

Planning Slough's Future:

Summary of the Issues and Options Consultation
16 January-27 February 2017



What is the Local Plan 2013-2036?

Slough Borough Council is currently in the process of producing a new Local Plan for Slough. The new plan will set out how the council will plan for and manage development to meet the various needs of a growing diverse community up to 2036. Having an up-to-date Local Plan is important because it will set out the kind of place we want Slough to be and contain the policies that will be used to decide planning applications and decisions on local infrastructure projects for the next 20 years.

How you can be involved?

We are at the early stages of producing the local plan. Because this is such an important document for shaping Slough as a place for people to work, live and play, we want to be sure the communities and businesses of Slough have a chance to consider the issues and give their views. To help the discussion, we have produced an Issues and Options Consultation document. That is a detailed discussion of the tough challenges Slough faces and a look at some of the options available to tackle them. This is a summary of that document to let people know the key things it talks about, but you can read the complete document by going to Slough Council's website at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan

Join the discussion

Once you have had a chance to consider your thoughts on the issues and options please join the discussion by:

- Visiting our Facebook Page "Planning Slough's Future"
- Tweeting us at @SloughCouncil using #Next20Years
- Coming to our public consultation event at The Curve on 13 February at 7pm

Please note these forums are to encourage informal discussion about the Issues and Options so we will take into account the views expressed, but cannot respond to individual messages.

Take part

To take part in the statutory (official) consultation, please go to www.slough.gov.uk/localplan and fill in the online consultation form. You can also email us at planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk or write to St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough SL1 3UF.

If you need a paper copy or more information about how to do this, let us know using the above contact information.

The consultation closes at 5pm on Monday 27 February, so please provide any comments by then.

When will the Local Plan be finished?

The rules set by the government for the Local Plan mean we will have to go through a number of stages before our new Local Plan can be adopted. After this consultation on "Issues and Options", we will produce a "Preferred Options" document that will consider the consultation responses and more research, and be a more detailed plan. We plan to consult on the Preferred Options in October 2017. The timing of the later stages of the plan has yet to be finalised as it is partly dependent on factors such as the Heathrow expansion process.

When we are clearer about how big issues outside of our control (like Heathrow) affect Slough we can produce a draft of the full Local Plan that will set out in more detail the new rules (policies) about how and where development can happen in Slough. After we have consulted on that, we will submit it to the government for public examination. If it passes that test the new Local Plan will be adopted as our official planning policy for the foreseeable future.

Anything else I should know?

Because planning takes place across the country as well as locally, the Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with legislation, national planning policy and guidance produced by government (such as the 'NPPF' and 'PPG'). This means the local authority does not have an entirely free hand about how the Local Plan is put together and what issues can be taken into account.

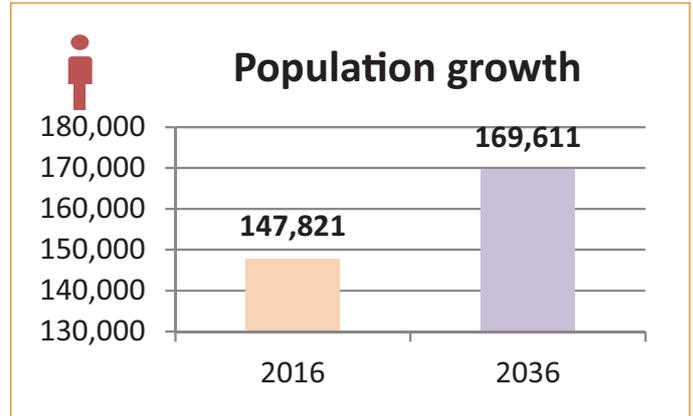
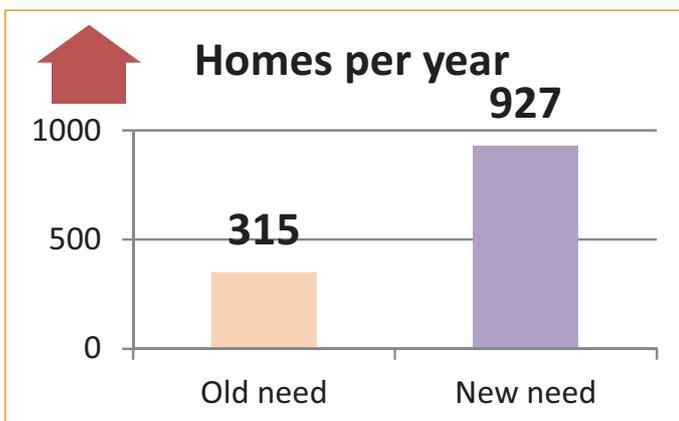
What are the big issues that the Slough Local Plan needs to deal with?

Population growth and housing

Slough's population is growing, and we need enough houses to accommodate people. National planning policy indicates that housing need should be looked at in the context of a "housing market area" rather than simply looking within the administrative boundaries of a local authority. Slough has worked with other Berkshire authorities and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership to commission a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This has been carried out in accordance with an approved methodology that looks at a range of factors to assess how many new homes and what kinds of homes will be needed to meet need during the plan period.

The council has accepted the assessment that around 20,000 new homes are needed by 2036 if, following the government's rules, we want to provide one for everyone that needs one. That works out at 927 homes per year. This is a much higher number than the current Local Plan (the "Core Strategy") is planning for. This big increase is therefore one of the key issues that the new Local Plan must address.

The main factor driving this need is the population, which for Slough is expected to grow by more than 15% to 169,611 in 2036. Coupled with this, the borough currently has unusually high percentages of people aged 30-40 and under ten. As these residents grow up evidence suggest they will create a demand for additional housing.



This means we need to think about where we can build new homes. Slough is already very built up within its administrative boundaries, so solving this issue within the context of the kind of place we want Slough to be is a real challenge and will probably require a combination of strategic approaches. We can identify sites currently in other uses (such as employment) that would be suitable for housing, we can build on greenfield land that has not been built on before (including Green Belt land), and we can encourage more housing on existing residential sites by allowing higher density redevelopment.

Our research shows that even if all those options for new development within Slough are adopted, we will still fall short of building enough new homes to meet the need of people who may want to stay in Slough. The consequence of this is that more homes will be required to be provided to 'catch up' as time passes, people will have to move elsewhere, or live in overcrowded conditions. We want to avoid this if possible.

Therefore, we may have to consider some of Slough's housing need being accommodated in neighbouring areas if we want to meet our government obligations, prevent homelessness and tackle substandard housing.

Do you agree we should plan to meet our local housing needs in or around Slough?

If not, where should new housing go?

The issue is not just the overall number of houses but providing the appropriate size, type and tenure (e.g. rented or owned) of new homes. We have aspirations that Slough should be a place where people can work, rest, play and stay. This means we need a choice of homes to meet their lifestyle needs, including for new families, the elderly and others with special needs. We want to give those people who will be growing up, educated or working in Slough the choice to stay within their existing community.

There are very few houses in Slough at the top end of the market (30% in South Bucks). We know the average earnings of people who live in Slough are lower (£529 per week) than those who earn their living in Slough (£574 per week) (Slough Business Focus Study, May 2015). Does this mean people currently move out of Slough to find more aspirational property? We need to consider whether higher specification residential accommodation could or should be provided in Slough.

There is a continuing need to provide more good quality family housing in Slough. If we need to build more densely on previously developed land close to existing facilities and transport, fewer new homes will have large gardens. We can try to make sure there is a range of high quality substantial family housing with gardens built in and on the edge of Slough to meet the needs of an aspiring community.

In the past ten years, on average around 60% of all of the new homes built have been flats. In the future, up to 80% of new builds are likely to be flats. In these higher density schemes we need to achieve a full mix of housing sizes, including family homes, and ensure through good design that all residents have access to open space and recreation opportunities.

Homes in Slough have become steadily less affordable in recent years. The council's housing register (waiting list) has been limited to those in most urgent need, but it still has 2,000 households. Homelessness is increasing and is fast approaching the levels seen in London boroughs. The council's housing strategy proposes to build 1,000 new homes and 200 new affordable homes on its own land during the next five years.

But it is also very important to ensure developers of new market housing continue to contribute to providing affordable housing, either on site or through contributions to off site provision.

How much contribution can be made largely depends on the financial viability of developments.

Higher specification properties, such as on green field sites, could provide a means of increasing development viability to ensure rental and other forms of affordable housing is provided for those in greatest need.

Do you agree that we should be building more high quality homes to meet future aspirations of local people?

If not, what type of housing would you want?

Living locally in Slough's suburbs

The vast majority of Slough's residents live in the various neighbourhoods that make up the borough. These suburban areas have already absorbed a lot of the population growth that has been taking place, and we need to consider how future pressures will affect the distinctive sense of place in neighbourhoods.

Population growth could put pressure on the suburbs to absorb more than has already happened through the extensions to existing houses and building ancillary accommodation in gardens. The scope for further growth of this sort by infilling spaces between buildings is limited. The layout of the borough means there are very few areas with long undeveloped gardens suitable for "backland" development. Consequently, proposals for "densification" of the suburbs are only likely to work successfully in more comprehensive schemes, where large groups of properties are assembled into a redevelopment site.

If this happens, it will be important it happens in a way that enhances the sense of place. One of the characteristic features of the suburbs has been their greenery. Unfortunately, some of this is being lost as a result of front gardens and verges being used for parking, and back gardens being paved over. Where redevelopment does take place, greenery should be replaced as part of an overall aim to increase the number of trees and planting in the suburbs. The quality of the street scene is also critical to the appearance of an area and this relates as much to house extensions and hard paving as to new development.

One of the most important council objectives is to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents and reduce deprivation by providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives. In most cases this can best be achieved by making our neighbourhoods as adaptable as possible, so that people can live their whole life within their community and get the support they may need. It's also important to provide safe and inviting streets and encourage people to choose to walk and cycle for local journeys rather than use their cars.

Do you agree that we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development?

If not, what sort of development should we allow in the Suburbs?

Jobs in Slough

One of our objectives is to ensure that Slough's economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse.

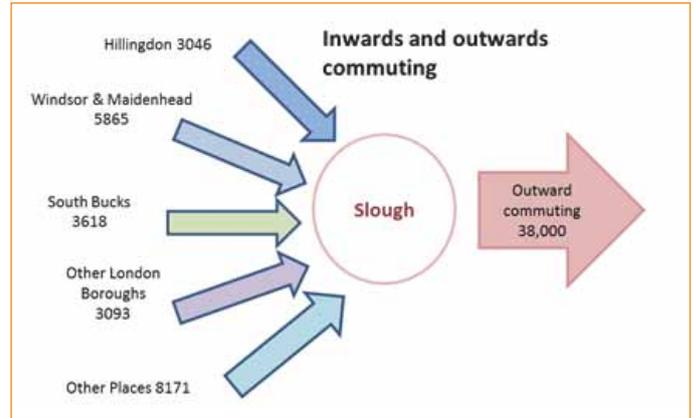
Slough is part of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP), which is regarded as one of the most successful LEP areas in the country. Slough's economy is not just important locally but also in a national context.

Slough has a wide range of businesses sectors within its economy. This diverse and resilient economic base is important to ensure it is not over dependent upon particular sectors that may shrink in importance as a result of global, national or local changes to the economy. We also need to ensure all of the small businesses that serve the local economy and make it function continue to be provided for.

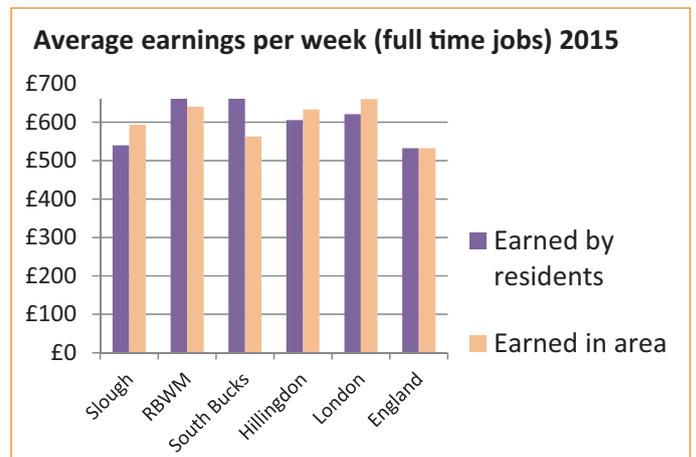
As with housing, we have to consider the wider economy of the area in evidence for plan making. Slough has jointly commissioned the Eastern Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA). The forecasts in this study underpin the objective to create at least 15,000 jobs in Slough over the plan period. Slough has always been a "working town" and in 2015 there were 80,000 jobs in the borough (ONS 2015 business register and employment survey).

There can be no certainty these forecasts of job growth will actually happen, especially if we do not have the right economic development strategies and planning policies in place to deliver the skills, premises and infrastructure required. Therefore, one of the big issues for the plan is how we make sure businesses can find what they need to locate in Slough and then stay as they grow.

One of the reasons Slough is an "economic powerhouse" is that it has access to a large and suitably skilled workforce. Currently around 39,000 people commute into Slough on a regular basis, mainly to take the high skilled jobs. At the same time a similar number Slough residents commute out, many of them to less skilled jobs. Businesses have highlighted the difficulty of finding the right skills to meet their business needs.



The council thinks it is important people who live in Slough are given the opportunity to improve their skills and the opportunity to fill vacancies in the higher paid jobs. Not only will this help to maintain Slough as a major employment centre, but it will also help to boost the spending power in the town, which in turn will help to underpin existing businesses and a revitalised town centre. We will need to take opportunities to increase the provision of higher education facilities and 'on the job' learning. We also need to recognise the link between having a supply of suitable housing and the ability to attract skilled workers to live and work here.



'People in Slough earn less than those that live here... we want the Local Plan to help change that'

Slough also needs to attract investment to ensure the premises businesses need will be available and that we can make the most of our excellent and improving transport connections: the airport, the motorways and rail networks.

There has been a shift in the proportion of jobs in various sectors of the economy, with information and communications growing strongly. Forecasts tell us that business class jobs will continue to increase. Slough has a large number of HQ buildings supporting 4% of jobs in Slough, many of which are now on the Bath Road rather than the town centre. There is, however, a general trend away from business park type locations which rely upon high levels of car commuting, towards town centre locations with good public transport links and better facilities. This is particularly true for companies that want to attract a young workforce.

Do you agree that we should continue to promote Slough as a major employment centre?

If not, how should we provide new jobs for local people?

Revitalising our town centre?

There are a number of reasons why Slough town centre could become a major commercial centre and provide a higher proportion of new office jobs than the forecasts suggest. The introduction of the Crossrail service in 2019 will make it much easier for residents in London to get to Slough to work and easier for people working in Slough to access the City or Canary Wharf. Cheaper office rents in Slough compared to London, combined with its connectivity to the capital, will make Slough a very competitive location. The proposed passenger rail link from Slough to Heathrow (WRLtH), due to be completed in 2021, will make it attractive for overseas firms.

In order to compete with other areas, the town centre will have to offer the environment and range of facilities that modern day office workers expect. This would mean having better quality shops, a better range of leisure facilities and a better evening economy. Slough will also have to improve its image, and the "Slough Pound" approach could be critical to making sure new investment delivers the biggest benefits in terms of working towards our overall objectives.

What will happen to the shopping centre is a major issue for the town centre. The evidence shows that the quality of shops is declining and it is now effectively operating as a very large district centre. At present it doesn't have a significant leisure or night time economy and suffers from traffic congestion and the perception of a poor environment.

However The Curve, new bus station and other council improvements have helped and there is now lots of new building and investment in town centre, such as modern offices near the station and old offices being turned into flats. The same is true for the shopping centre, which has now been sold to a new company who are already making great plans to modernise it. Through future development we could take advantage of the town's rich ethnic and cultural diversity to create unique shopping and food destinations. We could promote it as a leisure destination aimed at families.

Whatever approach is adopted, it is clear that major investment and high quality design, using appropriate materials and creating good useable public spaces, will be needed in order to achieve our objective of revitalising the town centre. A "town centre first" policy, reinforcing the primacy of this area as the focus for leisure and shopping and further measures to manage congestion and favour public transport options, would underpin any strategy.

Do you agree that Slough town centre should be revitalised as a commercial, leisure and retail centre?

If not, what should the future of the town centre be?

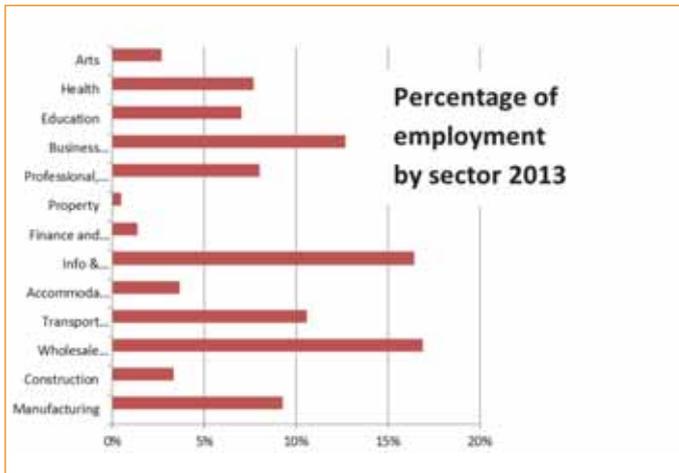
Land for business use

A special employment study (an 'EDNA') calculated that up to 180 hectares of land could be required to support the population and job growth up to 2036. This is an area about the size of the Slough Trading Estate. Given the pressures to find land for housing as well, it is important the local plan considers a range of other options that will support job growth and also ensure businesses that serve the local needs of residents can find premises.

Outside of the town centre we can expect to see an increase in jobs as a result of the re-development or re-use of existing sites. Low value buildings will be replaced with more intensively used high value ones. Although in some cases, such as the construction of data centres, this can result in a reduction of employment; the drive to use assets productively may mean the number of people working in buildings (known as 'occupational density') will increase as a result of redevelopment and the need to make better use of space.

In Slough 14% of total jobs are in businesses with fewer than 10 employees, and these operate in all sectors, especially information and communications, businesses and pharma and life science. Some of these occupy bespoke business incubator premises but many are home based or located in residential or district centres. Better access to flexible and affordable premises may help the growth of these businesses.

'Types of jobs in slough, and the percentages doing them: most people work in IT, wholesale and business; the number of jobs in manufacturing is declining'



A much higher number of jobs than expected could be created through office development in the town centre. The only area where new warehousing would be supported is the Colnbrook and Poyle area, but environmental constraints and Green Belt designations limit potential developments. It is also the area where the third runway for Heathrow is proposed to be built. That would require a large land take for the airport and the supporting infrastructure. In the short term, until detailed plans are in place for Heathrow, development should only be allowed in this location if it can be shown that it is needed to support the airport. The proposed expansion of Heathrow could create a welcome 77,000 additional jobs and may make up for any shortfall in Slough.

We will need to work with partners to produce a vision and strategy for the sub-region most affected by Heathrow. Part of this will consider how the benefits from the expansion of Heathrow can be spread beyond the airport, and any problems minimised. The government's timescale for making a final decision about the third runway at Heathrow will make the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough complicated, but it provides a valuable opportunity to ensure the benefits of the expansion of Heathrow are channelled towards Slough and that the appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

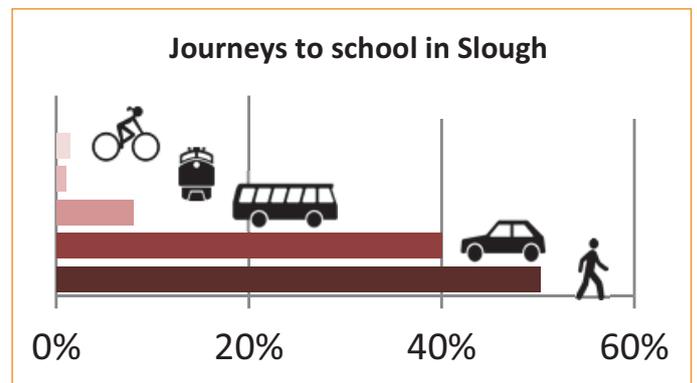
Do you agree that we should plan to gain the maximum benefits and mitigate the environment impacts of the growth at Heathrow Airport?

If not, what should our approach to Heathrow be?

Getting around in Slough

Whilst Slough is well connected to the outside world, travelling across the borough can be difficult, especially as a result of high levels of congestion in the morning and evening peaks. These delays have been estimated to cost businesses £34m a year, but the cost is wider than this: communities suffer and the environment suffers.

A lot of the congestion in Slough is caused by local people. 66% of residents commuting out of Slough do so by private car, and many other journeys are less than one mile. During the morning peak one in three car journeys is taking a child to school.



Slough is small so the space for roads, and vehicles on roads cannot keep being increased, and there is a limit to how much traffic management, such as removing pinch points and traffic flow technology, can achieve. The Local Plan will have to work alongside the Local Transport Plan and the new Transport Vision for Slough to develop new solutions for how to get people around, how to reduce the need for car journeys and to persuade people to try different modes of travel.

One of the best ways of trying to reduce congestion on the roads is to reduce the need for people to use their car. We can do this by locating as much new development as possible close to existing facilities, like the town centre or district centres where there are good public transport connections or they are close to existing homes and jobs. By ensuring that a range of facilities are available in existing neighbourhoods and making roads more attractive places to walk and cycle we can encourage people to live locally. There may also be a need to adopt radical measures that restrain the use of the private car or deter traffic from using the A4 through the town centre as a through route. We can also work to make sure that alternatives to car use, especially public transport options, are made more attractive and convenient.

Do you agree we should use strong measures to discourage people using their car for short journeys?

If not, how should we try to stop congestion getting worse?

Insisting on good design and environmental standards

The view of Slough as a 20th century “working town” has left the town with a less attractive public image, even though it does have many pleasant residential neighbourhoods and interesting places. Improving the image will attract investment for employment, new homes and shoppers to the town centre. In turn this could improve the quality of life for residents. A task for the Local Plan will be to drive up the quality of design and create an attractive sense of place in new developments. A better quality of environment will also improve the town’s image.

The Local Plan could make it clear that good design is an essential part of new development. This would mean encouraging good architecture and innovation in buildings and that the materials used keep looking good over the lifetime of the development.

It would also allow for the creation of attractive, useable public spaces, where care has been taken to ensure street frontages are accessible, vibrant and welcoming, and that Slough has an interesting skyline.

Maximum benefits can be achieved by focussing improvements on key corridors and places, such as the town centre, which are seen and used by most people. Within neighbourhoods the priority might be on improving the street scene - ensuring the front looks good and keeping any distinctive characteristics of individual neighbourhoods. More greenery within the street would be a benefit. Park enhancements can also help improve neighbourhood quality. Protecting and enhancing historic or locally valued features helps improve the image of streets.

Protecting, enhancing or, in exceptional cases replacing green infrastructure such as open spaces for recreation and wildlife, need to be given consideration as part of creating a healthy environment, as do water quality and heritage issues. Protecting people from pollution (for example noise, soil contamination, and in particular pollutants in the air) is part of meeting health and wellbeing objectives. Living conditions (privacy, light, amenity space etc.) in and around new developments also need to be carefully considered if higher density development takes place. Climate change needs addressing through green infrastructure and flood protection and, where practical, carbon emission reductions.

Do you agree that we should insist on better design to improve image of Slough?

Can you think of other ways we could improve the image of Slough?

Making sure that infrastructure is in place

The housing and employment growth planned will need infrastructure to connect and support it. The Local Plan allocates land for some infrastructure, such as transport links, schools or flood water storage.

Because a wide range of agencies and private companies are responsible for delivering infrastructure, the Local Plan has a role in co-ordinating such projects, both for the sake of new residents and businesses, and so existing residents enjoy the benefits rather than the impacts of growth. The Local Plan also needs to ensure the necessary resources (financial contributions or, occasionally, land or buildings) are in place before the new development can proceed.

Strategic options

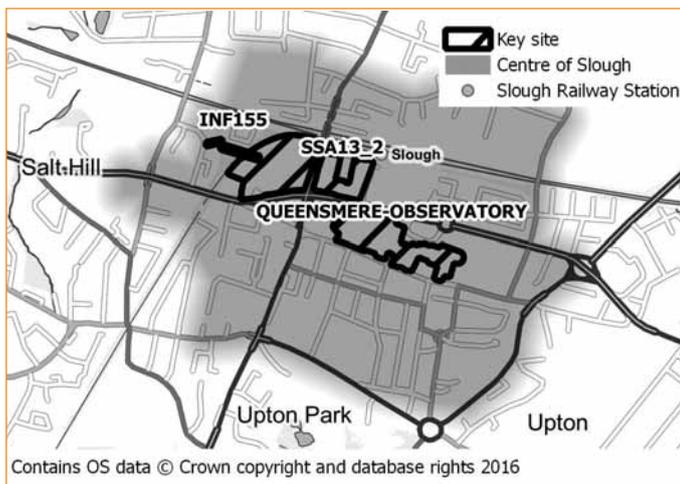
Having considered the strategic issues and explored possible policy responses, we have produced a number of strategic 'Spatial Options'. These are examples of how the issues could be dealt with on sites we know about now. Whilst these have not been fully worked up at this stage, they are realistic and meaningful possibilities that would benefit from public consultation.

There are 11 Options (Referenced A-K) set out in detail in the full Issues and Options consultation document (available online at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan). These are summarised below with maps where we have them. Several or all of the options may be appropriate, some may not be compatible with each other and there may be cumulative impacts, which would have to be addressed. Options J1, J2 and K involve development next to Slough but outside of our administrative area. This means they are outside Slough Borough Council's control and will need to be investigated jointly through the "Duty to Cooperate" process with the boroughs that are responsible for them.

Which Spatial Options do you support and why?

Which Spatial Options do you object to and why?

Option A - Expansion of the town centre



The town centre has always been important to the image and economy of Slough as a whole.

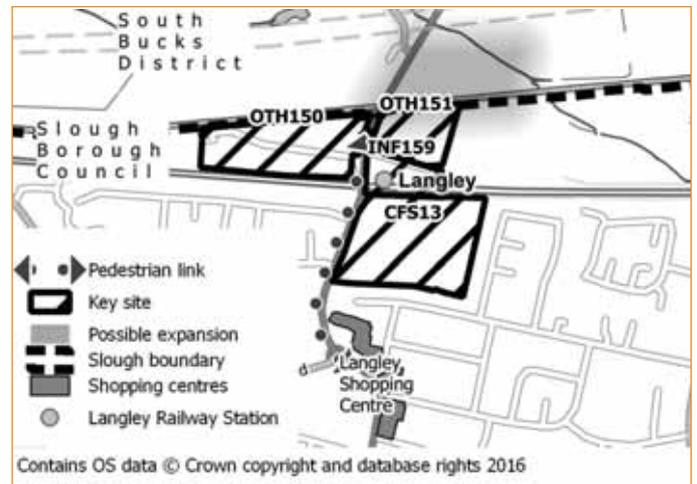
Development in the future could help create more vibrant busy places, with a mixed economy of retail and leisure uses, new premium office accommodation and residential flats.

This option envisages the town centre as the premium location for new HQ offices and convenient residential development, which will in turn support the viability of a wider range of retail and leisure uses. We will insist on some of the profits made from redevelopment being invested in high quality materials and the best of design to create attractive public spaces and routes would help to attract investment and ensure good standards for residents and visitors.

There are issues to consider, such as the need to deal with traffic and make access easier using public transport. Future development would need to be carefully designed to reduce noise and deal with air quality issues. We know more open space needs to be created and where the town centre joins lower density areas, the relationship has to be carefully managed.

This strategy would make a substantial contribution to the number of residential units needed to meet housing need in the future. It would also be extremely valuable in reinforcing the image of Slough as an economic powerhouse, contributing to jobs in offices and the service sector.

Option B - Expand the centre of Langley



This option is to develop the area around Langley station in a way that will create new homes in an accessible location and expand the existing district centre to provide new facilities.

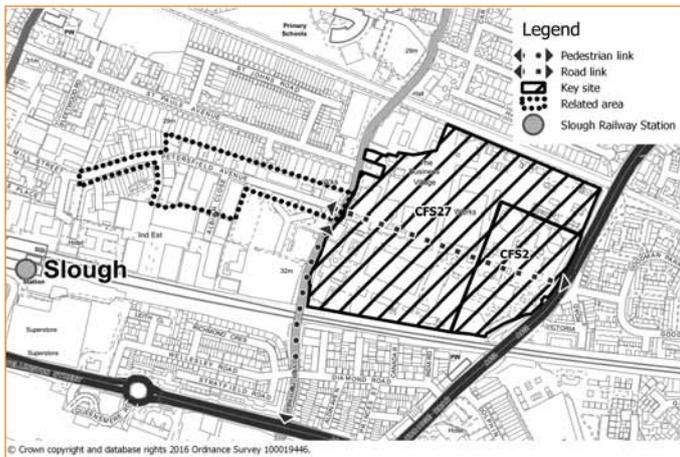
Development would be concentrated in three sites: the Langley Business Centre; part of Waterside Drive; and the Canal Wharf industrial area. Together these could provide around 600 new homes.

The area around the station will be well connected in the future. The Elizabeth (Crossrail) line is due for completion in December 2019. A new high density residential area with employment, retail and leisure facilities would complement the Harrow Market district centre. Many new residents will choose to live in the area because of the railway station, and will boost the demand for local facilities, in turn helping existing residents to live locally.

A new footbridge with lifts will be constructed as part of the Crossrail scheme and the council is proposing to improve pedestrian access from the south and enhance the station forecourt area. Although the new retail and leisure facilities would be designed for local needs, traffic issues will require consideration in light of existing concerns about congestion in the area.

There would be an overall loss of employment land in this option. Part of the Langley Business Centre is currently vacant. Planned comprehensive development will be more likely to deliver better outcomes for Slough than ad hoc changes of existing buildings to residential.

Option C - New neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites

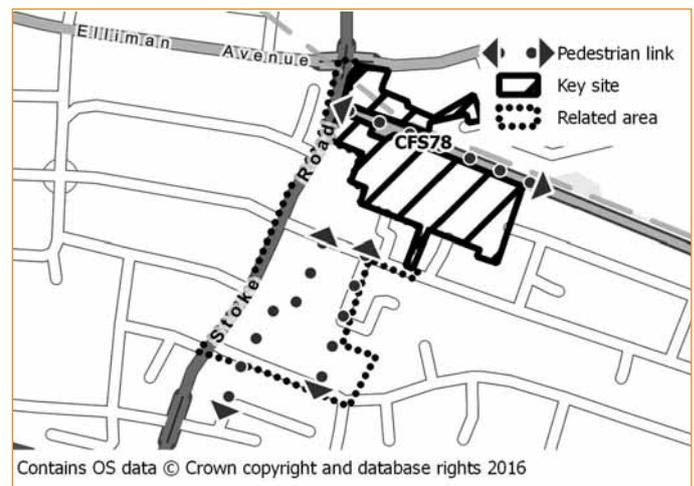


The proposed option is to comprehensively redevelop two large industrial sites to create a new residential neighbourhood with employment and supporting facilities (local retail, education, open space, community spaces). Redeveloping will mean a loss of land that at present is only allowed to be used for employment, but it provides a rare opportunity to develop a significant quantity of new housing within walking distance of the station and town centre facilities.

It is likely these sites could be available for redevelopment within the next five to 10 years. While some research and office use may be retained on site, the majority of the land could accommodate between 1,000 and 1,400 homes. How many homes will depend on the character of the development and the proportion of new homes to be flats or family homes with gardens. There is also scope for taller buildings - up to five storeys in some areas.

Soil contamination associated with historical industrial use will need to be removed and the existing gas holders are expected to be removed to reduce constraints on residential development. Site access from Wexham Road and Uxbridge Road will require consideration. To reduce reliance on cars, pedestrian cycle and bus routes through the site and towards the town centre will be needed. This may involve enhancements to the related Petersfield Avenue area through redevelopment of vacant property.

Option D1 - The canal basin



There has been a long standing proposal to redevelop the canal basin in Stoke Road. Around 250 homes within a new development are proposed as part of a scheme to improve the environment and access to the towpath and canal.

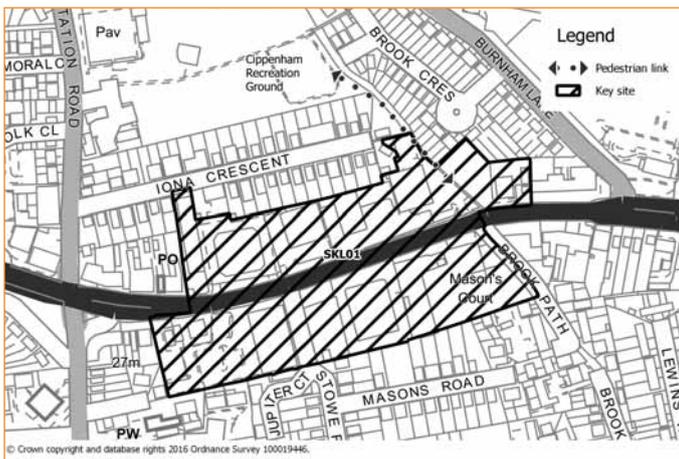
All of the land is now under the control of a consortium of potential developers including the council. The proposal suggests building residential blocks along the northern part of the Bowyer Playing Fields fronting onto the canal. The loss of some open space on Boyer Playing fields has been accepted in the past and the improved access and leisure opportunities compensate for this. The remaining public open space will be improved, so there will be an overall increase in recreational value.

The main physical constraint to the development is the electricity pylon and cables that cross the northern part of the site. As moving these would be very expensive, the whole scheme may need to be built in phases, with the prospect of more homes in future if the pylon and overhead cables are removed.

The site will be predominantly developed with flats, with some family housing and affordable housing also provided. Access from the Stoke Road will open up views of the canal basin.

An associated potential site for redevelopment is on the east side of Stoke Road, to the south of the canal basin, which could include a cycle and pedestrian link from the basin towards Slough station.

Option D2 - New central Cippenham strip

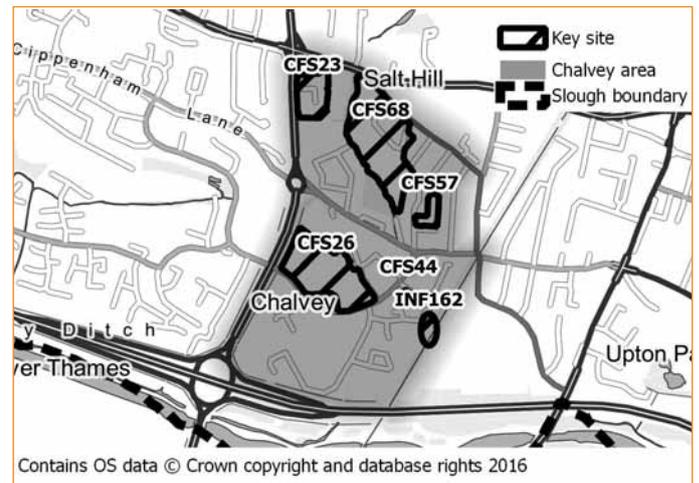


This option is for a comprehensive regeneration of the area of the A4 Bath Road west of the Slough Trading Estate, currently used by a mix of commercial uses. This could accommodate approximately 200 new homes.

This part of the Bath Road lacks the tree lined avenue that runs alongside the Slough Trading Estate. It is one of the less attractive main road corridors in Slough and was identified in the Site Allocations Plan (2010) as a key location for comprehensive regeneration. Residential development including flats on the road frontage and family housing to the rear could be acceptable. The option would involve the loss of employment land but much of this is quite low key or consists of retail type jobs that could be accommodated elsewhere.

Development should be comprehensively planned to improve the appearance of this main road frontage and link it to the nearby recreation ground. A proposal would also need to address some flood risk and noise issues.

Option D3 - Chalvey regeneration area



This option proposes a regeneration area in Chalvey. This includes a number of key sites including the existing Montem Leisure Centre site. Overall approximately 220 new homes will be expected, including for families, and some smaller homes.

A new primary and secondary school, which would keep or replace existing community facilities around the Thames Valley Community Centre, would provide a new focal point for this part of the neighbourhood. Removing the unsightly old shopping centre and office building on Chalvey High Street would create an opportunity for a new frontage along the north side of the high street.

The Chalvey area is going through a period of change. Planning permission has already been granted for a number of developments, which together with the group of identified sites will help improve the appearance of the area, provide more housing for local needs and key community facilities including a new school. Enhancements along the Salt Hill stream could create a new walking and cycling route and a "green corridor" for wildlife.

Option E - Estate renewal

This option works alongside the council's housing strategy. There are more than 6,000 council houses, most of which are located in a number of estates. Selective redevelopment of parts of some of Slough's housing estates could provide an opportunity to increase the number of units, as well as the quality of housing that is available to meet local needs.

The housing strategy sets out a goal of creating 1,000 additional homes during the next 15 years through building on the council's own land. Part of this growth will be affordable housing, with an estimate of 200 affordable housing units during the five-year life of the strategy.

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

The council proposes to demolish the Tower and Ashbourne flats in Chalvey and replace them. In addition, the council has been developing homes on unused garage courts. Further phases are planned, along with proposals to redevelop some retirement homes that do not meet modern needs.

Option F - Intensification of the suburbs

This option explores the potential for creating more housing in the suburbs of Slough.

Much of the growth in the past few years has already been absorbed in the suburbs, so this option has limitations.

Comprehensive redevelopment at a higher density means replacing existing homes with more homes in the same area. This kind of development is more likely to include mostly flats, but could provide more small and affordable homes and specialist housing for elderly or disabled people. Because the cost of assembling land is high, few such developments are likely to come forward.

Due to the layout of most residential areas, there are few sites where several new homes could be built in amalgamated gardens while retaining the existing houses.

Most of the easy opportunities for infilling gaps between buildings with new homes have already been taken up. Encouraging more infill on less suitable sites would risk having a detrimental impact on the distinctive character; erode the openness and impact on neighbouring homes.

Option G - Redevelop existing business areas for housing

This option explores the potential for meeting housing need by allowing existing business sites to be redeveloped for housing.

The EDNA study has estimated a need for up to 180 hectares of new employment to accommodate some of the additional 15,000 jobs that it envisages being created.

The Core Strategy (2008) protected Existing Business Areas as part of a successful strategy to ensure Slough has a diverse economic base.

The biggest concentrations of business are in the town centre, the Slough Trading Estate and the Poyle Trading Estate. It is not envisaged that either of the trading estates will cease to be employment areas during the plan period. Option A proposes an increase in Grade A office space in the town centre. Heathrow expansion is likely also to lead to an increase in jobs in Slough. The council wants to help businesses make the most of this opportunity. The only area where new employment land could be allocated to enable this is in the east of the borough (see option I).

Other options propose the loss of some employment land in order to build new homes. The government's office to residential conversion policy has boosted the number of new homes, but reduced availability of business premises.

In this context, the business sites outside of the estates and town centre remain an important resource for Slough and support the council's desire for people to live locally. It is possible that some such sites may be considered suitable for redevelopment for housing, but the difficulty of achieving a comprehensive development and the value of the existing uses are likely to be an effective barrier to development for housing.

Option H - Release of Green Belt land for housing

This option would allow for some appropriate land within the Green Belt to be released from its designation and made available for housing development.

Much of the undeveloped land on the edge of Slough is designated Green Belt and therefore protected under national planning policy. It can only be brought forward under a Local Plan review following detailed examination of all the issues through a Green Belt Review. Green field land would provide a rare opportunity to extend the range of family housing available to enable people to live, work and stay in Slough.

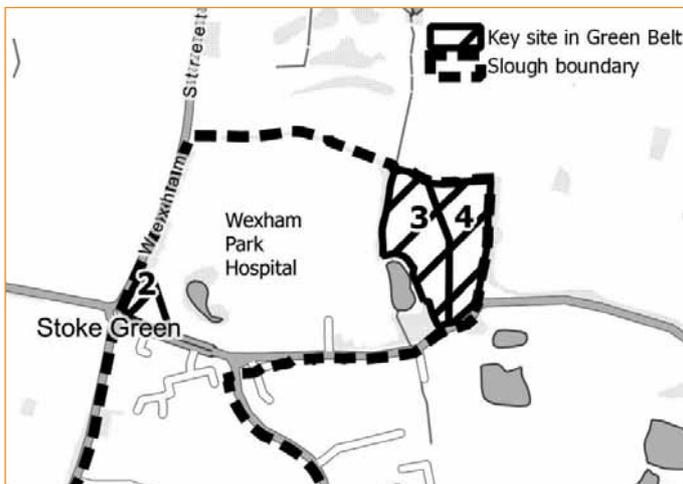
The largest area of Green Belt in the borough is in Colnbrook and Poyle. This area is not considered suitable for new housing because of environmental constraints and the expansion plans for Heathrow. A number of other small pockets of Green Belt land have also been ruled out as possible housing due to fundamental constraints.

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

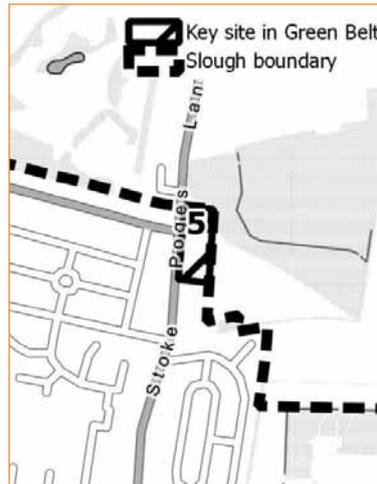
1. St Antony's Field, Farnham Lane (CFS 54)



2. Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street (CFS 30)
3. Land to rear of Opal Court, Wexham Street (CFS 29)
4. Land east of Wexham Park Hospital



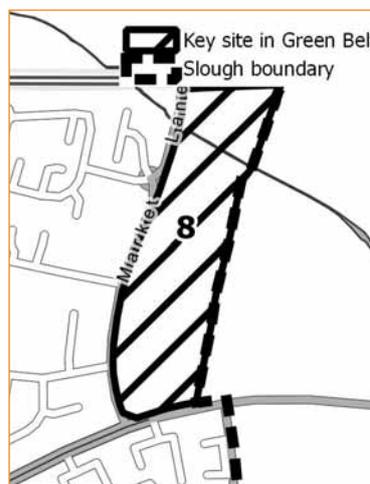
5. North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane



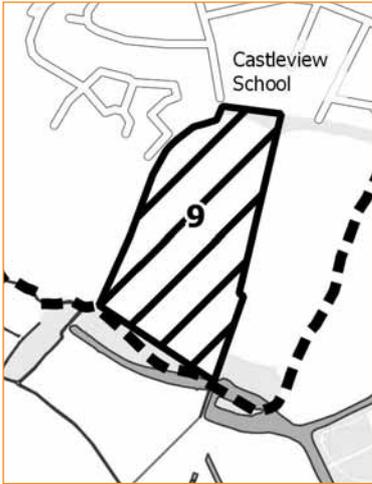
6. Land east of Rochford Gardens
7. Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road (CFS 6)



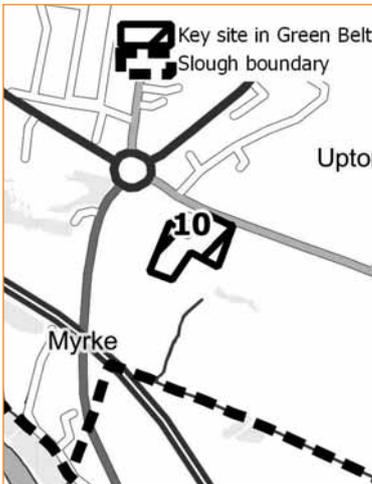
8. Land east of Market Lane



9. Land south of Castleview/ Blenheim Road



10. Upton Court Farm



It is estimated that together these sites could produce around 680 dwellings, but this would have to be subject to detailed testing. All of the sites should be predominantly developed for family housing and a full quota of affordable housing and all of the necessary infrastructure contributions will be provided.

Option I - Release of Green Belt land for employment (in Colnbrook and Poyle)

This option would involve releasing land from the Green Belt in the Colnbrook and Poyle area for airport related employment development. Specific sites have yet to be identified.

Local Plan objectives include facilitating 15,000 new jobs in Slough as well as making the most of the benefits that growth at Heathrow can bring. In light of the other pressures of a very limited supply of undeveloped land in borough and the need to accommodate high housing growth, finding additional land for employment is difficult.

The only option for providing additional land for employment use is to release land from the Green Belt. Releasing Green Belt land can only be done through a Local Plan Review to determine whether there are very special circumstances sufficient to justify its release.

Much of the undeveloped land in the Green Belt is in the east of the borough near Colnbrook and Poyle. The Poyle Trading Estate and a number of other commercial properties are also in the area. There are substantial businesses located within the Green Belt in this area. Releasing land in the Poyle and Colnbrook area could meet both the job creation and the Heathrow objectives. However, the Core Strategy "Strategic Gap" policy that prevents London merging into Slough, and the impact on Colne Valley Regional Park in this area require careful consideration.

There will be difficulties associated with timing of the plan review and the airport development. To safeguard land needed for the proposed third runway and its associated development, an embargo on non essential development should be considered - to be reviewed once a detailed planning consent has been granted and other matters resolved. Proposals for the release of additional land for airport related development would then be considered at this stage. A comprehensive master plan for the whole area, considering, among a wide list of issues, the traffic congestion issues in this area will be required.

If the third runway does not go ahead consideration will still be given to whether any additional airport related development is needed.

Options for the expansion of Slough beyond the local authority boundary

Options J and K consider the option of meeting housing need that Slough cannot meet outside its boundaries.

Housing capacity evidence shows that even if all of the options for housing development within the borough - options A to K - were to be developed, Slough would still not be able to meet all of its assessed housing need. The pipeline for delivery shows that the shortfall will be at its maximum during the last ten years of the plan period.

A northern extension would involve the development of housing within the area of South Bucks District Council. A major new residential development of around 5,000 new homes, with the entire necessary supporting infrastructure such as shops, community facilities, schools and open spaces in this area, could be envisaged as a new "garden suburb". Specific sites haven't been identified at this stage, but the "area of search" stretches from land north of Farnham Lane in the west across to land east of Market Lane in Langley.

A southern expansion of the urban area of Slough could involve building housing on open land that is in the administrative area of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The M4 motorway prevents the southern expansion of the western half of Slough so the only unconstrained areas of open land that join the urban area are at the south east of Ditton Park in Langley and at Brands Hill. The area of search is therefore limited to two parcels of land: land south of Austen Way, Langley, and land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill.

There are two main issues. The expansion areas are within the administrative area of South Bucks District Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead respectively. Secondly, much of the suitable land is within the designated Green Belt.

These and any other options for building housing to meet the unmet housing need from Slough cannot be brought forward through the Slough Local Plan review. Local authorities must engage constructively with each other in order to address strategic issues that cross administrative boundaries. So, these options will need to be taken forward through the Duty to Cooperate discussions.

Are there any other comments that you would like to make about the issues and options for the Slough Local Plan review?

Where to find more information

Our full Issues and Options document and supporting evidence is available on the council's website at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan

You can contact the planning policy team at the council at planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk

We also recommend the "plain English guide to the planning system" available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/plain-english-guide-to-the-planning-system or the Planning Portal.

Summary of Issues and Options Consultation, 16 January-27 February 2017