contained flats with associated parking and amenity space, involving demolition of existing garage and outbuilding.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are as follows:

   - Whether the proposal would assist in creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, having regard to the effect on family accommodation in the Borough.
   - Whether adequate living conditions would be provided for the future occupiers of the proposed flats, having regard to amenity space.
   - The effect on highway safety.

Reasons

Sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities

3. The appeal site comprises a mid-20th Century semi-detached 3-bedroom dwelling occupying a spacious corner plot, adjacent to the junction of Nash Road and Swabey Road. It is situated in an area largely made up of similar suburban family housing.

4. Core Policy 4 of the adopted Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) provides that in urban areas outside of the town centre, new residential development will predominantly consist of family housing and there should be no net loss of family

accommodation as a result of flat conversions, changes of use or redevelopment.

5. The Council explained that CS Core Policy 4 reflects the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMAA) recommendation that a higher proportion of larger houses should be built in the Borough compared with that delivered in recent years. There is no evidence before me to suggest that CS Core Policy 4 is not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). In particular, paragraph 50 of the Framework advises that in order to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities Councils should, amongst other matters, identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand. Therefore, CS Core Policy 4 should be given full weight.

6. I acknowledge that by providing two bedrooms, the proposed flats could potentially be occupied by a young family or a single parent and that an additional dwelling would be contributed to the housing stock. Even so, such accommodation is more likely to appeal to a couple or single person without children, compared with the existing dwelling. The proposed flats would also not offer the same flexibility as the existing dwelling, in terms of accommodating a wider range of family sizes. Moreover, the definition of family housing in Appendix 3 of the CS excludes flats. Whilst I appreciate that the appellant does not agree with the CS interpretation, it forms part of the Development Plan and thus attracts full weight.

7. Consequently, the proposal would fail to accord with CS Core Policy 4 as it would result in a net loss of family accommodation and by failing to assist in the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, it would be inconsistent with paragraph 50 of the Framework.

Living conditions

8. Occupiers of most properties in the surrounding area enjoy access to a reasonably sized, private garden. Future occupiers of both flats would largely share the amenity spaces at the front and rear of the building. Whilst these areas are relatively generous in size, they would not be private. Therefore, the future occupiers would not have any meaningful area of private amenity space in which to undertake everyday activities, such as informal recreation or relaxation.

9. The Council have suggested that 50 square metres of enclosed garden with separate access should be provided for both flats, but Policy H14 of the adopted Local Plan for Slough (LP) does not detail any minimum size. Even so, the absence of private amenity space means that future occupiers of the flats would have a poor standard of living environment when compared with surrounding development.

10. I acknowledge that there is a public open space in Spitfire Close. There are also a number of larger public parks in the wider surrounding area. However, the availability of public recreational space is not an adequate substitute for private amenity space, particularly in respect of flats which the appellant suggests could be occupied by families with children. Moreover, none of the public open spaces in the area were especially convenient to access from the site, having regard to the distances involved or the need to cross busy main roads. The appellant has also suggested that a similar ratio of amenity space

to occupants would occur if the existing dwelling were extended. However, that scenario is not comparable with the appeal scheme, as all of the occupants of the extended dwelling would still have access to a private garden at the rear.

11. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with criterion in LP Policy H14, as it would not provide an appropriate level of amenity space having regard to the size of the flats, the households likely to occupy them, the quality of the space in terms of privacy, the character of the surrounding area in terms of the size and type of amenity spaces and the proximity to public open space and play facilities. Moreover, for the above reasons the proposal would not accord with CS Policy 8 criterion. The failure to provide a good standard of amenity for future occupants would also be inconsistent with one of the core planning principles at paragraph 17 of the Framework.

Highway safety

12. The flats would each have two off-street parking spaces. Parking for the ground floor flat would be in front of the extended building and would be accessed via an existing crossover from Swabey Road. A second crossover from Swabey Road would be formed towards the rear of the site to provide access to the parking area for the first floor flat.

13. Vehicles would be parked on the site at angles and in proximity to one another, close to the extended building and boundary walls. To access the spaces parallel to Swabey Road it would be necessary for vehicles to make very sharp turns over the crossovers. This may not be accomplished in one manoeuvre given the width of the site accesses and is therefore likely to lead to vehicles undertaking awkward manoeuvres on the highway in proximity to the junctions of Nash Road and Jefferson Close.

14. Vehicles parked in the spaces parallel to Swabey Road would also effectively be prevented from exiting the site by vehicles parked closer to the accesses. This is likely to lead to manoeuvring of vehicles onto the highway in order to allow other vehicles to egress the site. The undertaking of all the above manoeuvres in proximity to the road junctions would substantially erode highway safety. Moreover, given the tight arrangement of some of the parking spaces and proximity to adjacent walls, it may not be possible for all drivers to easily egress or access parked vehicles.

15. The above deficiencies in the proposed parking layout also suggests that drivers would be likely to perceive the parking spaces as inconvenient to use and that instead, they would park on the adjacent streets. Retaining the frontage boundary wall would not be a significant factor in dissuading drivers from street parking. The obstruction caused to vehicles and pedestrians by street parking in proximity to the road junctions would also lead to a diminution in highway safety conditions.

16. In reaching the above conclusions, I am mindful that the appellant had sought pre-application advice from the Council on the parking layout. However, such advice does not bind the Council in terms of its decision. Therefore, the flats would not accord with CS Core Policy 7, as they would not improve highway safety. Moreover, the flats would not accord with LP Policy T2, as the parking would not overcome highway safety problems. The failure to provide safe and suitable access to the site would also be inconsistent with paragraph 32 of the Framework.

Other matters

17. Despite not being a reason for refusing planning permission, the Council has made reference in its statement of case to what it regards as the unacceptable design of the proposed extension and a subsequent failure to accord with LP Policies as well as its adopted Local Development Framework Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document. The Council's decision notice should contain all of the reasons for refusal and additional reasons should not be introduced at an appeal. The appellant has addressed this matter in their own submissions. However, even if I were to find that the extension would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, it would not outweigh the significant harm already identified above.

18. I also note that the flats would not be smaller than the minimum gross internal floor areas in the National Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard[1]. Even so, this matter does not weigh significantly in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

19. The proposal would not accord with the Development Plan and it would be inconsistent with the Framework. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stephen Hawkins

INSPECTOR

[1] DCLG March 2015.

The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2020

by R E Walker BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3242013
24 Bell Close, Slough SL2 5UQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Amrik Singh against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/10726/013, dated 21 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2019.
- The development proposed is the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of three terraced houses.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application, which accurately describes the proposal.

3. The planning application was made in outline with all matters reserved. As such, I have regarded all elements of the drawings submitted as indicative.

4. Since the appeal was lodged, the Government has published its 2019 Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results. In the interests of fairness, the main parties were given the opportunity to comment on these results.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

   - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
   - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular reference to noise, disturbance and odour; and
   - The effect of the proposed parking arrangements on highway safety in Bell Close.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site comprises of an end terrace property within a block of 4 houses. No 24 Bell Close (No 24) occupies a large corner site at the north eastern end of Bell Close. Although there is a front extension to one of the middle properties, there is symmetry in the design of the block. The 2 end terrace properties have a 2-storey element with a hipped roof which projects forward of the building line of the middle properties. This design feature is repeated in several other terrace blocks in the street and contributes to its character.

7. At the end of the street on either corner are large gaps. The gap between No 24 and No 26 Bell Close (No 26) is fenced off and forms part of the grounds of No 24. Despite this, views can still be achieved to the buildings and trees to the rear of the site. These gaps are important features within the street scene and help break up the terrace blocks.

8. The proposal would result in the demolition of No 24. Although individually the property is of no particular architectural merit, its loss would disrupt the balance within the terrace block. The appearance of the remaining terrace block would, in my view, be harmed as a result.

9. Although submitted for indicative purposes, the proposed plans show how a scheme for 3 houses could be developed on the site. I recognise that the design of the indicative houses would appear in keeping with the surrounding area. Moreover, due to their position angled in the corner, the houses would not be prominent in the wider area. However, they would still be visible toward the end of the street and from nearby properties.

10. Each of the proposed dwellings would have reasonable sized rear gardens and a sense of space to the rear. To this end the buildings would not appear cramped. However, the angle and orientation of the proposed housing within the original corner gap would be at odds with the prevailing pattern of housing.

11. I recognise that the indicative layout seeks to maintain a gap between the remaining terrace block and the proposed houses. This would allow some views through to the rear of the site. However, the gap would be reduced and its contribution to break up the neighbouring terrace blocks would be significantly eroded. Moreover, the frontage area would be dominated by parking and the access drive. Given the amount of hardstanding and the layout of the vehicle parking as it narrows adjacent to the rear garden of No 22 Bell Close (No 22), in my view, the frontage area would appear somewhat cluttered and cramped.

12. Overall, the combination of these factors leads me to conclude on the first main issue that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would conflict with the requirements of Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) (2008) and Policy H13 and EN1 of the Local Plan for Slough (LP) (2004). These policies require, amongst other things, that development respects its location and surroundings.

13. These policies are broadly consistent with paragraph 127 of the Framework, which broadly seeks to secure high quality design and therefore any conflict with them are a matter of significant weight.

Living conditions

14. The proposal incorporates parking to the front of each of the houses which would be accessed from a shared driveway positioned between No 26 and No 22. Both properties would be aware of the vehicular movements even if there are no windows on the end wall of No 22. Vehicles would pass near the front garden and front windows of No 26 and near the rear and front garden of No 22 and its front windows.

15. I recognise that the appellant has sought to position the driveway to minimise the effects on the occupiers of No 26 and frontage parking is a common characteristic within the street. However, such parking serves single properties rather than a group of 3. To this end, my concerns relate to the level of vehicular activity and movements near the 2 neighbouring properties. These movements would give rise to noise, disturbance and exhaust fumes. The combination of which would be to the detriment of the living conditions of the occupiers of the immediate neighbouring properties.

16. I therefore find that the proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular reference to noise, disturbance and odour. The proposal would therefore conflict with the requirements of Core Policy 8 of the CS and Policy H13 and EN1 of the LP. These policies require, amongst other things that the design of all development within the existing residential areas should respect the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

17. These policies are broadly consistent with paragraph 127 of the Framework, which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure good standards of living conditions for existing occupants. As such, any conflict with these policies is a matter of significant weight.

Parking arrangements

18. The indicative plans show parking to the front of each of the properties with vehicles needing to reverse out. The Council's highway officer objects to any layout that results in reversing onto the highway.

19. Bell Close appeared to be a reasonably quiet road with vehicles not travelling at a high speed. This is particularly the case around the appeal site which is positioned at the end of the street. Other properties along the street have parking with vehicles reversing onto the highway, there is also some on street parking available and space at the end of the street to turn. I have no substantive evidence before me that the existing arrangements within the street have resulted in any highway safety issues.

20. I recognise that each of the units would be provided with sufficient vehicle parking spaces. Although it has not been demonstrated that vehicles would be able to enter and exit in a forward gear, given the existing parking situation and the nature of Bell Close, I am satisfied that the proposed parking arrangements would not have an adverse effect on highway safety.

21. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Policy T2 of the LP and Core Policy 7 and 8 of the CS. These policies require, amongst other things, residential development to provide a level of parking appropriate to its location. The proposal would also comply with paragraph 109 of the Framework

which seeks to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable impact on road safety.

Other Matters

22. My attention has been drawn to a previous planning permission for a single dwelling which was approved (Ref: P/10726/006) by the Council for a 2-storey 3-bedroom house. This did not involve the demolition of No 24 and I'm told has been implemented. As such, I am satisfied that if the appeal proposal were not erected, there is every likelihood that this fallback position would be built.

23. However, it is common ground that the size of the built form and number of units are greater than the proposal before me. Moreover, I have no substantive evidence that the fallback position, even considering any potential permitted development rights, would result in similar or greater effects to those identified.

24. In my view, the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties from this fallback position would not be as substantial as the proposal before me.

25. The Council raised no concerns in relation to the principle of development, the impact of the dwellings themselves on the occupiers of neighbouring properties or to the standard of accommodation proposed. I have no reason to disagree with these findings. However, the absence of harm in these respects is a neutral matter weighing neither for nor against the proposal.

26. Concerns regarding the processing of the application, including errors made by the Council, are not issues that I can assess as part of this appeal. The validity or not of such matters do not affect the planning merits or effects of the proposal before me.

27. I have also had regard to third party representations made raising a series of other concerns about the proposal. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, I have not pursued these matters further.

28. None of the other matters raised alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issues.

Planning Balance

29. I am satisfied that the policies on which the Council relied upon in this case are consistent with the aims of the Framework. Moreover, I find that the proposal would conflict with the requirements of the policies of the development plan when read as a whole.

30. The Council has confirmed that it cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11 of the Framework is therefore engaged. This indicates that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

31. The proposal would accord with the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing. I attach significant weight to the shortfall of housing and under delivery over several years, as evidenced by the Council and

the HDT results. However, due to the number of dwellings sought the proposal would only have a limited impact in the context of the overall housing supply, and I attach limited weight to the benefit in that regard.

32. Against these limited benefits, the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. I find these harmful effects weigh significantly given the environmental aims of the Framework.

33. I therefore find the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

34. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would conflict with the development plan and Framework when read as a whole.

35. Overall, I find there to be no material considerations that would indicate that the appeal decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.

36. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Robert Walker

INSPECTOR

The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2019

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 October 2019.

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3232021
33-41 Bayliss Road, Slough SL1 3PH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
- The appeal is made by CY Projects against Slough Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/08499/005, is dated 24 October 2018.
- The development proposed is for the construction of 6 no 3-bedroom terraced houses, with associated landscaping, refuse / cycle store, gated access, and associated alterations to the pedestrian access route and entrance between Nos 39 and 41 Bayliss Rd..

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

Procedural Matters

2. Following the Council's refusal of the application, they have indicated in their submission documents that they cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. I shall therefore have regard to Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in my determination of the appeal.

3. The Council has indicated that amended drawings were submitted by the applicant but not formally accepted or consulted on. Therefore, they determined the application on the scheme as originally proposed. I have done the same in my determination of this appeal.

Background and Main Issues

4. This appeal has been lodged following the Council's failure to determine the application within the relevant timescale. The Council in their submission include reasons for refusal had they been in a position to determine the application. This includes reference to those development plan policies that the Council considers to be relevant to each of the refusal reasons put forward.

5. The main issues are (i) the effect on the character and appearance of the area; (ii) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of existing neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to outlook, privacy, noise and disturbance, and the effect upon the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed dwellings with particular reference to amenity space and privacy; and (iii) the effect on highway safety with regard to the site access and parking provision; and (iv) the effect of the location and accessibility of refuse storage on bin operatives.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

6. The appeal site is in a backland location behind the dwellings fronting onto Bayliss Road and comprises parts of the former rear gardens of Nos 33 to 43. It is currently overgrown with vegetation whilst containing a small number of single storey buildings. Bayliss Road has a consistent built character that comprises semi-detached dwellings built along a largely rigid building line, with frontage parking, and uniformly designed semi-detached dwellings with hipped roofs. Dwellings predominantly have rear gardens, some of which have single storey buildings within them, resulting in a largely open aspect to the rear. Although not forming part of any residential property, the appeal site with its modest collection of outbuildings, and scrub vegetation is consistent with the open aspect that is a defining feature of the spaces immediately behind dwellings.

7. To the rear of the dwellings and the appeal site, and seen rising above their rooflines, is a large 4 storey flat complex known as Pickford Gardens. A public footpath separates the appeal site from the existing blocks of flats. The site can be seen through existing gaps between properties along Bayliss Road and the large opening between Nos 39 and 41 that would form the site access. A perspective of the site is also seen from Pool Lane to the south. Furthermore, it can also be viewed from upper floor windows pertaining to the flats at Pickford Gardens and between the single storey outbuildings and hedgerow that adjoins the public footpath to the rear.

8. The appeal scheme would consist of two terrace blocks, each comprising of 3 dwellings. These would occupy a large proportion of the site given the modest area allocated for amenity space. The scale of the proposed dwellings would be seen between the gaps that separate Nos 33-44 including the proposed site access, from Pool Lane to the south and from the public footpath to the rear of the appeal site. More prominent views of the proposal would inevitably be seen from upper floor windows associated with Pickford Gardens and the complex's large parking forecourt. The presence of the dwellings in relatively open surroundings rising above gardens and domestic outbuildings would appear stark and incongruous, as well as cramped in context with the Baylis Road houses given the close proximity of the proposal to these dwellings. They would also be seen protruding above the existing rooflines of the Bayliss Road dwellings and against the backdrop of the Pickford Gardens complex creating a sequence of roofscape horizons that noticeably increases the concentration of structures in the area. The overall effect is considered damaging to the prevailing pattern of development and characteristics of the area.

9. The appellant is of the view that the proposal would represent an acceptable transition between the Bayliss Road dwellings and Pickford Garden flats, thus in harmony with the surrounding residential fabric. However, with its siting on a confined site close to the Bayliss Road dwellings and amongst open gardens and smaller domestic structures, this will result in an awkward physical relationship rather than a harmonious association.

10. I conclude that the proposed dwellings would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the requirements of Core Policies CP1, CP4 and CP8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2026) (the SCS) and Policies EN1 and H13 of the Slough Local Plan (Adopted 2004) (the SLP), which seek, amongst other matters, to ensure development respects and is compatible with its surroundings in terms of design, scale and density. The

proposal would also be contrary to the Framework which requires development proposals to be sympathetic to local character.

Living Conditions

11. The appeal site appears largely open, albeit with the presence of the small number of single storey outbuildings and boundary trees, when viewed from first floor windows of Nos 33 – 43 Baylis Road. The gardens of the properties are enclosed by boundary fences and walls therefore the site is not readily visible from these areas, although there is likely to be an appreciation that the appeal site represents an open area of land beyond these boundaries that contributes towards the residents' outlook.

12. The proposed flank walls of Plots 1 and 6 would be sited very close to the rear boundaries of the No 33 and 43 and would enclose the space with two stark brick elevations that rise to 2.5 storeys. This would appear unacceptably imposing and the impact would be greatest when viewed from upper floor windows and rear garden areas of Nos 33, 35, 41 and 43. These neighbours, would, markedly and unreasonably, lose outlook and feel unduly enclosed. Notwithstanding, the proposal's close proximity to neighbouring dwellings, the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment Report, concludes that the proposal would not have an unacceptably harmful effect upon neighbouring occupiers in terms of overshadowing and access to sunlight.

13. In terms of the effect on privacy, Nos 33-43 would not be unduly harmed, as the facing flank walls of Plots 1 and 6 would not have any habitable room windows that would otherwise overlook these neighbouring garden areas. However, all of the proposed dwellings would have first floor windows that would overlook the rear gardens of Nos 31 and 45 respectively. There is limited depth to the proposed gardens (approximately 7m) therefore the first-floor windows of Plots 1-6 would have the effect of looming into the garden spaces of Nos 31 and 45 to the extent that their privacy would be restricted and therefore unacceptably harmed. It is acknowledged that there is already a degree of mutual overlooking into these garden areas, but I consider the proposed development would result in a further intrusion that exceeds what would be acceptable in this instance.

14. As for the effect on the living conditions of future occupiers, there would be a very limited separation distance between the existing first floor windows relating to No 33 and No 44 from the proposed rear gardens of Plots 1 and 6 respectively. The neighbouring windows would loom over the private space and would result in a significant and unacceptable invasion of the privacy of future occupiers when using their garden areas.

15. The proposal would utilise the existing entry into the site between Nos 39 and 41 Baylis Road for vehicular access purposes. This would be in close proximity to existing flank wall windows at ground and first floor, as well as the rear amenity space of Nos 39 and 41. The vehicular movements associated with 6 new dwellings are anticipated to be low over a 24hr period, nevertheless I would expect vehicle noise to be characterised by engines starting, revving, doors opening and closing, and drivers and passengers talking. Furthermore, the gated access would require, in all likelihood, vehicles to wait with their engines running at locations very close to the windows and garden areas of Nos 39 and 41. I would also anticipate some noise associated with the action of the gates opening and closing and the regular trips by residents to the refuse storage area immediately abutting the boundary of No.41.

Conclusion

28. The Council accept that they do not have an up to date 5-year housing land supply. Therefore, Paragraph 11 of the Framework advises that where policies relating to the supply of housing are considered to be out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

29. In relation to the sustainable development objectives in the Framework, I acknowledge that the appeal scheme would be located in an existing built up area with good accessibility to various modes of transport, services and facilities, and the general thrust of national policy seeks to boost housing provision. I accept that it would also be an efficient use of underused and derelict land, meet internal space standards and have a design and use of materials that is consistent with other dwellings.

30. However, good design also relates to respecting the prevailing character, but this proposal is inconsistent with the general pattern of development in the area. Whilst I accept that the Framework supports small scale development, the contribution of 6 dwellings to the supply and mix of housing in the area would be minimal, as would be any economic benefits resulting from the construction period and spending of future occupiers. Moreover, the harm to the character and appearance of the area and living conditions of neighbours would conflict with the environmental and social objectives of achieving sustainable development, and any benefits arising from sustainable construction and energy efficiency would be modest.

31. Overall, whilst I have given weight to the benefits of the development in my decision, in this case, I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the area, living conditions, and the associated conflict with the development plan, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. Therefore, the proposal would not be a sustainable form of development, and the conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by other considerations including the Framework.

32. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed and planning permission refused.

R. E. Jones

INSPECTOR

The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2017

by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 17th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3174339
14 Belmont, Slough SL2 1SU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Malik Abid against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/14363/001, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2017.
- The development proposed is erection of a 2 bedroom detached house on land adjacent to 14 Belmont.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The application form stated that the development proposed was a 3 bedroom detached house. However, the plans, the appeal form and the Council's decision notice all relate to a 2 bedroom dwelling. I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Belmont is part of a large residential estate characterised by two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings with strong repetitive design features. The end-terrace properties have distinctive gables whilst the middle of the terrace has a pitched roof. This creates a 'book-end' feature to each of the blocks. The houses nearest the junctions have larger plots. This allows more open corners which contribute to the character of an area which is otherwise densely developed.

5. No 14 is an end-terrace dwelling on a prominent corner site at Belmont's junction with Greenside. There is a significant gap between its flank wall and the back of the footway. The proposal seeks to erect a detached house in this area, the front and rear elevations of which would align with the host property. The flank wall would be hard up against the site's boundary and the front garden would be restricted to a small triangular area of land immediately adjacent to the junction.

6. In my view the introduction of a detached house would appear awkward and out of keeping with the existing terrace. It would fail to respect the pattern and layout of the estate with the front gable being a distinctive feature of a number of the corner properties. I consider this to be the case notwithstanding the presence of a new dwelling that has been constructed adjacent to a gable-ended property at No 52.

7. On the corner opposite to No 14 is a semi-detached property with a pitched roof. Its flank wall is set back from the footpath by a similar distance to that of No 14. This gives the junction a symmetrical and open appearance, which would be seriously eroded with the introduction of the appeal proposal. The arrangement of properties around the junction of Belmont with Thorndike is different and did not result in a comparable loss of symmetry with the construction of No 52a.

8. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: *Residential Extensions Guidelines* (SPD) does not specifically address the situation of constructing new dwellings. However, it provides relevant guidance regarding factors that should be taken into account when assessing a proposal within an existing established residential area. The section of Greenside closest to the appeal site is characterised by side gardens, garages and parking areas and a track that runs between the rear gardens of the dwellings. It does not have a strong building line, so the proposal would not breach it in any harmful way. However, the scheme would conflict with the SPD's recommendation that there should be a minimum 1m set-in from the boundary. The SPD was adopted after the Council had granted permission for the scheme at No 52. That scheme therefore cannot be directly compared with the appeal proposal which I have assessed on its individual planning merits in the light of current relevant guidance.

9. In any event all the Council's policies pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. The Framework advocates a design-led approach to the assessment of development proposals to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area and reinforce local distinctiveness. I consider the proposal's juxtaposition with the gable feature of the host property would introduce an alien feature into the street scene. This harm would be accentuated by the position of the flank wall immediately adjacent to the footway and the erosion of the symmetry and openness of the junction of Belmont with Greenside. This combination of factors demonstrates that the proposal would be unacceptable.

10. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies CP4 and CP8 of the Slough Core Strategy and saved Policies EN1 and H13 of the Local Plan for Slough which, amongst other things, require all new housing developments to enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area. As saved Policy EN2 specifically relates to extensions to buildings, I do not consider it to be relevant to this case.

Conclusions

11. The Government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and requires applications for housing development to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal would provide an additional small family house in a sustainable location, the principle of which is acceptable. The scheme would provide adequate internal living accommodation in terms of room sizes, ventilation, light and external amenity space. It would not give rise to harmful overlooking of neighbours and adequate parking would be provided for the host property and the new dwelling. All these factors weigh in the scheme's favour.

12. However, I have found that it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The benefits that would accrue from the provision of one dwelling would not outweigh this harm. For this reason, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden INSPECTOR

The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2019

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th November 2019.

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3232544
Land between 16 and 18 Layburn Crescent SL3 8QN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Wexham Homes Ltd against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
- The application Ref P/17711/000, dated 20 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2019.
- The development proposed is described as a proposed 3 bedroom dwelling.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant has submitted additional plans to accompany the appeal that were not before the Council when it made its determination of the application. This includes a plan which shows further details in relation to bin storage and cycle/car parking to overcome concerns in the refusal notice.

3. I have considered the matter in light of the principles established by the Wheatcroft judgement, to which the appellant has also referred. In the interests of fairness, I am obliged to determine the appeal on the basis of the application considered by the Council. Not to do so could potentially prejudice the interests of interested parties as I have no evidence to suggest that they are aware of the suggested revisions. Furthermore, I cannot be entirely certain there are not interested parties who did not comment on the basis of being content with the scheme as submitted and are unaware of the proposed changes.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, with particular reference to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises an area of open amenity land between Nos 16 and 18 Layburn Crescent and located within a planned residential estate. There are

similar parcels of land located around the estate where they occupy corners and gaps between dwellings. Their appearance is primarily grassed, although some contain a small number of mature trees. The appeal site is not allocated as a formal area of open space; however, it is evidently an inherent part of the original estate layout. The cumulative effect of these green spaces gives the estate a spacious appearance and contributes positively to the prevailing character and appearance of the area.

6. The proposed development would occupy most of the site, however, some grass areas will be left open to the side and in front of the proposed dwelling. Despite this, the proportion of the site that would be given way to built development, hard surfacing, enclosed private garden and attendant parking areas would occupy a large proportion of the site that would significantly reduce the green space in this part of the estate. The loss of this space to residential development would have an erosive effect on the area and diminish the valuable contribution the undeveloped green spaces provide.

7. It is acknowledged that the proposal could retain an area of grass and introduce landscaping to the side and in front of the dwelling through a condition. However, this is not comparable to the size of the area that would be lost, and the contribution of the residual land would not be commensurate with the more spacious areas of green space on the estate. Therefore, retaining these areas would not overcome the harm that has been identified. Moreover, part of the area to the side of the dwelling would be taken up by the proposed car parking.

8. I saw the area of green space adjacent to No 10 Layburn Crescent which was subject to an appeal decision[1] for a detached house. Although larger in area and containing mature trees, it is considered that in combination with the appeal site and other such spaces, they collectively add to the value of the estate's design and layout. The development of the appeal site would therefore result in a significant erosion of these spaces and would harm the visual qualities of the estate.

9. Comparisons have been drawn by the Appellant to a scheme approved by the Council where it did not equitably apply its open space policy. However, the nature and location of that scheme is materially different to the one before me. Additionally, it's noted that the Council deemed that acceptable mitigation was provided to overcome the loss of open space. That being the case I have afforded this permission little weight and considered the appeal scheme on its own merits.

10. Therefore, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies OSC8 and EN1 of the Local Plan for Slough (2015) (the SLP) and Core Policies 8 and 9 of the Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006-2026, Development Plan Document, (2008) (the SCS). Amongst other considerations, these policies require proposals to respect the area's character and surroundings and protect against the loss of green spaces. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal the Policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

11. Although the Council, in their determination of the application, referred to Policy H13 of the SLP, this policy is not relevant to the proposal as it relates to

[1] APP/J0350/W/16/3160238

this main issue. With regard to Policy EN1 of the SLP, I note there is no specific reference to the retention of this particular type of land as green space. However, its loss would result in unacceptable harm to the area and the development would not therefore be consistent with the policy's intentions, which amongst other matters, require development to be compatible with their surroundings having regard to visual impact. On this basis I consider that Policy EN1 is relevant to the first main issue.

Living conditions

12. The proposed dwelling's rear elevation would face the flank /side wall of No 16 Layburn Crescent (No 16) and maintain a distance of approximately 10.6 metres from the two-storey part of the dwelling. This falls short of the Council's desired 15m separation distance as set out in its design guide[2] (the SPD), however, this guidance relates to house extensions rather than space standards for new dwellings. Notwithstanding this, the two-storey flank wall of No 16 would be at an oblique angle where it faces the garden and rear elevation of the proposed dwelling. Furthermore, the width and height of the flank wall of No.16 would not be excessive to the extent that it would unacceptably enclose the space, nor would it result in an oppressive outlook for future residents from habitable rooms and the rear garden. The proposed separation distance is therefore considered acceptable.

13. There are two windows in the flank wall of No.16 that would face the garden of the proposed dwelling. The Council recognises that these are likely to serve non habitable rooms, but would have concerns regarding the insertion of any windows serving habitable rooms in the future and the resultant overlooking. However, I have not been presented with any evidence to suggest that the occupiers of No.16 would be installing windows in the flank wall. In any event permitted development rights place restrictions on the insertion of windows in flank walls and would ensure privacy would not be unacceptably harmed should this happen in the future.

14. The proposal would not therefore result in harm to the living conditions of future occupiers of the dwelling in terms of privacy and outlook. In this regard the proposal would therefore be in accordance with Policies H13 and H14 of the SLP where they relate to ensuring the amenity of surrounding occupiers is not unacceptably harmed. Insofar as is relevant to the appeal the Policies are consistent with the Framework.

Other Matters

15. The Council have raised concerns that the parking spaces do not meet the required space standards, whilst no details of cycle parking and bin storage were provided with the application. However, from what I have examined and saw on site there would be sufficient space within the appeal site to accommodate parking spaces, cycle parking and bin storage that meet the Council's standards in this respect. Collectively, these are matters that could be controlled by condition.

[2] Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted January 2010

Conclusion

16. The Council accept it cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. The scheme would be located in an existing built up area with good accessibility to various modes of transport, services and facilities, and the general thrust of national policy seeks to boost housing provision. I accept that it would be an efficient use of underused land and have a design and use of materials that is consistent with other dwellings.

17. However, even if I accept the shortfall suggested, the combined benefits of the proposal are modest. Consequently, they are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

18. That said, other material considerations do not indicate that my decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. The proposal would not accord with the development plan, the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

R. E. Jones

INSPECTOR

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/20/3246017 100B Waterbeach Road, Slough SL1 3JY

The Inspector dismissed a development proposal for a change of use from a dwelling house to a large house in multiple occupation stating that the *"effect of the development would be that the appeal property would no longer be available for family accommodation….The introduction of a large HMO, with the associated intensification of activity this would bring, into what is essentially a suburban location, would represent a form of development that would be uncharacteristic of the surrounding area."*

The Inspector concluded that *"the proposed development would result in the loss of a family dwelling which would harm the character and appearance of the area."*

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/20/3246233 Land at 12-14 Lynwood Avenue, Slough SL3 7BH

The Inspector dismissed an appeal for a proposed development for the demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of 4no. three bed dwellings and 2no. four bed dwellings. They said *"the character of Lynwood Avenue is well established and distinctive. The introduction of new dwellings in this location would appear as an incongruous addition to the rear garden area, as they do not reflect the pattern of development nor the spacious undeveloped nature of these gardens."*

This *"proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. There is conflict with policies CP1, CP4, CP8 of the Slough Core Strategy 2006-2026 (CS), policies EN1 and H13 of the LP."*

List of further relevant Planning Appeal Decisions

- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3181792
  1 and 2 The Drive, Slough SL3 7DB
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/15/3017902
  6 The Garibaldi, The Green, Slough SL1 2SN
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/15/3003423
  9-10 Chapel Street, Slough, SL1 1PF
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/16/3151164
  18-31 Tilbury Walk, Slough, SL3 8EX
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/16/3143499
  88 Trelawney Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8RW
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/19/3221641
  207 Cippenham Lane, Slough SL1 5AG
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/16/3164440
  Spring Cottage, Slough SL1 2DQ
- Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/15/3134141
  The Curve, 26 Chalvey Road West, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2JG

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Protecting the Suburbs Strategy, June 2020

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