# Wider Area Growth Study
## Part 1: Defining the Area of Search

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## The Wider Area Growth Study

1.1 The Wider Area Growth Study (WAGS) has been commissioned jointly by Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) and Chiltern & South Bucks councils, as part of the evidence base to supporting future plan making and Duty to Co-operate work between the authorities.

1.2 The study relates to the future housing needs of the cluster of 'core places', comprising the urban areas of Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead. Slough currently considers it will not be able to meet all of its existing and future housing needs within its boundary. So we need to identify areas where this 'need' can be accommodated regardless of administrative boundaries. The purpose of the study is to identify the potential locations that could accommodate the future housing need growth of the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead core, in line with national policy. This requires that, where a local planning authority cannot meet its housing need in its own area, the resulting unmet need should be accommodated in '*neighbouring areas… where it is practical do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development*'[1] In short, the study aims to identify alternative locations for people who would normally expect to live in the core places, but cannot do so, due to lack of capacity for new housing development. Any recipient areas should meet two broad criteria:

- *From a demand perspective, they should match what the people concerned want and need.*
- *On the supply side, they should be free of constraints that would preclude sustainable housing development, over and above what is required to meet the needs of their own districts.*

1.3 The Wider Area Growth Study is addressing these two issues in sequence. Part 1 of the study is now complete and its findings are set out in this report. It deals with the demand side, defining a broad 'study area', in which new housing development could provide reasonable substitutes for homes in the core places. Part 2 has not yet started. It will look at supply, capacity and constraints in the study area identified in Part 1, to identify specific locations within its boundary where housing development could be deliverable and sustainable.

1.4 The work focuses on housing but there is also likely to be shortfall in employment land needs. This work can help inform the search area for employment land but in general where is suitable is probably more dictated by local factors – including access to key Motorway junctions or the availability of high capacity urban office sites near to the railway stations and town centres.

[1] National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019, para 35

1.5 The emerging findings of this study have been shared with neighbouring Councils. As part of this consultation we sought to both sense check the emerging areas of search but also the data used to inform our conclusions. No conflicting views were expressed and this report has sought to incorporate any comments received.

# Part 1 – Defining the Area of Search

1.6 In Part 1 of the study, our focus is on people who will be seeking a home in the core places of Slough and RBWM – whether they be existing local residents who are considering a move, within the core, or potential migrants[2] who are looking to move in from other places. Our purpose is to determine an area of search that such people would typically regard as suitable for their needs. Within that area of search, the typical resident would consider that different settlements are reasonable substitutes for one another.

1.7 Perhaps the most obvious way to draw the area of search would be an opinion poll, asking large numbers of people about their housing preferences. But this approach would not be practical or proportionate. Rather, following accepted practice for this type of study, we rely on indirect evidence, under four headings:

i Demographic profile: the mix of people who may look for housing in the core place in future

ii Migration: the past housing choices of comparable people

iii Commuting (travel to work): where people work

iv Housing costs: what people can afford.

1.8 Behind this approach are common-sense assumptions:

- People's past housing choices are a guide to the future choices of similar people.
- Main factors that drive those choices include access to jobs (people live where they can get to work), and the cost of housing (people live where they can afford).

1.9 Of course jobs and housing costs are not the only factors behind people's housing choices. Other factors include social and community links, access to amenities and services and personal tastes. Such factors are difficult to measure directly, but they are captured indirectly through the evidence of past migration.

1.10 In this Part 1 analysis we have entirely set aside supply-side constraints, deliverability and policy considerations. Nothing in this report implies that specific sites, or indeed any sites, in the area of search, either can or should be developed for housing to accommodate cross-boundary unmet needs. Whether this is the case, will be considered in part 2 of the Wider Area Growth Study.

1.11 The remainder of this report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the findings of earlier studies on the area's housing market geography. Chapters 3-6 provide our own analysis, considering in turn the demographic profile, migration, commuting and

[2] 'Migrants' and 'migration' denote people who are moving house, whether within the UK or internationally.

housing costs. Conclusions are in Chapter 7, including a map showing the conclusions in relation to the proposed geographic area for the Wider Area Growth Study.

# 2 PREVIOUS EVIDENCE

## Introduction

2.1 Earlier analysis of housing market geography around our core places is found in two evidence base studies, commissioned by two groups of authorities. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Berkshire SHMA), by GL Hearn for the Berkshire authorities, was published in 2016. The HMA-FEMA study by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Buckinghamshire authorities (Identifying HMA's and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire and the surrounding area), was initially published in 2015 and updated in 2016. In this chapter we consider whether the findings of those studies, or the methods they used, help answer the question we set out in paragraph 1.4 above. Also whether the conclusions of these two documents still 'hold true' given that the planning guidance used to prepare them has now been cancelled.

2.2 The Berkshire SHMA and the Buckinghamshire HMA-FEMA study were conducted under earlier versions of national policy and guidance, which are no longer in force. Under that previous planning system, plan-makers were required to define housing market areas (HMAs), which were usually larger than local authorities. HMAs in effect were areas of search, bringing together residential locations that the typical resident would regard as reasonable substitutes for one another. Authorities sharing an HMA were expected to produce joint housing needs assessments covering that area as a whole, and if any authority's needs could not be met within its own boundaries then other parts of the HMA were expected to accommodate the resulting unmet need. This is illustrated by the agreement of Aylesbury Vale to accommodate a proportion of the unmet housing need from Chiltern and South Bucks within its Local Plan, currently at Examination.

2.3 Thus, the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies had broadly similar objective to this study: to establish where housing needs can be met, irrespective of local authority boundaries. They also used broadly similar evidence, focusing on migration and commuting from the 2011 Census[3], as well as housing costs. But on closer examination there are major differences between this study and the earlier ones.

2.4 Our analysis, as mentioned earlier, starts from a tightly defined core place, or centre – the Slough/ Windsor/ Maidenhead urban cluster. Our purpose is to identify the area of search of people who would choose to live in that specific place. By contrast, the earlier studies started from much larger areas – the whole of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire respectively – which are also different from each other. Their purpose was to identify areas of search for people who would choose to live in those large areas generally, rather than specific places within them.

2.5 The Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies also used different methods from ours, partly because the government guidance in use at the time set a formal criterion for

[3] The census counts migration as individuals moving house in the 12 months before the Census date.

defining the HMA. The criterion was that the area should 'typically' have a minimum of 70% migration containment[4], excluding long-distance moves (for example those that involve a lifestyle change, such as retirement). This criterion is no longer in force. In the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (issued in February 2019), and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), the concept of housing market areas as the geography to derive need no longer exists. Also, as we outline in more detail below, both these older studies needed to exclude London from their analysis. This has the effect of distorting some of the flows or linkages because in many areas the strongest (or near strongest) links are with London and not other neighbouring districts.

2.6 Given the differences in objectives and methods the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies cannot be expected to produce a ready-made answer to our present question – now freed from the constraint of deleted guidance. Nor did they produce the same answer as each other, as we discuss in the next section.

# Findings

## The Berkshire SHMA

2.7 In regard to migration the Berkshire SHMA used data for whole districts, because more localised data from the 2011 Census were not publicly available, due to confidentiality restrictions. But its analysis of commuting and housing costs uses small-area data, at the level of Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) – which are sub-divisions of districts, with population between 5,000 and 15,000[5]

2.8 To define HMAs the Berkshire SHMA used two main indicators - the size of migration and commuting flows, and containment ratios for migration and commuting. These two indicators are related to each other. In broad terms, the SHMA defined HMAs as groups of districts that:

- Were more closely linked to each other than to other districts, and
- Collectively showed high containment ratios, both for migration and commuting.

2.9 The study concluded "Using a best fit to local authority boundaries, there is strong evidence to support the definition of two separate HMAs containing the Berkshire authorities and South Bucks – a Western Berkshire HMA covering Bracknell Forest, Wokingham Borough, Reading Borough and West Berkshire; and an Eastern Berks and South Bucks HMA comprising Slough Borough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) together with South Bucks" (para 5, p17)

2.10 In this list, South Bucks is the only district that is not administratively part of Berkshire. It was included because ORS Atkins recommended that South Bucks

[4] Migration containment is the proportion of house moves that remain within the area, as opposed to crossing its boundaries. Similarly commuting containment, which we discuss later, is the proportion of journeys to work which take place within an area, so both home and workplace are in the area. For commuting containment the PPG did not set a threshold; many housing need studies rely on the threshold set by ONS for the definition of Travel-to-Work Areas TTWAs), which are 75% or 66.66% depending on the size of the area.

[5] Source : https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography

District should be considered part of a Reading and Slough HMA comprising of South Bucks District Council and the Berkshire authorities. It was adding it to Slough and RBWM to increase the area's containment, due to its links to Slough.

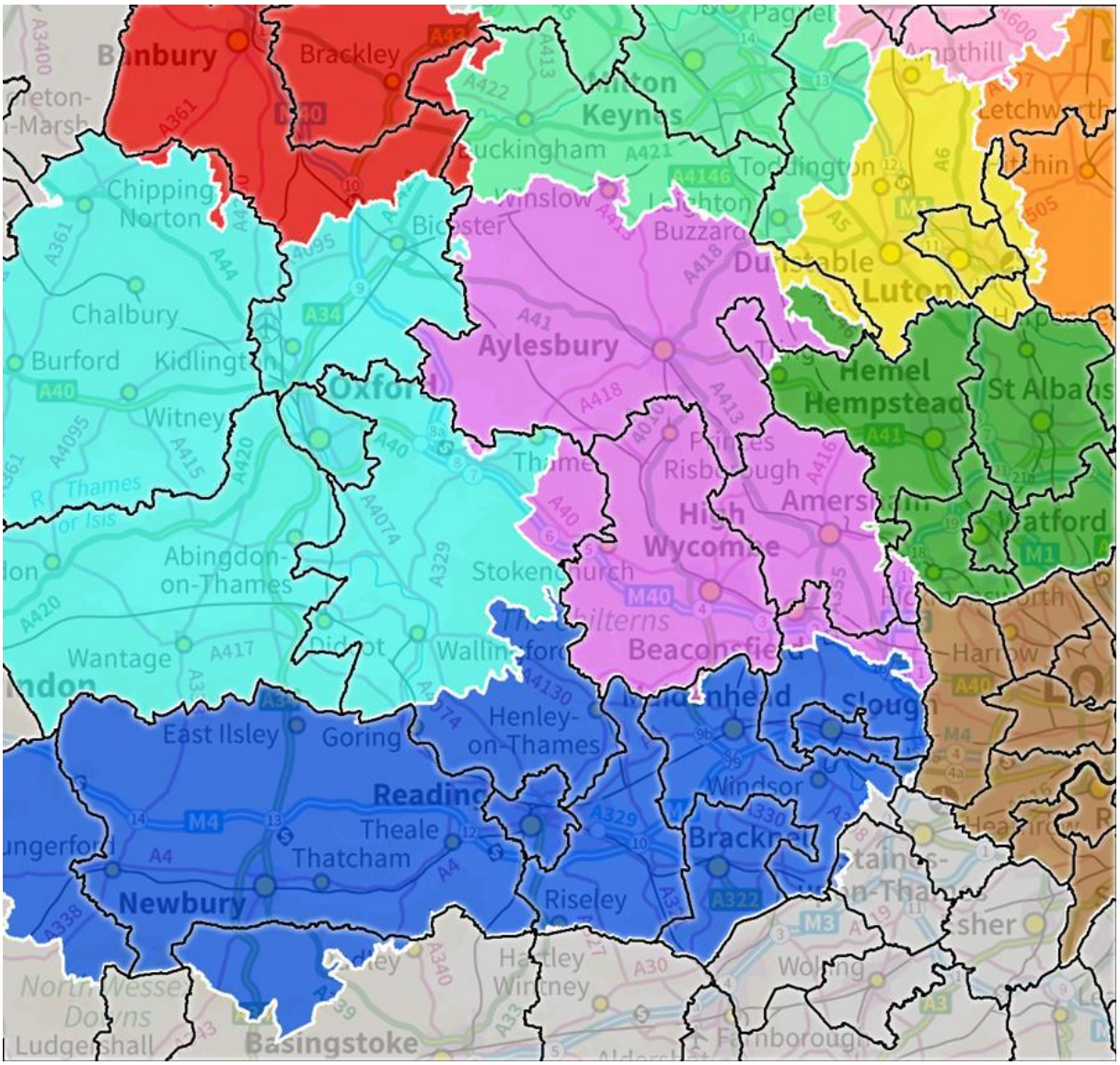
## The Buckinghamshire HMA-FEMA study

2.11 Unlike the Berkshire SHMA, the Buckinghamshire study was based on small-area data, analysing both migration and commuting flows between Middle Layer Super-Output Areas. The original study, published in 2015, used migration data from 2001, because results of the 2011 census were not yet available. In June 2016, following the decision to prepare a joint Local Plan, South Bucks and Chiltern District Councils published "HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire: Updating the evidence". This update was able to also use more recent 2011 migration data. But as with earlier data this was only available on a highly confidential basis and could not be published unless aggregated in such a way that disguised the raw data.

2.12 Using this data ORS analysed migration and commuting flows between each pair of MSOAs in Buckinghamshire and surrounding areas, which covered much of Southern England. To handle that very large dataset, they used a sophisticated formal model, based on joining together MSOAs which are most closely linked, until the joined-up area reached the desired containment. The resulting areas were called 'functional HMAs'.

2.13 ORS, both in their original study and the 2016 update, found that South Bucks district was split between two functional HMAs. The northern section of the district was in a Central Buckinghamshire area, while the southern section was in a 'Reading & Slough' area, which covered the whole of Berkshire. This geography is shown in the map below – where district boundaries are marked in black, the Reading and Slough HMA is blue and the Central Buckinghamshire HMA is mauve.

## Figure 2.1 Functional housing market areas in the ORS study




Source: *HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire: Updating the Evidence*, 2016

2.14 This split of one district between two HMAs is not unusual. The boundaries of ORS's functional HMAs often cut across local authorities, so a local authority might contain sections of more than one functional HMA. The ORS report explained that for practical planning this was unhelpful. Therefore, it defined a further set of market areas that did match district boundaries, while being as close as possible to the functional HMAs. The study recommended that those best-fit market areas, or 'pragmatic HMAs', be used for planning.

2.15 For South Bucks, the 2015 study considered two candidates for a pragmatic HMA, Central Buckinghamshire and Reading & Slough. It found that Reading & Slough was preferable, because it accounted for the majority of the district's population (nearly 60%), and its migration and commuting links were stronger. Accordingly, as 'the most pragmatic' solution the study recommended that South Bucks be included in the Berkshire HMA.

2.16 In the 2016 update, using more recent migration figures, the modelling produced virtually the same results for South Bucks. Therefore, ORS's recommendation also remained the same – that on balance South Bucks belonged in the Reading & Slough best-fit HMA, along with the Berkshire authorities.

2.17 ORS in 2016 also produced a supplementary note titled *HMAs and FEMAs in Buckinghamshire: The Impact of a Joint Plan for Chiltern and South Bucks.* The note is summarised in the final section of the updated main report. It considered how HMAs should be defined if South Bucks and Chiltern were joined together into a single planning unit. It found that Chiltern district, unlike South Bucks, was more closely linked to the rest of Buckinghamshire than to Berkshire, and for the combined area of the two districts this tipped the balance. Accordingly the supplementary note concluded that

'*The most pragmatically appropriate "best fit" for Chiltern and South Bucks as a single, combined area is as part of the Central Buckinghamshire housing market area.' based on Local Plan areas comprises Aylesbury Vale district, Wycombe district and the combined area of Chiltern and South Bucks districts [...] these "best fit" groupings do not change the actual geography of the functional housing market areas that have been identified – they simply provide a pragmatic arrangement for the purposes of establishing the evidence required..." (para 36-37, p10).'*

2.18 It added:

*Whilst we believe that this proposed grouping for Central Buckinghamshire HMA provides the overall "best fit" for joint working (based on a Joint Plan being developed for Chiltern and South Bucks), it '[This] is not the only arrangement possible given the complexities of the functional housing market areas in the region. Regardless of the final groupings, the more important issue will be the need for all of the Buckinghamshire districts to maintain dialogue with each other and also with their neighbouring authorities, as well as with the Mayor of London through the Greater London Authority.' (para 38, p10).*

# The influence of London

2.19 The influence of London raised technical issues that impacted on both the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies. The problem was that, for many local authority areas surrounding the capital, the dominant migration and / or commuting links are with London boroughs (typically people move house away from London and commute towards London).

2.20 Due to those close links with London, it was difficult to define HMAs that met the required containment thresholds without including London, or large parts of it. But joining London with its neighbours would have resulted in very large HMAs – comprising either a set of overlapping areas that have Central or Inner London in common, or a single, even larger area that covers all of London and a wide belt surrounding it.

2.21 This is what happened in the NHPAU *Geography of Housing Market Areas* (2010). The NHPAU study provides the only definition of HMAs that is consistent across England. It used a broadly similar model to the ORS Buckinghamshire study, and did not allow HMAs to overlap. The result was a very large London HMA, extending from Slough to Basildon and from Luton to Crawley. (The national geography of Travel-to-Work areas, produced by the same team of academics for the ONS, produces a similar market area for London).

2.22 The Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies noted that for practical plan-making those outsized HMAs would not be helpful, because joint working across the areas would need to bring together too many authorities. Also, the adopted London Plan treated London as a single housing market area, suggesting that the capital's housing needs should be assessed separately from surrounding areas.

2.23 Therefore, when defining housing market areas, both the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies largely excluded London from their analysis. In both studies, the definition of HMAs is based on containment ratios that disregard links to London, and hence the recommended HMAs do not extend into London.

2.24 Excluding London makes a significant difference to the studies' results. In the Buckinghamshire study, for example, we know that ORS did experiment with runs of their model that did include London – though in formulating its conclusions it set aside those results. With regard to the market geography identified in the Buckinghamshire study (see Figure 2.1 above), we are advised by ORS that in the version that included London both Slough and South Bucks districts were part of a London HMA.

2.25 However, for our purposes excluding London is not helpful, because unlike the earlier studies we are not seeking to define housing market areas in the meaning of the previous guidance, nor are we required to base our analysis on containment ratios. In this study, excluding London would overstate the links of our core places to other locations outside London, while setting aside what may be stronger links to places in London, both in housing terms and patterns of work, which the emerging expansion of Heathrow illustrates. Heathrow is located in the west of London, but has a close relationship with the economies of neighbouring areas outside of London. Therefore, our own analysis below does include London.

## Conclusion

2.26 Neither the Berkshire SHMA nor the Buckinghamshire FEMA-HMA study provide a direct answer to our present question: what alternative locations would suit people for whom there is no room in Slough, Windsor or Maidenhead? That is because those studies were designed to answer different questions, and they followed government guidance that no longer exists.

2.27 That said, the evidence of the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies do provide some clues on possible answers to our question. Not surprisingly, the evidence confirms that the districts of Slough and RBWM are closely linked, so from a demand

perspective either of them could help meet the other's housing need. This older research It also suggests that our area of search does not extend south into Surrey.

2.28 To the north of the core districts, the position is more complicated:

- The ORS Buckinghamshire study, which uses fine-grained analysis of small areas, finds that the district is divided – so only the northern section is part of Berkshire HMA, due to its links to Slough.
- When taking a best-fit view about South Bucks as a whole, ORS considers the district to be part of the whole Berkshire HMA.
- The GL Hearn Berkshire study, which only looks at whole districts, – concluded that on balance South Bucks' closest relationship is with Eastern Berkshire.

2.29 In the present study, we do not need to take a whole-district view: it would be perfectly reasonable for our area of search to straddle administrative boundaries. Nor do we have to conclude that any area of search is 'exclusive' to that housing market area – I.e it can only meet the needs arising within one fixed geography. In practice undeveloped land, if developed could meet needs arising from a number of different areas. Therefore, the suggestion from earlier evidence is that the southern part of South Bucks is likely to belong in our area of search, because the land is closely related to Slough (and RBWM) while the northern part does not.

2.30 Both the Berkshire and Buckinghamshire studies largely excluded London from their analyses of housing market geography. This was done for good reasons, but for the purpose of our study it distorts the evidence. In our own analysis below, we make no distinction between London boroughs and other areas.

# 3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

## Introduction

3.1 To help us understand future housing choices, it will be helpful to know something about the people and households who will generate demand for net additional housing in the core districts of Slough and RBWM. One source for this is the official demographic projections from the Office for National Statistics.

3.2 Projections by local authority area are released in two parts: first the sub-national population projection (SNPP), and some weeks later the sub-national household projection, which groups the SNPP population into households. Our analysis uses the latest projections, which are 2016-based and were published in 2018.

3.3 The reader should bear in mind the limitations of these figures. The projections, as their name indicates, carry forward ('project') past trends, and specifically the past behaviour of each demographic group (defined by age and sex). If the factors that drive demographic change are different in the future to what they were in the past, the projections may not be a reliable guide to that future.

3.4 Another caveat, which follows from the first, is that the projections do not reflect the government's view of future housing need. The 2019 revisions of the NPPF and PPG have introduced a standard method for measuring those needs, whose result is called 'local housing need' (LHN). The calculation of LHN starts from household growth in the next 10 years, as shown in the 2014-based official projections. It uplifts it by a factor that depends on housing affordability, and may then apply a cap depending on existing plan targets. Changes are also expected to the method sometime in the next 12 months or so because the current method does not align with the Governments stated 300,000 dpa – but no further details are available at the moment. But in summary it is likely that under this new system each Council may have to increase the number of new homes compared to the old system. But by how much we cannot say now.

3.5 Ideally it would be helpful to know the demographic profile associated with the local housing need. But this is not available, because the standard method only calculates numbers of households. It tells us nothing about the characteristics of those households or the people who form them.

## Slough

3.6 Over a 25-year period, 2016-41, the 2016-based SNPP shows Slough's population increasing by 568 persons per annum. The driver of this growth is natural change – the difference between births and deaths – of 1,360 p.a. This fast natural growth is offset in large part by negative net migration of minus 780 p.a., the outcome of a large outflow to the rest of the UK and a smaller inflow from overseas[6].

[6] Numbers may not add up exactly, due to rounding by ONS>

3.7 Numbers of households in Slough in 2016-41 increase from 53,375 to 62,668 – an annual rate of 372 households p.a.

3.8 The main reason for the large projected increase in population is that Slough has a high number of people in the 30 to 40 age bracket and a large number of children under ten. In 2015 the fertility rate in Slough was 2.23 children per woman which is significantly higher than the national average of 1.82 children per woman.

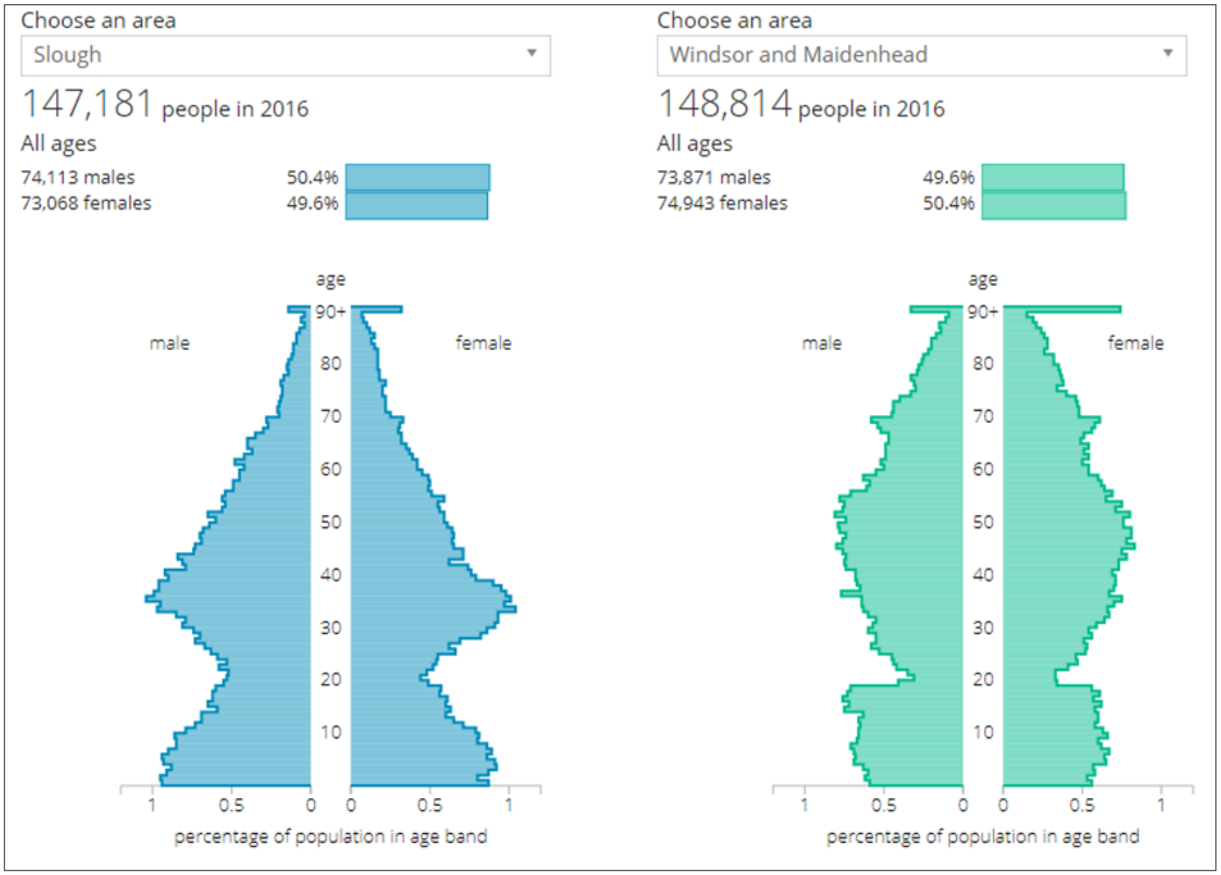
3.9 In addition to the population increasing in Slough over the plan period, the age profile will also change – as the population generally ages and more new homes are needed to house the aging population. Also many of those children born in recent years (i.e. the 2.23 children per woman) will in the life of the next plan start forming their own households and generate a local need for new homes.

## RBWM

3.10 From 2016 to 2041, the 2016-based SNPP shows RBWM's population growing by 400 p.a. In regard to the sources of this growth, RMBW is very different from Slough. In RBWM natural change – the surplus of births over deaths – averages just 152 p.a., about one ninth of the figure for Slough. Net migration – the difference between people moving into the borough and those moving out – is positive at 244 p.a., due in roughly equal parts to domestic and international migration. The domestic element is likely to include moves from Slough, though the published projections do not provide this level of detail.

3.11 One reason for RBWM's low natural change compared to Slough's is illustrated at Figure 3.1 below. In RBWM much of the population is middle-aged or elderly; the 'population pyramid' shows a bulge around age 50, and relatively large numbers above that age. In Slough the population is much younger, with a marked bulge in around age 30, and smaller numbers of elderly people. It is not surprising, therefore, that Slough is predicted to have fewer deaths and more births than RBWM.

**Figure 3.1 Population pyramid, Slough and RBWM, 2016**




Source: ONS

3.12 In the household projection, the number of households in RBWM grows from 60,265 to 68,323 – an annual average of 322 p.a., slightly slower than Slough. Also similar to Slough, this growth does not only result from increasing population. It is also driven by falling household sizes, largely due to the ageing population. In RBWM the average household size in 2016 was 2.42 persons, substantially smaller than Slough's - at least partly an outcome of the older population. By 2041 it is projected to fall to 2.27 persons, still smaller than Slough and probably for the same reason.

## South Bucks

3.13 For the sake of context we also summarise the demographic projections for South Bucks, which as noted earlier is part of the client group for this study and, in the southern part of the district, has close links to our core districts.

3.14 South Bucks is a much smaller district in population size than Slough and RBWM, with around half or less of their population and households. In the official projection, the district's population in 2016-41 grows by 340 persons p.a., much less than Slough's and slightly less than RBWM's. As natural change is an insignificant at minus 60 p.a., this growth is all due to net inward migration - specifically domestic (UK) migration, probably including migration from Slough. The age profile at 2016 is similar to RBWM or slightly older. Household numbers over the period increase by

203 per year – less than both Slough and RBWM. Average household size falls from 2.50 to 2.35.

3.15 In summary, South Bucks has much smaller population and fewer households than either of our core local authorities. In regard to its demographic profile and the nature of expected change, it looks quite different from Slough and quite similar to RBWM. South Bucks housing need / growth is largely driven by inward (domestic) migration with 'natural change' a small component.

## Conclusion

3.16 The future demand for additional housing in the core districts will be driven by two factors. The first of course is population growth, which means that there will be more people looking for homes. The second factor is falling household sizes, which is largely due to the ageing of the population, and new household formation, and means that any given population will require more homes.

3.17 The official population projections provide indications on both these factors. But that evidence must be treated with caution, because the projections only show what would happen if past demographic trends continue. They do not take account of factors that might alter those trends, such as new government policy.

3.18 In regard to population growth, the projections for the next 20 years suggest that the two core districts will be quite different.

3.19 In Slough, the projections show natural change – the surplus of births over deaths – of 1,360 persons p.a., more than twice the population growth of 568 p.a. In net terms, people born in the district not only account for all the additional population, but also replacing large numbers of people who move out of the district over the period. Therefore, the demand for additional housing will be driven by residents who are already in the district (and later their children), as opposed to future in-migrants.

3.20 By contrast, in RBWM the projections show much lower natural change, at just 152 persons p.a. – probably due to the older population profile. This accounts for less than half of the population change of 400 p.a. The main component of population growth is net in-migration, both domestic and international. The demand for additional housing will be largely driven by this in-migration.

3.21 It is likely that people who move house over long distances, to a different local authority area, are more footloose than those who move over local authorities; in other words, they have a larger area of search. Therefore, the projections suggest that the area of search we are seeking to define will be larger for RBWM than for Slough.

# 4 MIGRATION

## Introduction

4.1 In this chapter, we aim to identify the areas that have the closest migration links to the core districts. Those are the areas that in-migrants to the core districts come from, and the areas that out-migrants from the core districts go to. Other things being equal, those origins and destinations may approximate the area of search we are looking for. That is because, as stated earlier, we reasonably assume that past housing choices are a guide to future housing searches.

4.2 However, we must be careful in interpreting the data, because other things may not be equal. In particular, past migration flows do not only reflect the advantages of different locations, but also the nature of previous housing provision, if any. This is especially important in relation to small-area data. For example, a small geographical area such as an MSOA[7] might be anchored by a small village. But if a new urban extension or new community is delivered in the same area, the numbers and mix of people who move in will be quite different in the future.

4.3 This caveat is especially important around Slough and RBWM, because new homes are built at scale in the sub-region they may be quite different in character from the existing housing stock.

4.4 Another factor that impacts greatly on housing choices, and may change in future, is accessibility. Our analysis, like the previous studies discussed earlier, uses migration data from the 2011 census, which is the only available source. In interpreting those data, we need to consider if new infrastructure is leading to any major changes in accessibility across the sub-region. This question is addressed in the next section.

## Transport infrastructure

4.5 The strategic infrastructure in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire is largely unchanged since census day, with two major exceptions: the Great Western main line has been electrified, and Crossrail is expected to open from 2020 onward.

4.6 In relation to the Great Western main line, we have looked at government statistics to see if there is any evidence that electrification has increased passenger numbers. If electrification had led to changes in commuting, one might expect that it is also changing migration and hence the demand for homes, as more people want to live or work in places that benefit from the improved rail service.

4.7 But Figure 4.1 below suggests that this is not the case. The chart shows changing numbers of station users in the 10 years to 2017/18. It compares the Great West main line stations of Slough and Maidenhead with the South East total. There has been no noticeable increase in usage at either station relative to the general trend.

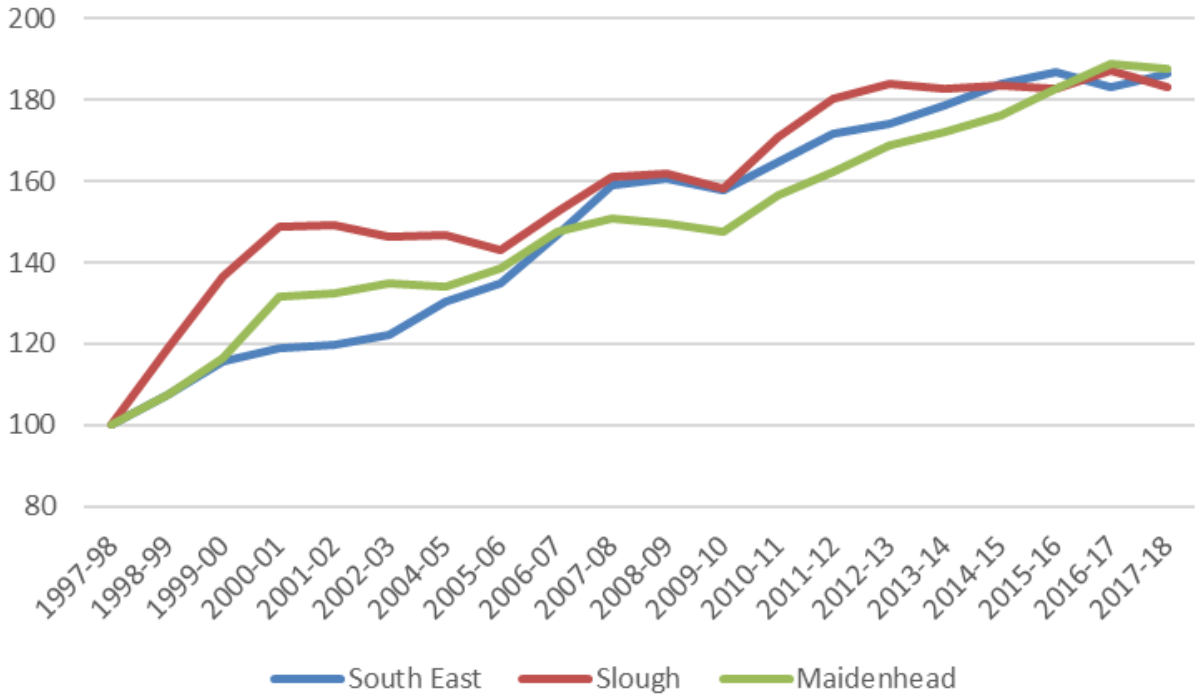
[7] MSOAs are defined at 2.7 above.

This suggests that electrification has not had a large dramatic impact on travel behaviour.

**Figure 4.1 Estimates of station usage**

Numbers of people entering, exiting and changing at stations

Index 1997-98 = 100




Source: Office or Rail and Road, Estimates of station usage
https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates

4.8 As Slough and Maidenhead are also on Crossrail (the Elizabeth Line), the same data set also suggests that the imminent arrival of Crossrail has not led to any marked changes in traffic. Part of the reason may be that Crossrail largely duplicates existing links, making them more efficient and increasing capacity, but does not create new routes. It could also be that the connections to the station, especially new connecting local public transport, is not yet in place. There is an overarching caveat that all the data we have available reflects today's market and links. Should a new tram network be delivered, or high quality 'linking' routes then the patterns may change. But we are still slightly surprised that such a large investment in the network which is well advertised has not boosted travel yet.

4.9 There is some anecdotal evidence that Crossrail is beginning to impact on housing demand, it may be driving some of the recent house price inflation in the sub-region (we discuss house prices in Chapter 6) and perhaps attracting a new type of commuter to the area. Property market agents report that Crossrail is an attractor, but it only benefits a small geographical area around each station. For people who live further away, the extra time taken to travel to a Crossrail station would offset the time saving from using the new line.

4.10 For the future, the impact of Crossrail must be a matter of opinion. Our own view is that it may attract more people to the area it serves, but it is unlikely to fundamentally change the broad areas of search that those people consider in looking for a home. The challenge is accessing the stations, and the added time needed to access the 'railhead' which will dilute the impact – except where new homes are very accessible to the stations.

# Migration within the core districts

4.11 The tables below show house moves beginning and ending in the core districts in the 12 months to census day. For each district, they show two measures of containment. Origin containment is the proportion of house moves originating in the district that also end in the district. Destination containment is the proportion of house moves ending in the district that also originates in the district.

### Table 4.1 Migration to and from Slough

In the 12 months to census day, 2011

| | **Destination (moves to)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (moves from)** | **Slough** | Elsewhere | Total moves from Slough | **Origin containment** |
| Slough | 9,789 | 6,273 | 16,062 | **61%** |
| Elsewhere | 6,084 | | | |
| Total moves to Slough | 15,873 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **62%** | | | |

Source: ONS

### Table 4.2 Migration to and from RBWM

In the 12 months to census day, 2011

| | **Destination (moves to)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (moves from)** | **W&M** | Elsewhere | Total moves from the area | **Origin containment** |
| W&M | 7,055 | 8,754 | 15,809 | **45%** |
| Elsewhere | 8,322 | | | |
| Total moves to the area | 15,377 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **46%** | | | |

Source: ONS

4.12 Containment ratios are around 60% in Slough, against 45% in RBWM. Specifically, the destination ratios tell us that in 2010-11 62% of the people who moved into a home in Slough were local residents, already living in the district; whereas of people moving into a home in RBWM only 46% were local residents.

4.13 The broad message is that RBWM is a more open housing market, where people are more footloose, than in Slough. The demographic projections discussed in Chapter two predicted that this would be the case in the future. The census data reinforce the message, telling us that the same is true of the past.

4.14 For completeness, in the table below we show containment ratios for South Bucks.

**Table 4.3 Migration to and from South Bucks**
In the 12 months to census day, 2011

| | **Destination (moves to)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (moves from)** | **South Bucks** | Elsewhere | Total moves from the area | **Origin containment** |
| South Bucks | 1,653 | 4,675 | 6,328 | **26%** |
| Elsewhere | 4,457 | | | |
| Total moves to the area | 6,110 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **27%** | | | |

Source: ONS

4.15 South Bucks is an even more open housing market than RBWM, with containment ratios just above 25%. This again dovetails with the analysis above. In the past, and probable future, homes is South Bucks are 'needed' to accommodate migrated housing demand from other districts.

# Migration between districts

## Inflows to the core districts

4.16 Table 4.4 below shows the origin of people who moved to each of the core districts in the 12 months to census day. It also shows data for South Bucks, for reference. London boroughs are highlighted in red. As discussed above, in earlier evidence base studies London was set aside, so the strength of links to London was concealed.

4.17 For a person moving to Slough, the two most likely districts of origin were the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Hounslow, accounting for 690 and 555 in-movers respectively. RBWM, South Bucks and the London Borough of Ealing come next, with numbers around 400-500. Other origins show much lower numbers.

4.18 For RBWM, the picture is quite different. The top origin is Slough, followed some distance behind by other adjoining districts, comprising Bracknell Forest, Wycombe South Bucks, Runnymede and Wokingham. London boroughs are further down the ranking.

### Table 4.4 Top 20 origins of migrants to the core districts

In the 12 months to census day, 2011

| | Destination (moves to) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Slough | | RBWM | | South Bucks | |
| Origin (moves from) | | | | | | |
| 1 | Hillingdon | 690 | Slough | 661 | Slough | 648 |
| 2 | Hounslow | 555 | Bracknell Forest | 473 | Hillingdon | 548 |
| 3 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 491 | Wycombe | 438 | Chiltern | 325 |
| 4 | South Bucks | 429 | South Bucks | 359 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 298 |
| 5 | Ealing | 382 | Runnymede | 319 | Wycombe | 298 |
| 6 | Reading | 154 | Wokingham | 230 | Ealing | 214 |
| 7 | Wycombe | 142 | Hillingdon | 222 | Hounslow | 127 |
| 8 | Bracknell Forest | 134 | Spelthorne | 212 | Westminster,City of Londor | 77 |
| 9 | Spelthorne | 110 | Hounslow | 210 | Aylesbury Vale | 59 |
| 10 | Birmingham | 89 | Ealing | 185 | Brent | 54 |
| 11 | Harrow | 85 | Richmond upon Thames | 168 | Hammersmith and Fulham | 53 |
| 12 | Wokingham | 77 | Reading | 162 | Harrow | 48 |
| 13 | Brent | 74 | Wandsworth | 157 | Wandsworth | 47 |
| 14 | Newham | 71 | Surrey Heath | 149 | Merton | 41 |
| 15 | Richmond upon Thames | 62 | Westminster,City of London | 110 | Spelthorne | 40 |
| 16 | Tower Hamlets | 61 | Hammersmith and Fulham | 97 | Wokingham | 38 |
| 17 | Croydon | 59 | South Oxfordshire | 88 | Three Rivers | 37 |
| 18 | Redbridge | 50 | West Berkshire | 78 | Bracknell Forest | 34 |
| 19 | Barnet | 50 | Oxford | 74 | Richmond upon Thames | 34 |
| 20 | Waltham Forest | 48 | Lambeth | 74 | Oxford | 34 |

Source: ONS. The table excludes people who moved house within local authority areas.

## Outflows from the core districts

4.19 Table 4.5 shows the destinations of people who moved out of the core districts in the year preceding the census. Again, London boroughs are shown in red, and South Bucks is included for reference.

4.20 For people who moved out of Slough, the top destinations by far are the adjoining districts of RBWM and South Bucks. The other adjoining local authority area, London Borough of Hillingdon, comes a distant third. Comparing this with the origins in the previous table, we see that Slough's relationships with London boroughs is very much one way: thus only 322 people left Slough for Hillingdon, whereas 690 people left Hillingdon for Slough. Between Slough and its other immediate neighbours, relationships are also asymmetrical, but in the opposite way: thus 661 people left Slough for RBWM, whereas only 491 people left RBWM for Slough.

4.21 The fact that Slough is firstly highly self-contained, and then where people move they tend to move locally, would align with most of Sloughs need being locally derived –

Children growing up in Slough and looking for homes where their social and economic links are retained.

4.22 For people who moved out of RBWM, again the picture is quite different. The top seven destinations are adjoining districts, followed by Reading (the eights adjoining district, Spelthorne, ranks slightly lower). There are significant outflows to London, spread between many boroughs. Part of this pattern will simply be geography – the borough has more neighbours and several towns which are close to different neighbouring authority areas. But it does suggest that 'need' arising from RBWM has more candidate Council areas than available to Slough. Slough residents don't tend to 'hop over' RBWM (or South Bucks) and move to Wokingham for example.

## Table 4.5 Top 20 destinations of migrants from the core districts

In the 12 months to census day, 2011

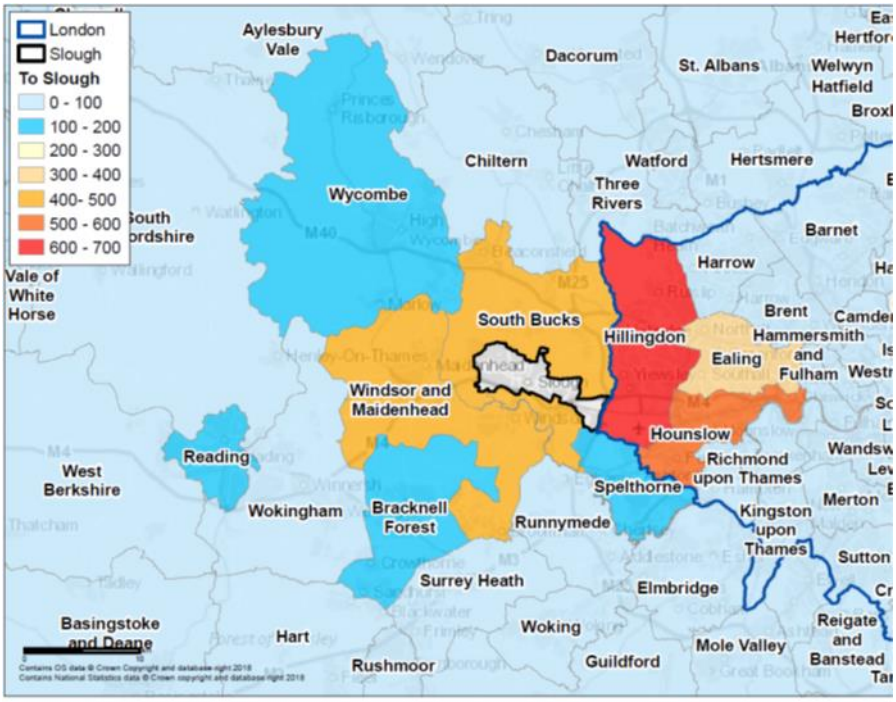
| | Origin (moves from) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Slough** | | **RBWM** | | **South Bucks** | |
| **Destination (moves to)** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 661 | Bracknell Forest | 642 | Wycombe | 533 |
| 2 | South Bucks | 648 | Slough | 491 | Slough | 429 |
| **3** | **Hillingdon** | **322** | Wycombe | 486 | Chiltern | 386 |
| 4 | Bracknell Forest | 196 | Wokingham | 355 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 359 |
| **5** | **Hounslow** | **190** | South Bucks | 298 | **Hillingdon** | **257** |
| 6 | Wycombe | 183 | Runnymede | 296 | Bracknell Forest | 84 |
| **7** | **Ealing** | **159** | Surrey Heath | 189 | **Ealing** | **82** |
| 8 | Wokingham | 155 | Reading | 165 | **Westminster,City of London** | **64** |
| 9 | Reading | 139 | **Wandsworth** | **135** | Aylesbury Vale | 63 |
| 10 | Spelthorne | 104 | Spelthorne | 129 | Wokingham | 59 |
| 11 | Birmingham | 98 | **Westminster,City of London** | **123** | Birmingham | 53 |
| 12 | Chiltern | 81 | South Oxfordshire | 123 | Three Rivers | 52 |
| 13 | Runnymede | 76 | Oxford | 121 | Oxford | 48 |
| 14 | Portsmouth | 64 | **Hammersmith and Fulham** | **117** | **Tower Hamlets** | **45** |
| 15 | Surrey Heath | 62 | **Richmond upon Thames** | **106** | **Hounslow** | **44** |
| 16 | Cherwell | 56 | **Hillingdon** | **101** | **Wandsworth** | **44** |
| 17 | Basingstoke and Deane | 50 | **Ealing** | **99** | Southampton | 42 |
| 18 | Leicester | 48 | West Berkshire | 97 | Reading | 41 |
| 19 | Oxford | 48 | **Hounslow** | **96** | Nottingham | 41 |
| **20** | **Westminster,City of London** | **46** | Wiltshire | 91 | **Hammersmith and Fulham** | **39** |

Source: ONS. The table excludes people who moved house within local authority areas.

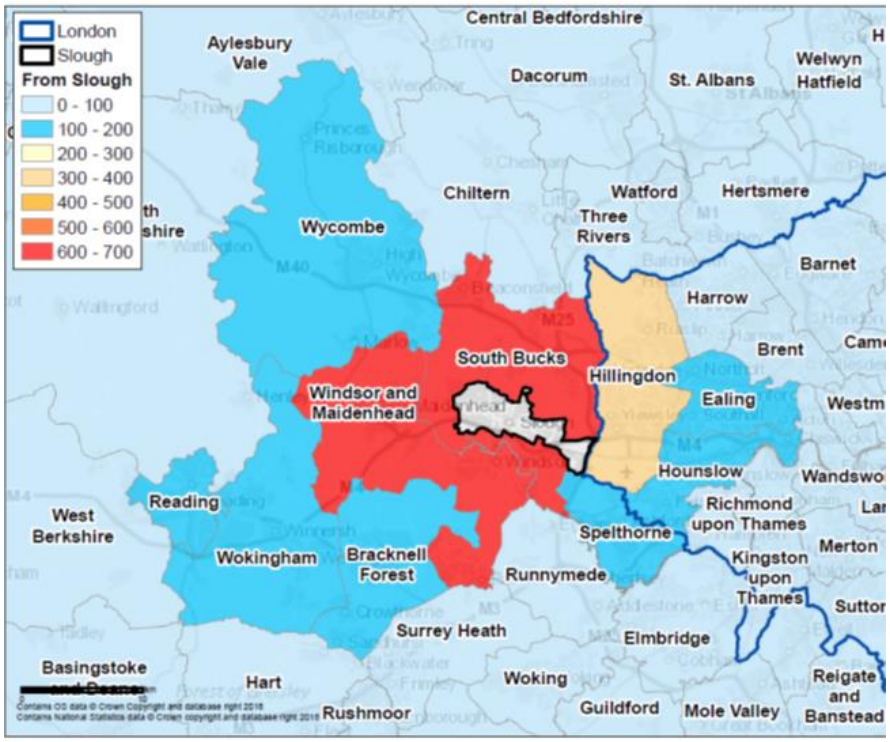
4.23 In the maps below we show both sets of data – origins and destinations.

## Figure 4.2 Migration to and from Slough

### To Slough



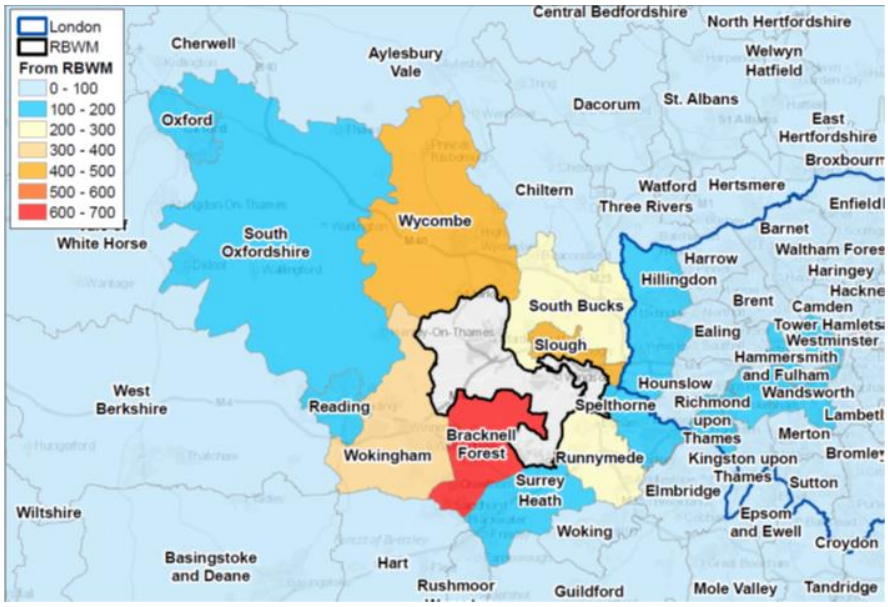

### From Slough



## Figure 4.3 Migration to and from RBWM

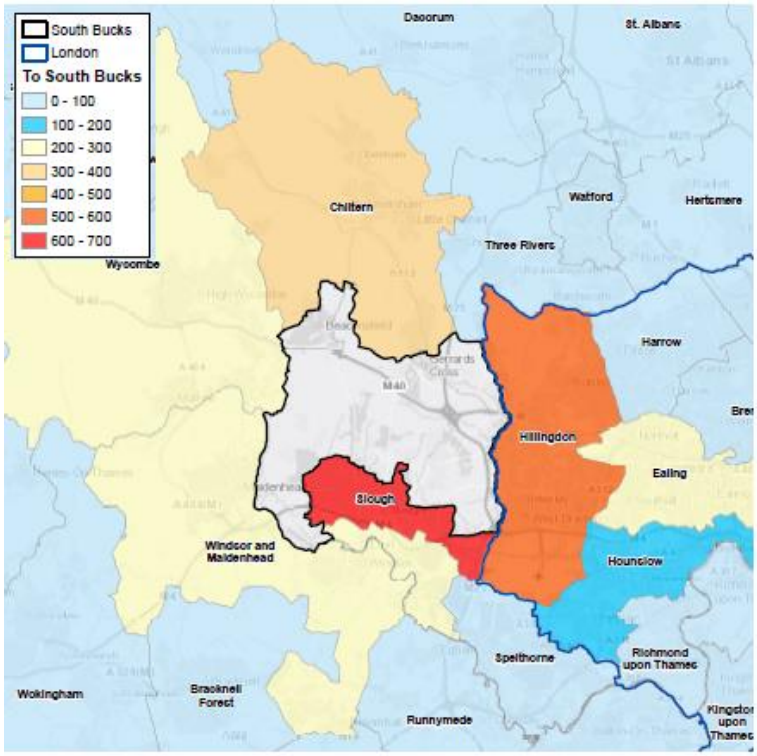
### To RBWM


### From RBWM

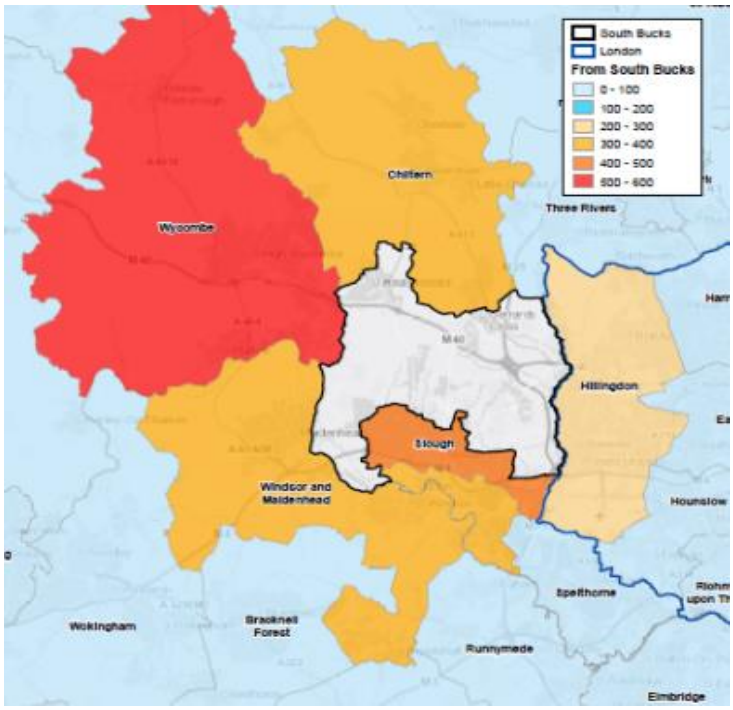


## Figure 4.4 Migration to and from South Bucks

### To South Bucks




### From South Bucks




4.1 From the maps it is easier to see that in all three local authorities there is a slight east to west migration flow. This is much stronger for Slough, where there are strong flows out of London; through Slough, into RBWM or South Bucks. A similar; but

weaker flow can be seen from RBWM westwards, through Berkshire and immediate Buckinghamshire neighbours.

4.2 Interestingly there are only weak flows, in either direction, between the core area and Surrey.

4.3 In summary, the analysis suggests that migration moves along 'wedges' coming out of London along the M4 and Great Western railway and again the M40 and Chiltern railway. But for Slough this move is much shorter, as the westwards flow 'bottles up' in the districts immediately west of Slough.

# Conclusion

4.4 In this chapter we have looked at the past housing choices of people who moved within, to and from the core districts in the past. The origins and destinations of those people are an indication of their areas of search, and hence the likely areas of search of future residents.

4.5 For Slough, the demographic evidence suggests that the area of search is relatively small. More than half of all house moves are contained within the district. For those people who do move house across district boundaries, choices are largely restricted to the two West London boroughs of Hillingdon and Hounslow, and the adjoining districts of RBWM and South Bucks. The predominant direction of travel is westward, from West London to Slough and from Slough to RBWM and South Bucks. This suggests that, if there were no capacity in Slough but there is capacity elsewhere, some people who would otherwise move to Slough would remain in West London, while others would move to South Bucks or RBWM instead.

4.6 For RBWM, the area of search seems considerably larger. More than half of house moves cross district boundaries, and the housing choices of those migrants are widely spread, across all or most of the eight adjoining districts.

4.7 In the next two chapters we explore some possible reasons for these preferences.

# 5 COMMUTING

## Introduction

5.1 This chapter analyses the journeys to work of people who live in the core districts, work in the core districts, or both. It draws on the same data source as the previous chapter, and is structured similarly to the analysis of migration in the last chapter. We start in the next section with commuting flows within each district, and then turn to flows between districts. All data relate to homes and workplaces at the time of the Census, in 2011. It excludes home workers and those with no fixed workplace.

## Commuting within districts

5.2 The tables below show commuting journeys starting and ending in the core district. As we did for migration, we show two measures of containment. Origin containment is the proportion of trips originating in the district that also end in the district. Destination containment is the proportion of trips ending in the district that also originates in the district.

### Table 5.1 Commuting to and from Slough, 2011

| | **Destination (trips to)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (trips from)** | **Slough** | Elsewhere | Total | **Origin containment** |
| Slough | 24,062 | 31,777 | 55,839 | **43%** |
| Elsewhere | 39,326 | | | |
| Total | 63,388 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **38%** | | | |

Source: ONS

### Table 5.2 Commuting to and from RBWM

| | **Destination (trips to)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (trips from)** | **RBWM** | Elsewhere | Total | **Origin containment** |
| RBWM | 23,072 | 34,522 | 57,594 | **40%** |
| Elsewhere | 37,051 | | | |
| Total | 60,123 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **38%** | | | |

Source: ONS

5.3 Slough and RBWM have similar containment ratios, around 40% both for origins and destinations. Thus, some 40% of workers who live in each district also work in the

same district, and conversely some 40% of workers who work in each district also live in the same district.

**Table 5.3 Commuting to and from South Bucks**

| | Destination (trips to) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Origin (trips from)** | **South Bucks** | Elsewhere | Total | **Origin containment** |
| South Bucks | 4,819 | 20,401 | 25,220 | **19%** |
| Elsewhere | 20,619 | | | |
| Total | 25,438 | | | |
| **Destination containment** | **19%** | | | |

Source: ONS

5.4 South Bucks is a much more open labour market, with containment of just 19%.

# Commuting between districts

## Inflows to the core districts

### *District-level analysis*

5.5 Table 5.4 shows the district of residence of people who commute into the core districts across administrative boundaries. As before, London boroughs are shown in red.

5.6 The two core districts are closely linked. RBWM is the main origin for people who commute into Slough, just as Slough is the main origin for people who commute out into RBWM. Also, these two flows are roughly equal, at around 6,000 people.

5.7 In other ways, the two core districts are quite different:

- For commuters into Slough, after RBWM the main areas of residence in order are South Bucks and the West London boroughs of Hillingdon and Hounslow. Next in the ranking come Wycombe, Bracknell Forest and another West London borough, Ealing.
- For commuters into RBWM, Slough is followed in the ranking by three immediate neighbours – Bracknell Forest, Wokingham and Wycombe. South Bucks comes next, followed by Reading, then more of RBWM's immediate neighbours. London boroughs are well down the list.

## Table 5.4 Top 20 origins of commuting to the core districts, 2011

| | Destination (trips to) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Slough** | | **RBWM** | | **South Bucks** | |
| **Origin (trips from)** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 5,865 | Slough | 6,380 | Slough | 3,486 |
| 2 | South Bucks | 3,618 | Bracknell Forest | 4,910 | Wycombe | 3,222 |
| 3 | Hillingdon | 3,046 | Wokingham | 3,124 | Hillingdon | 2,046 |
| 4 | Hounslow | 2,172 | Wycombe | 2,983 | Chiltern | 2,030 |
| 5 | Wycombe | 2,058 | South Bucks | 1,868 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 1,615 |
| 6 | Bracknell Forest | 1,878 | Reading | 1,361 | Ealing | 564 |
| 7 | Ealing | 1,831 | Surrey Heath | 1,079 | Aylesbury Vale | 470 |
| 8 | Wokingham | 1,767 | Runnymede | 986 | Three Rivers | 418 |
| 9 | Spelthorne | 1,416 | Hillingdon | 826 | Bracknell Forest | 335 |
| 10 | Reading | 1,052 | Spelthorne | 722 | Wokingham | 333 |
| 11 | Chiltern | 738 | South Oxfordshire | 699 | Hounslow | 327 |
| 12 | Runnymede | 736 | Ealing | 642 | Harrow | 308 |
| 13 | Richmond upon Thames | 571 | West Berkshire | 611 | Dacorum | 274 |
| 14 | West Berkshire | 518 | Hounslow | 598 | Brent | 223 |
| 15 | Harrow | 497 | Chiltern | 462 | South Oxfordshire | 209 |
| 16 | South Oxfordshire | 485 | Hart | 458 | Richmond upon Thames | 188 |
| 17 | Surrey Heath | 437 | Richmond upon Thames | 433 | Watford | 178 |
| 18 | Brent | 359 | Basingstoke and Deane | 386 | Spelthorne | 175 |
| 19 | Basingstoke and Deane | 347 | Woking | 331 | Reading | 156 |
| 20 | Aylesbury Vale | 338 | Rushmoor | 304 | Westminster,City of London | 130 |

Source: ONS. The table excludes people who live and work in the same district.

5.8 The point of this information is that it tells us where people who work in the core districts might look for a home, if they cannot find one in those core districts. Again the answer varies between the two districts:

- For Slough, the analysis suggest that the main area of search comprises RBWM, South Bucks and part of West London.
- For RBWM, it covers Slough and many of RBWM's immediate neighbours, in a 360-degree pattern.

### *Small-area analysis*

5.9 For better understanding of local labour markets, we have also analysed finer-grained commuting data, showing flows between MSOAs – which as noted earlier are geographical areas much smaller than local authority districts[8].

5.10 In the map below there is a pie chart superimposed on each MSOA, which shows where the workers resident in that MSOA work:

[8] In this report we do not analyse small-area migration data, because the numbers are subject to confidentiality restrictions and may be too small to be reliable. This is because census migration data relate to house moves in a single 12-month period, and only a small proportion of people move house in this short period of time. In contrast, commuting data from the census are more useful, because they relate to the whole working population, and hence show much higher numbers.

- Each pie represents the total number of resident workers in the MSOA.
- Slices of the pies show how those residents' workplaces are distributed between different districts. A red slice shows the proportion the MSOA's resident workers who work in in Slough, a blue slice shows the proportion who work in RBWM and so forth.
- Thus, a red slice for example shows the probability that a worker living in the MSOA will work in Slough. The larger the red slice, the stronger will be the argument that they will work in Slough.

5.11 The map focuses on those districts that have substantial numbers of residents working in Slough, RBWM and South Bucks (derived from our district analysis above). Other districts are excluded from the calculation. Below, we discuss in turn the districts shown on the map.

5.12 In our core districts, Slough and RBWM:

- Each MSOA exports a high proportion of its working residents to the other core district, and those proportions are similar. Contrary to what might be expected, people who live close to the boundary between the two districts are no more likely to commute across that boundary than those living further away. The likely explanation is that the river Thames is a barrier to movement, so the 'crow-flies' distances shown on the map do not measure actual journeys to work; a trip between two adjacent MSOAs might be much further than it looks, because it needs to go over a bridge.
- Parts of Slough also export high proportions of workers to West London.

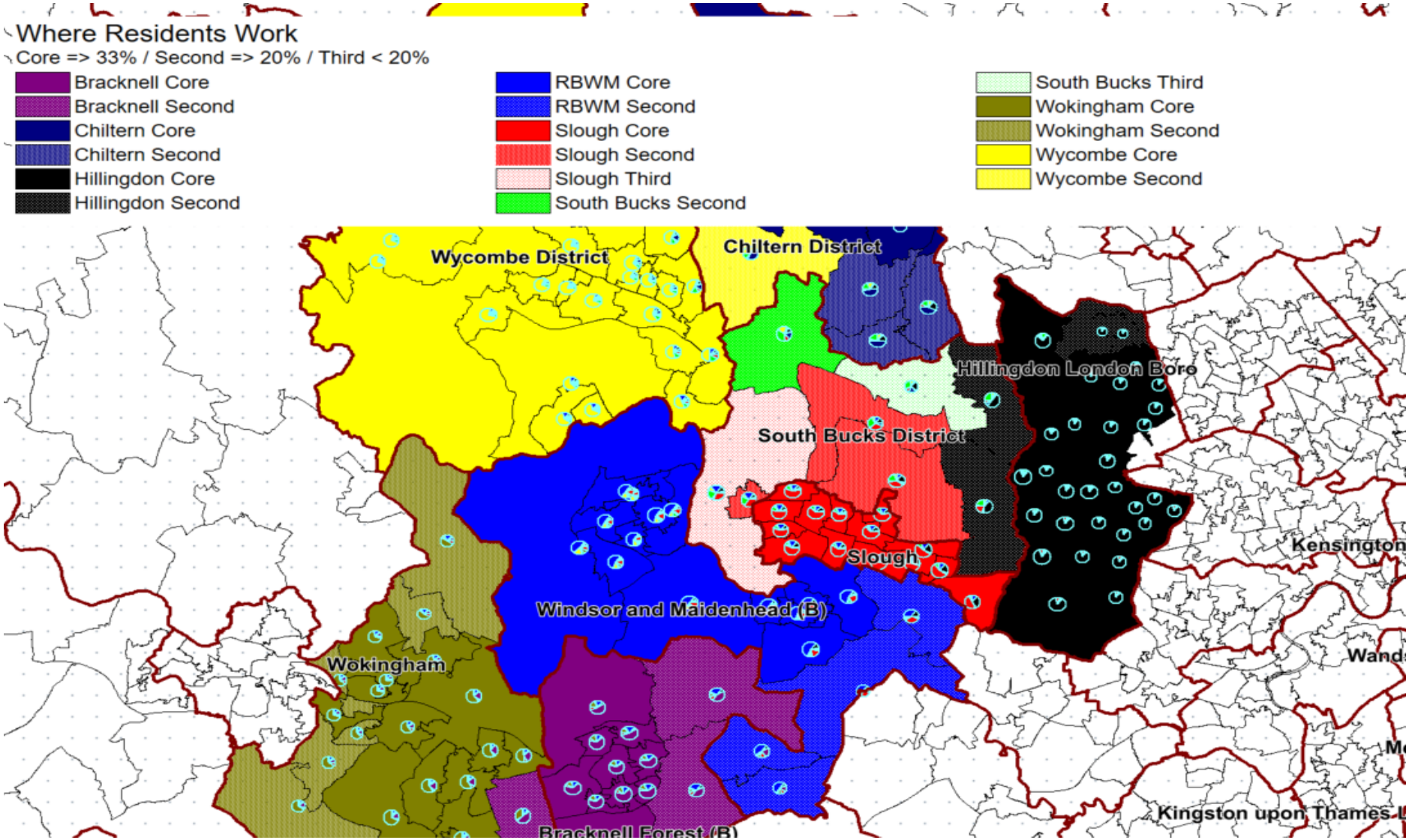
5.13 By contrast, in South Bucks commuting destinations do vary across the district. In parts of the district a high proportion of residents work in South Bucks itself, while other parts export high proportions to Slough, and the eastern part also looks to Hillingdon. As noted elsewhere in this report the strength of the London links were suppressed in earlier HMA work but for the eastern side of the district Hillingdon is much more important than either Slough or any out of London district.

5.14 In Bracknell Forest, for all MSOAs the main workplace of residents is Bracknell Forest itself. But in the east of the district nearly as many residents work in RBWM as Bracknell Forest.

5.15 In Wycombe, all MSOAs export low proportions of workers to the core districts, even in the area close to the boundary. The obvious explanation is that the river Thames is a barrier to movement. But in the Marlow and Bourne End areas, some residents do commute south into Slough and RBWM. These areas are close to bridges, and also they are rail-connected to Maidenhead but not to High Wycombe.

5.16 Finally in Wokingham, all MSOAs export low proportions of residents to our core districts. The likely explanation is that Wokingham is part of the Greater Reading labour market, so people who live in Wokingham are more likely to work in Reading.

## Figure 5.1 Small-area commuting




Source: ONS, PBA

5.17 In conclusion, the small-area analysis has refined the district-level analysis in the last section. In particular:

- It confirms that the two core districts, Slough and RBWM, are closely linked to each other in their entirety.
- It shows that South Bucks in divided, so only its southern part is likely to be part of our area of search.
- It suggests that sections of Bracknell and Wycombe districts are closely linked to our core districts, and hence may be part of our area of search, even though most of Bracknell and Wycombe are not.
- It also suggests that Wokingham is not part of our area of search, because its strongest commuting links are with Reading.
- Commuting links to the Surrey districts are weak

## Outflows from the core districts

5.18 Table 5.5 shows the workplaces of people that commute out of the core districts. RBWM is the main destination for people who commute out of Slough, just as Slough is the main destination for people who commute out of RBWM. Otherwise, the two core districts are quite different again:

- For Slough, the second destination on the list (after RBWM) is the London Borough of Hillingdon, followed by South Bucks, which in turn is followed by three further London authorities. Hillingdon accounts for around 5,500 out-commuters, almost as many as RWBM. It is likely that many of those out-commuters work at Heathrow airport.
- For RBWM, the second-ranking destination (after Slough) is also Hillingdon, though the borough sends to Hillingdon less than half the number of commuters that it sends to Slough. Other main destinations comprise RBWM's immediate neighbours (except for Spelthorne, which ranks lower than the others), Hounslow and Reading.

## Table 5.5 Top 20 destinations of commuting from the core districts, 2011

| | Origin (trips from) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Slough** | | **RBWM** | | **South Bucks** | |
| **Destination (trips to)** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Windsor and Maidenhead | 6,380 | Slough | 5,865 | Slough | 3,618 |
| **2** | **Hillingdon** | **5,458** | **Hillingdon** | **2,868** | **Hillingdon** | **3,478** |
| 3 | South Bucks | 3,486 | **Westminster,City of London** | **2,857** | Windsor and Maidenhead | 1,868 |
| **4** | **Hounslow** | **2,148** | Wycombe | 2,810 | **Westminster,City of London** | **1,750** |
| **5** | **Westminster,City of London** | **1,513** | Bracknell Forest | 2,135 | Wycombe | 1,600 |
| **6** | **Ealing** | **1,200** | Wokingham | 1,692 | Chiltern | 1,050 |
| 7 | Wycombe | 1,184 | South Bucks | 1,615 | **Ealing** | **894** |
| 8 | Reading | 910 | Runnymede | 1,554 | **Hounslow** | **678** |
| 9 | Runnymede | 777 | **Hounslow** | **1,489** | **Camden** | **319** |
| 10 | Bracknell Forest | 751 | Reading | 1,297 | **Hammersmith and Fulham** | **288** |
| 11 | Spelthorne | 542 | Spelthorne | 793 | **Brent** | **256** |
| 12 | Wokingham | 517 | West Berkshire | 542 | Bracknell Forest | 249 |
| 13 | Chiltern | 461 | **Camden** | **530** | Spelthorne | 234 |
| **14** | **Hammersmith and Fulham** | **377** | **Ealing** | **509** | Runnymede | 233 |
| **15** | **Camden** | **340** | South Oxfordshire | 478 | Wokingham | 228 |
| **16** | **Brent** | **280** | Surrey Heath | 475 | Tower Hamlets | 218 |
| 17 | West Berkshire | 271 | **Hammersmith and Fulham** | **449** | Reading | 213 |
| **18** | **Richmond upon Thames** | **247** | **Tower Hamlets** | **345** | Aylesbury Vale | 187 |
| **19** | **Tower Hamlets** | **232** | Rushmoor | 311 | Three Rivers | 184 |
| 20 | Surrey Heath | 200 | **Richmond upon Thames** | **310** | **Harrow** | **164** |

Source: ONS. The table excludes people who live and work in the same district.

5.19 Comparing the above outflows with the inflows discussed earlier, we can see that the net flow is predominantly from west to east. This is especially marked for Slough, which in net terms is a major supplier of labour to West London, and specifically Hillingdon: some 5,500 people commute from Slough to Hillingdon, while only 3,500 people commute from Hillingdon to Slough.

5.20 For RBWM, the west to east pattern is weaker. For example, roughly equal numbers of people commute westwards from RBWM to Reading as commute eastwards from Reading to RBWM. It is perhaps surprising that Reading is not a main destination – nor is Wokingham because these are both on the M4 / Great Western Railway. But the eastwards London 'pull' factor appears to be stronger than the westwards pull towards Greater Reading.

5.21 For South Bucks the London pull factor also appears stronger than the other Buckinghamshire districts.

5.22 Wycombe district attracts a modest number of workers from all three districts which would be expected given the proximity of High Wycombe, the Southern Wycombe Districts towns and the good motorway links.

5.23 The point of the above analysis is that it tells us about the likely area of search of people who would prefer to live in the core districts, but cannot find a home there. Such people will not wish to live in places that are too far from their workplaces.

5.24 We have found that, for those residents of the core districts who commute out, the main direction of commuting is east. This is especially true of Slough, because many of its residents work in Hillingdon (probably concentrated at Heathrow Airport). The implication is that areas of search, especially for people who commute out of Slough, do not extend west of RBWM into Wokingham and Reading. Given the fact that in previous work Berkshire was considered a HMA or FEMA the weak commuting links are slightly surprising. As are the reasonable cross boundary links between Berkshire and Wycombe district. For Wycombe district this may be a product of a very large district

where the local links on the ‘edges’ have previously been lost when considering the district as a whole.

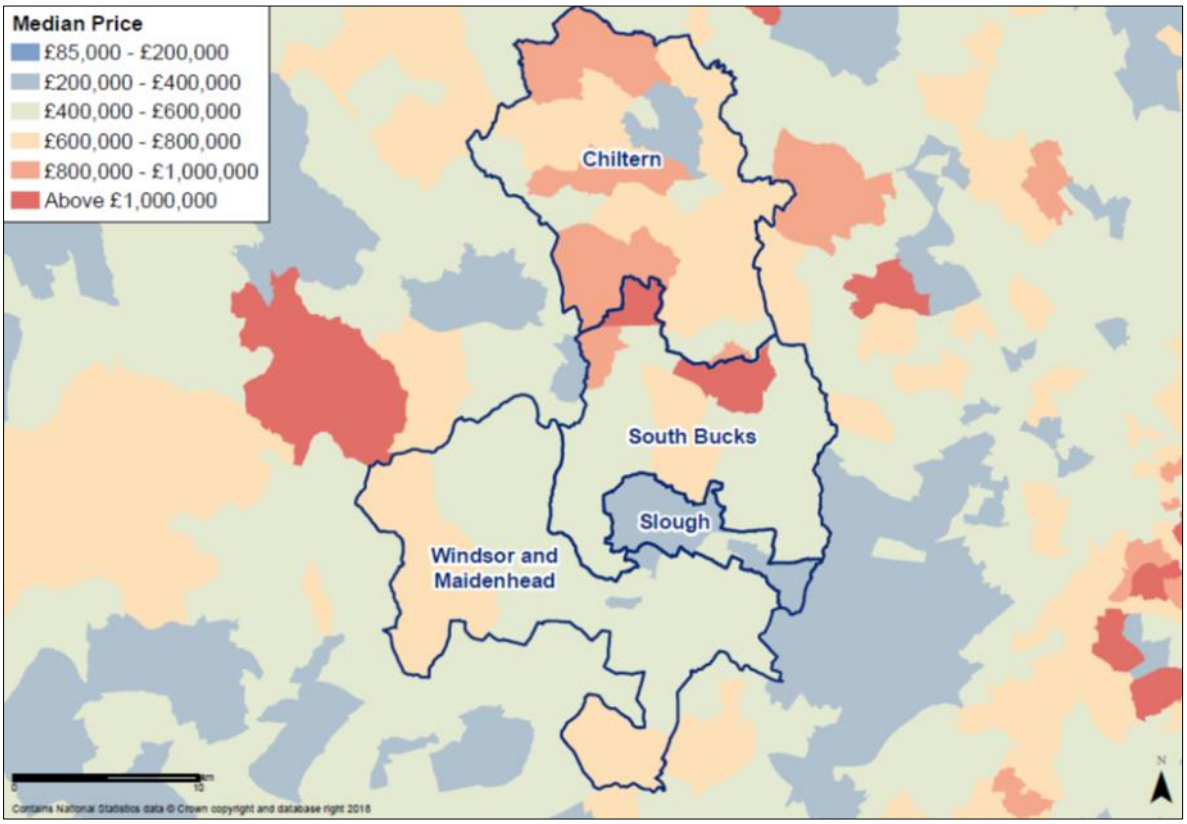
5.25 None of the data shows strong links southwards into (or from) Surrey – there are obviously local links but the worker economy of surrey appears to be different to that in our core area.

# 6 THE COST OF HOUSING

6.1 As well as places from which people can get to work, the area of search will comprise places that people can afford. In this chapter we aim to assess what those places are, by analysing housing house prices and affordability in the core districts.

6.2 The map below shows median house prices by ward.

**Figure 6.1 Median house prices, average 2016-18**

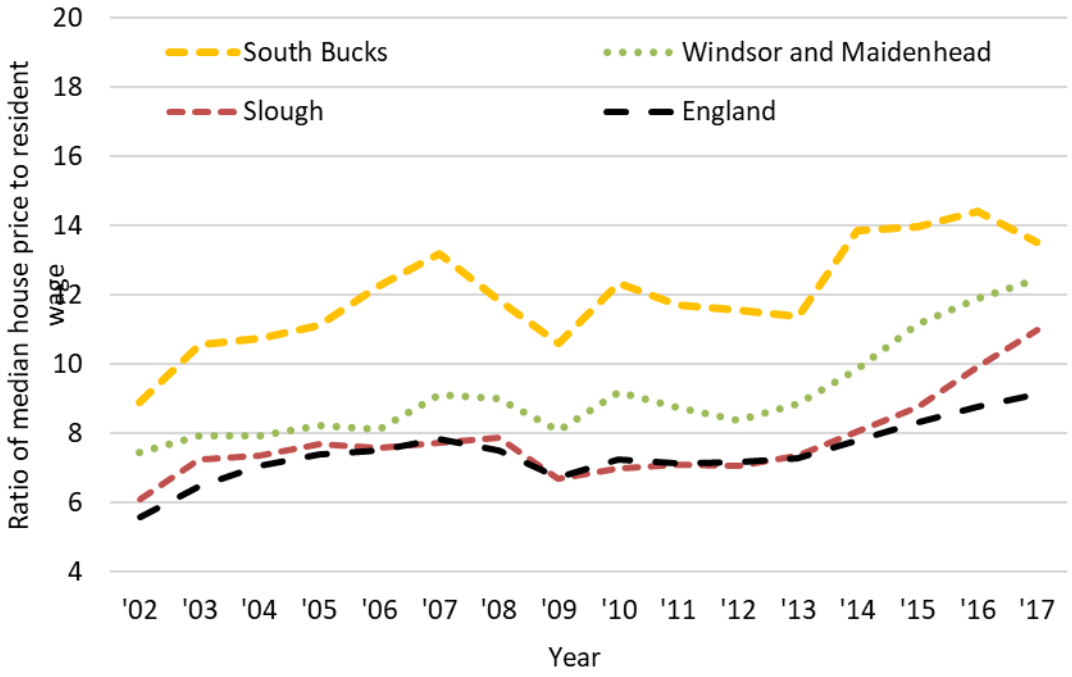



Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas

6.3 Slough is part of a relatively low-price area, where the average is below £200,000. The area extends into the London boroughs of Hillingdon and Hounslow, covering towns such as Hayes, West Drayton and Feltham. Prices in RBWM, South Bucks and surrounding areas are almost invariably higher.

6.4 What housing people can afford to buy of course depends on incomes as well as prices. Figure 6.2 below shows the ratio of the median house price to median resident earnings - a variation on the affordability ratio defined by the government, which uses workplace earnings.

**Figure 6.2 Ratio of median house price to median earnings, 2018, core districts, South Bucks and England**



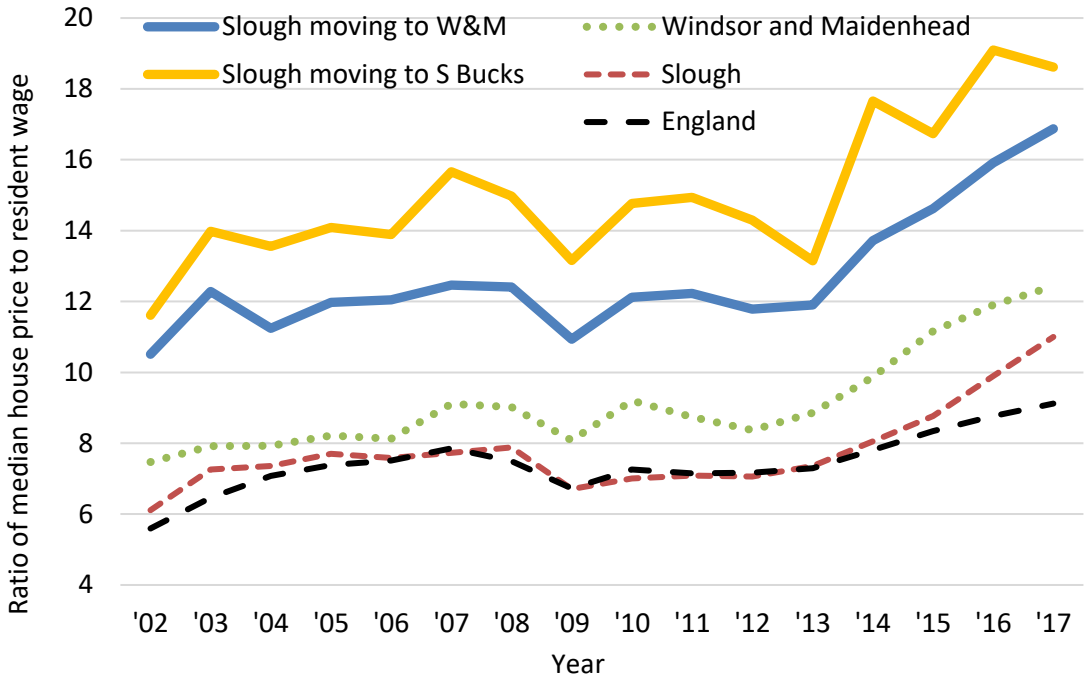

Source: ONS

6.5 The ratio for RBWM has been consistently higher than the national average, suggesting that homes in the borough are relatively unaffordable; as is South Bucks. Slough's ratio has been consistently below both the others. Thus, homes in Slough on average are more affordable than homes in RBWM or South Bucks. The reason is that, while both house prices and earnings are lower in Slough, the earnings gap is smaller than the price gap.

6.6 For our purposes what the data very clearly shows is that the average Slough resident cannot afford to access market housing in either RBWM or South Bucks at the current prevailing house prices.

6.7 This is shown in Figure 6.3 below – which reproduces Figure 6.2 but adds a further ratio, based on RBWM and South Bucks prices but Slough earnings. This ratio, labelled 'Slough moving to RBWM', shows the affordability of the median home in RBWM to the median resident of Slough. This ratio is, and always has been, very high: on the latest available data, it is 17, almost twice the England average.

**Figure 6.3 Ratio of median house price to median earnings, 2018, core districts, England and move from Slough to RBWM and South Bucks**




Source: ONS, PBA

6.8 In relation to our area of search, this suggests that for the typical Slough resident the typical home in RBMW is very unaffordable. While they can buy a home in Slough for around 12 times his or her average earnings, for a home in RBWM they would have to pay 17 times their average earnings (slightly more for South Bucks). From the price map at Figure 6.1, we can see that the same applies to the typical home in the surrounding areas of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

6.9 By contrast, the median resident of RBWM (or South Bucks) has a much wider area of search. He or she can buy a home not only in the borough itself, but across much of Buckinghamshire and Berkshire (the areas coloured green on the map), at a similar affordability ratio to RBWM (or South Bucks).

6.10 This of course does not mean that no one can afford to move from Slough to RBWM and neighbouring areas. Some people do make that move, as shown earlier in this report. This is partly because some combined households incomes are significantly more than the median earnings, and some homes are significantly cheaper than the median home. Many people also have sizable equity in their existing homes which makes this move easier.

6.11 But for the future what the analysis warns is that care is needed when looking to meet Sloughs housing needs – because the average Slough resident cannot access the average house in the neighbouring districts. To meet Sloughs needs new homes have to be offered at a price that broadly matches their current ability to afford property. This means the new homes need to provide in locations where they could pick up prevailing house prices from Slough and probability need to be large enough to create their own critical mass as opposed scattered to small scale developments which simply pick up the prevailing local house prices.

6.12 While some people who would otherwise live in Slough will be able to afford those high prices, most will not. In the past, people who moved from Slough to more expensive areas were likely members of the district's affluent minority. But in the future, as Slough runs out of capacity, it will also need to find alternative housing locations for the lower-earning majority.

6.13 In relation to our present topic, the house price analysis suggests that for the typical resident of Slough the area of search will be quite small. To the east, it will extend into parts of West London, where house prices are similarly low. But to the west, where prices are higher, the area is likely to extend only to the immediate surroundings of Slough.

# 7 DRAWING THE AREA OF SEARCH

## Findings

7.1 Above, we have explored demographic profiles, migration and commuting as three main areas of evidence on housing choices and the factors that drive such choices. No single strand of analysis provides the whole answer to our question. To define the area of search, where homes can meet the 'need' arising from capacity constrained districts, we need to consider the evidence in the round.

7.2 In regard to migration, the evidence points firstly to Slough being very self contained, particularly given its small geographical area (table 4.1). There is also some evidence of a broad east-to-west flow, so people move from London to Slough and then from Slough into immediately adjoining districts; and people living in Slough also move to areas in those adjoining districts to the west (fig 4.4 and 4.5). In contrast, commuting predominantly flows from west to east as commuters travel back to jobs in London.

7.3 This suggests that, for the eastern part of our core area around Slough, access to London is a critical requirement for residents. Access to Slough itself is also important, as much of future housing demand would come from the existing population of the borough, which is growing strongly.

7.4 Migrants out of Slough may have moved previously from London, or they may be born in Slough. Either way, the evidence suggests that they are reluctant to move much further west. This could be because high proportions of them work in Slough or West London, they have family ties in those areas, and / or they cannot afford the higher prices prevailing in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

7.5 Considered in the round, this evidence suggests that the future housing needs of Slough are best met:

- As close to Slough as possible
- In areas where house prices are, or house prices in new developments could be, no higher than in Slough
- Close to areas that Slough residents commute out to.

7.6 These criteria generate a very small 'narrow area of search', restricted to adjoining local authority areas. Those areas include the London Borough of Hillingdon to the east where areas close to Slough have similarly low house prices, and where many Slough residents work. To help meet Slough's housing need, Hillingdon does not have to take net migration from Slough. It will still be helping to accommodate Slough's needs if the net migration outflow from Hillingdon to Slough is reduced. If more housing is provided in Hillingdon this is the likely result, because many of the borough's residents who moved to Slough but still work in Hillingdon would probably have stayed there if they had found a suitable home,

7.7 Turning to the future housing needs of RBWM, our research shows that potential residents of the borough have more choice (e.g. due to financial and employment status) about where they can move to than for Slough. This is partly because many of the area's additional residents will be migrants from other local authority areas, and partly because RBWM's migration and commuting links are wide-ranging, covering a 360-degree area outside of the borough, albeit bounded by Greater Reading in the west and the M40 and M3 corridors to the north and south.

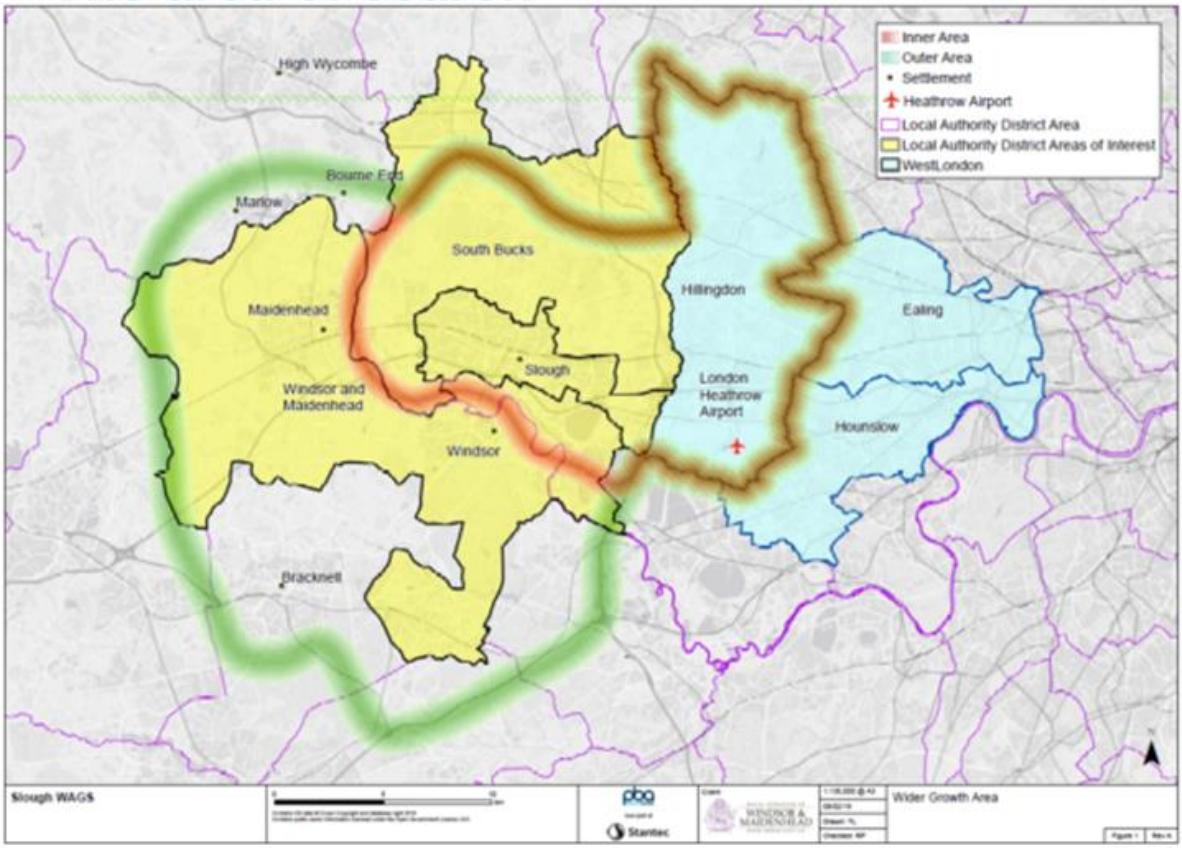
7.8 This suggests that for RBWM the area of search should be much larger than for Slough. The small-area commuting analysis suggests that such an area should extend into Bracknell Forest district, because parts of that district are linked to parts of RBWM, and it if provides relatively cheap housing, which could even meet the needs of Slough. It should also include parts of Wycombe district and small parts of Surrey. Those areas have only weak migration and commuting links with

RBWM, but the reason may be lack of connectivity – as major transport links mostly run east to west, except for the rail links to the south of Wycombe district (Marlow and Bourne End) and the Waterloo–Windsor / Reading rail links, which pass through a small part of Surrey before linking Ascot to Bracknell onwards.

7.9 To sum up, as well as the narrow area of search around Slough the analysis suggests that there is a second, wider area of search, which includes the narrow area but extends beyond it. In drawing the boundaries of that wider area, we have had pragmatic regard to the rail connections that run from West London through RBWM and including Bracknell Forest. We have also taken account of the rail links from Maidenhead to the towns in the South of Wycombe district. Because of those rail connections, the wide area extends into small parts of Wycombe district and Surrey. In both cases, it does not seem sensible to follow administrative boundaries when railway stations are only a few minutes apart and provide access to either the main towns within our core area or London (which we know is a very strong influence on the market here.)

7.10 As noted a number of times in this report – the data we have is influenced by current infrastructure, constraints and bottlenecks. It is also influenced by current house prices and affordability. Where land can be made available and accessible to our area of search, so that is shares many of the same features in terms of accessibility to jobs or social links, then this land cannot simply be excluded on the grounds that today's evidence does not show strong links.

**Figure 7.1 Areas of search: indicative boundaries**




# Recommendations

7.11 In summary, we recommend two areas of search, as shown in the map above:

- The narrow area has the best chance of meeting the needs of Slough. In addition to Slough borough, it includes the London Borough of Hillingdon and sections of RBWM and South Bucks district.

- The wider area is likely to meet the needs of some people to/from Slough and also RBWM. It covers the narrow area plus the rest of RBWM, much of Bracknell Forest district, and small parts of Wycombe district and Surrey.

7.12 The above areas should be the starting point when looking for housing land to help meet the needs of our core area. Any supply lying outside these areas would be more likely to meet the needs of other market areas, which may include Reading to the west and M3 / M40 corridors to the south and north.

7.13 It almost goes without saying that new areas identified for housing development should be served by transport infrastructure that connects them to the main towns and employment areas in the core districts, as appropriate. In relation to Slough's need specifically, homes would also need to be delivered at a price point prospective new residents could afford which may suggest some critical mass is needed as opposed to smaller schemes that take their values from existing settlements.

7.14 It may be that insufficient land can be found in the areas we have identified, due to supply constraints. In that case, the Councils have two possible options.

7.15 Firstly, they may accept that some residents will have to adjust their expectations, so they live in places that are poor substitutes for the core areas. This would have social consequences, as family and social ties become stretched over large distances, or over occupy.

7.16 It would also have economic consequences. If people have to move beyond reasonable commuting distances to Slough, Hillingdon or the RBWM towns, then their labour may be lost to those economies.

7.17 For example, were housing provided in West Berkshire to meet the needs of Slough, the residents concerned would be unlikely to commute back to Slough, because of the time and cost to do so. They would also have to travel past Reading. The result may be a smaller economy for Reading and a larger economy for West Berkshire.

7.18 If this 'long-distance option' is accepted, the concept of a sub-regional area of search no longer applies, because it is accepted that the ties that identify, define or create the area of search will be lost. New housing supply may then be sought almost anywhere in South-East England.

7.19 A second option for the Councils – still assuming that no capacity can be found in our areas of search – would be to expand the boundaries of the areas through new infrastructure.

7.20 Such infrastructure issues, together with other supply constraints, will be addressed in the second stage of the Wider Area Growth Study. This assessment will be wide ranging and take account of other changes that impact on the administrative landscape in which future decisions will be taken. For example, a new Unitary Council for Buckinghamshire will be in place by April 2020, with the intention of moving towards a single Bucks-wide Plan. This will build on and enhance the existing collaboration between the four Districts and County Council in establishing a common evidence base for Bucks as well as considering future growth on a Bucks-wide basis.

7.21 It will also be important for the Part 2 WAGS Study to consider land that is being released through emerging Local Plans, including those at Examination but which are not yet adopted to ensure that the capacity considered to be available takes account of sites considered to have an enhanced likelihood of deliverability, as a consequence of being allocated.