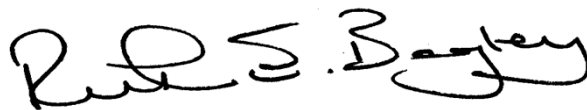


Date of issue: Friday, 11 November 2016

MEETING:	CABINET Councillor Munawar Councillor Hussain Councillor Ajaib Councillor Bal Councillor Matloob Councillor Sharif Councillor Sohal	Finance & Strategy Education & Children's Services / Health & Social Care Housing & Urban Renewal Environment & Leisure Transport & Highways Digital Transformation & Customer Care Regulation & Consumer Protection
DATE AND TIME:	MONDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2016 AT 6.30 PM	
VENUE:	VENUS SUITE 2, ST MARTINS PLACE, 51 BATH ROAD, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE, SL1 3UF	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NICHOLAS PONTONE 01753 875120	

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



RUTH BAGLEY
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

Apologies for absence.

1. Declarations of Interest

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Pecuniary or non pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 3 paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 3.28 of the Code.

The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest.

All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.

2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th October 2016	1 - 8	
3.	Financial Report - Q2 2016/17	9 - 16	All
4.	Draft Housing Strategy for Slough	17 - 66	All
5.	Approval of Local Plan Issues and Options Document	67 - 180	All
6.	Tackling Empty Private Sector Housing	181 - 186	All
7.	Digital and Customer Transformation Programme	187 - 218	All
8.	Proposed Strategic Acquisition Strategy	219 - 224	All
9.	Lease Slough Refugee Support, 28 Bath Road, Salt Hill Park	225 - 228	Chalvey
10.	References from Overview & Scrutiny	229 - 232	All
	References from the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel meeting on 3 rd November 2016:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resident involvement• Neighbourhood Services – Garages		
	Any references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 17 th November 2016.		
11.	Notification of Forthcoming Decisions	233 - 244	All

AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

12. Exclusion of Press and Public

It is recommended that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item in Part 2 of the Agenda, as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding the information) as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (amended).

PART II

13. **CPO Approvals for Seven Empty Properties**

245 - 270

Baylis and Stoke;
Cippenham Green;
Langley
Kedermister;
Wexham Lea

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

Note:-

Bold = Key decision

Non-Bold = Non-key decision



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Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 17th October, 2016.

Present:- Councillors Munawar (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair), Ajaib (from 6.40pm), Bal, Matloob, Sharif (from 6.35pm) and Sohal

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Anderson, Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Morris, Plenty, Shah, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

53. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bal declared that his daughter worked for Slough Borough Council.

54. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th September 2016

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th September 2016 be approved as a correct record.

(Councillors Sharif and Ajaib joined the meeting)

55. Hollow Hill Lane Experimental Scheme

The Cabinet considered an update on the experimental order process and duration required for Officers to make a decision on the closure of Hollow Hill Lane. Following the Cabinet resolution of 19th September 2016, the Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure & Regeneration had written to Andrew Jones MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport to seek clarification on the minimum period of closure required to obtain sufficiently robust data to develop the mitigation package necessary to address the long term traffic issues if the road was to close permanently in the future. A formal response had not yet been received.

The Cabinet considered comments and representations from Langley St Mary's ward Members Councillors Amarpreet Dhaliwal and Diana Coad, via written correspondence; and the Chair of Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel (who was also a Member for Langley St Mary's). The Chair of Langley Neighbourhood Forum, Eleanor Cryer MBE, was invited to address the Cabinet to set out the views of the Forum from their public meeting on 11th October. The Cabinet was informed of the continued significant traffic disruption in the area attributed to the closure and was asked to reopen the road after three months i.e. 2nd November 2016. The Officer recommendation was for a closure of six months to 2nd February 2017 to provide sufficient time for the required data collection and consultation; and to negotiate with HS2 and other relevant parties on the mitigation package.

The Commissioner for Transport & Highways set out the extensive discussions that he had held with residents, ward Members and stakeholders; and that he understood the level of concern about the closure. He confirmed that the scheme would not have been trialled were it not for the major national infrastructure schemes coming forward which meant that the Council had a duty to local residents to fully prepare for any future permanent closure and secure the best possible mitigation package. The Commissioner proposed a change to the recommendation to add a review after three months, i.e. 2nd November, to take account of any outcomes of negotiations with HS2 and the Ministers reply regarding the sufficient level of data collection required.

A range of issues were discussed including the accuracy of the information provided to the Neighbourhood & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, about which the Chair had expressed dissatisfaction; the communication and engagement process with residents; and the reasons for the closure continuing after 2nd November. Officers responded that the six month period included data collection, traffic surveys, consultation feedback and drop-in sessions and provided sufficient time to fully assess the impacts of closure across periods including school holidays, varying weather conditions and adjustments made to the network in response to changing patterns of traffic. Commissioners sought assurance that any funding secured in a mitigation package would be spent in Langley and it was confirmed that there would be a legal agreement setting out the specific schemes designed to address the issues caused by any future closure.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommendation for a six month period of closure to 2nd February 2017, subject to a review at three months by Officers as proposed by the Commissioner for Transport & Highways and agreed by the Cabinet.

Resolved – That Officers be granted a period of six months for the closure in order to allow them to make a robust case for either opening or closing Hollow Hill Lane. However, Officers, following consultation with the Commissioner for Transport & Highways, would review the experimental scheme after 3 months (2nd November 2016) to take on board the negotiations outcome; reply from Andrew Jones MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport; and if sufficient information is compiled by this date to make an informed decision on the matter.

56. Parking Strategy

The Cabinet was asked to approve an updated version of the Parking Strategy that reflected changes to legislation and the recommendations of the scrutiny task and finish group made in 2015. The document updated that adopted in 2011 as one of the 'Strategic Supplementary Documents' of the Third Local Transport Plan which was the primary framework for the delivery of transport initiatives in the borough.

Officers explained a wide range of actions undertaken to improve parking provision and enhance the attractiveness of the town centre, including bringing the four town centre car parks up to Park Mark standard and ensuring competitive pricing to attract people into Slough. Commissioners discussed the matter raised by the Task & Finish Group of the provision of disabled bays outside doctor's surgeries and Officers stated this would be looked at where practical. In updating the strategy, free parking had been offered to all blue badge holders in Council owned car parks and up to 3 hours free parking in Pay & Display bays.

In relation to the future roll out of the pavement parking policy, the new strategy would be implemented on a more localised basis by involving ward Members in addressing issues on a street by street basis. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst raised concern that this new approach would not provide the strategic control required to tackle the problem equally across the borough. In response to a question under Rule 30 from Councillor Anderson, it was noted applications or renewals for private car parks would include a condition to achieve Park Mark status within three months which would improve quality standards. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to approve the revised Parking Strategy.

Resolved – That the Parking Strategy, as at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

57. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016-2046

The Cabinet considered the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2016-46 that set out the financial commitments and spend priorities for managing the Council's housing stock. In view of significant uncertainty around national housing policy, it was proposed that the plan be approved and be followed by a period of consultation, with a further review taking place over the next six months prior to seeking Cabinet approval again in March 2017.

The Interim Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources gave a presentation on the key aspects of the Business Plan and the future outlook. The HRA was in a strong position in the short-term, but there were major uncertainties and threats to be addressed which may affect viability. These included major changes in Government policy such as 1% annual reduction in rents for 4 years from 2016/17 with uncertainty beyond that; mandatory annual payment to Government following sale of higher value voids; "Pay to Stay" would increase rents for households with incomes over £31,000, with proceeds flowing back to the Treasury; welfare reform, including Universal Credit, impacting on collection rates; and the information from the stock condition survey that would report in January 2017.

The Cabinet welcomed the £100m plan over the next seven years to repair, maintain and invest in the existing housing stock and the £40m to be invested in the next four years in developing new affordable homes. It was noted that as well as consulting residents about the plan and conducting a review in

Cabinet - 17.10.16

March 2017, it was also proposed to launch, in partnership with tenants and leaseholders, a major Option Appraisal on the future of council homes.

Commissioners discussed various aspects of the Business Plan, particularly the engagement with residents and the Cabinet was assured that there would be a full consultation process. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Morris broadly welcomed the plan but highlighted the importance of addressing fuel poverty and raised concerns about ability of the current Residents Board to deliver effective tenant empowerment. The proposal to increase rent levels for new Council properties was discussed and the rationale was explained. The differential level had the potential to generate the income required to fund the building of more new homes, whilst ensuring it was linked to the Local Housing Allowance to retain affordability. Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst spoke under Rule 30 and expressed concern about the higher rents on new build properties and the major Option Appraisal on the future of Council homes. It was confirmed that if the Cabinet approved the Business Plan the new rents would be implemented on the 23 new build properties. The concerns raised included the near doubling of rents on new builds, the potential impacts on any existing tenants moving to new properties and the fact that the higher rents would be implemented immediately, before the major consultation process. The comments were noted and a number of the points raised by Members under Rule 30 would be discussed at the next meeting of the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the Business Plan and other recommendations as set out in the report. It felt that the Plan provided a clear direction to secure the long-term viability of the HRA, start a process to engage residents, invest in existing stock and develop new homes where possible.

Resolved –

- (a) That the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved.
- (b) That the draft Business Plan be issued for consultation to the Residents Board and other residents groups.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal to finalise the Business Plan in the light of comments received during the consultation.
- (d) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal, be authorised to begin planning for the Options Appraisal of the Council's housing stock referred to paragraph 5.7 of this report, with a proposal to be brought back to Cabinet for approval.
- (e) That the development programme set out on Section 8 of the Business Plan be confirmed.

- (f) That the policy on rents to be charged on new build homes as set out in paragraphs 8.11 and 8.12 of the Business Plan be approved.

58. Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan Progress Report

A report was considered that updated the Cabinet on the progress of the plans for a community hub and associated development as part of the Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan since the previous Cabinet report of March 2016.

It had been envisaged that the Cabinet would be in a position to approve the business plan in September 2016, but the project was 3-6 months behind schedule to ensure the best possible scheme could be developed for the site of the former Merrymakers Public House. Approval was sought to enter into an Option Agreement with Raw Investments Limited (RIL) to develop the proposed community hub and the Council was working with RIL and other partners to develop a scheme that included a GP practice, pharmacy, dental practice, library, police station, council services and new residential units.

Commissioners welcomed the progress that had been made in developing a proposal that met the desire of local residents for health services alongside new community facilities. Asked about the anticipated timescale if the Option Agreement with RIL was approved, and it was responded that the Cabinet would be asked to approve the business plan in December 2016, planning would be sought in early 2017 with construction starting later in 2017 and the facility opening in November 2018.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst sought clarity on the position regarding the number of housing units as part of the redevelopment and the levels of rent on the new council housing units. It was noted that RIL would take ownership of the properties above the hub with the others would be Council homes for which the level of rents had not yet been confirmed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommendations to progress the development and consider approval of the business plan at its meeting in December 2016.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Council enter into an Option Agreement with RIL in relation to the land required to introduce the health care element community hub and associated car parking at Trelawney Avenue (as shown in Appendix One to the report) and dispose of this land to RIL for a sum that represents no less than the independent land valuation, if the option granted on the land is exercised.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the

Cabinet - 17.10.16

Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal and Commissioner for Environment & Leisure, to agree the terms of the Options Agreement, and

- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Asset Management to agree terms for the early surrender of the Thames Valley Police (“TVP”) lease of Langley Police Station for an amount that is supported by an independent valuation.
- (d) That it be noted that provided the new facilities remained cost neutral, Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (“SCCG”) had secured approval from NHS England to transfer funding into the proposed hub.
- (e) That it be noted that the proposals to introduce affordable housing on the land released by TVP.
- (f) That it be noted that scheme enablement had commenced, with the Merry Makers Public House and community hall vacated and ready for demolition in November 2016.
- (g) That it be noted that Thames Valley Police (TVP) had confirmed they required touch down space within the hub and in the meantime temporary space at Langley Library.
- (h) That it be noted that subject to the District Valuer valuations, as set out in section 5.7 of the report, providing a viable business case for the current proposals to proceed, a final report would be presented to Cabinet in December 2016.

59. Slough Basin Option Report

The Cabinet considered a report that sought formal approval to grant an option to Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) to redevelop Slough Basin and part of Bowyer Playing Fields to progress the long-term aspiration to create a high quality, residential led scheme at the end of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The Slough Basin scheme would be promoted and delivered in partnership with Waterside Places, the Canal and Rivers Trust development arm. It was recognised that the site had the potential to deliver significant regeneration benefits and granting an option to SUR was an important step forward for the complex scheme. It would provide the SUR and partners the certainty required to further develop the concept and bring forward to planning. The proposal would come back to the Council and Cabinet approval would be required for the disposal. The tenure mix was still to be finalised, however, there was an opportunity for the Herschel Homes subsidiary housing company to acquire the private rented units, subject to approval of the business plan by Cabinet in December.

Cabinet - 17.10.16

Commissioners commented on the need for a clarity and transparency in the strategic approach to such a major development and sought assurance that ward Members would be engaged in the development of the proposal, and particularly any community facilities. Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and asked the Cabinet to ensure that the regeneration benefits were maximised; access to the canal was maintained; and that the strategic intent of utilising any revenue or capital receipts for community benefit be clarified. The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal confirmed that the potential for a community hub would be considered as part of the wider development of the Council's emerging strategy on community hubs and that maximising the regeneration benefits for the local community was a key ambition in taking forward the plans.

The Cabinet then agreed to grant an option to the SUR and give delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing & Resources to take further practical steps to move the scheme forward.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be agreed to the grant of an option to SUR and to agree that Council officers should proceed on the basis that the sites at Slough Basin will be disposed to and developed by SUR , subject to Cabinet approval of the final sum that will represent no less than the best value consideration;
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing & Urban Renewal and the Leader of the Council, to negotiate an SBC option over any potential Private Rented Sector (“PRS”) units promoted within the scheme, and
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing & Urban Renewal and the Leader of the Council, to agree and approve the terms of the Joint Venture vehicle between SUR (SBC and Morgan Sindall Investment Limited) and Waterside Places (Canal and River Trading CIC and Muse Developments Limited) which will be used for the promotion and delivery of the Slough Basin scheme.

60. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

61. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between October to December 2016 be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.48 pm)

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Neil Wilcox; Assistant Director, Finance & Audit

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875358

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Munawar, Commissioner for Finance & Strategy

PART I
NON-KEY DECISION

FINANCIAL REPORT – Q2 2016-17**1 Purpose of Report**

To provide Cabinet with the latest quarter 2 forecast financial information for the 2016-17 financial year.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the current financial forecast and the ongoing work by departments to reduce the overspend be noted.

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

The report indirectly supports all of the strategic priorities and cross cutting themes. The maintenance of excellent governance within the Council to ensure that it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does is achieved through the improvement of corporate governance and democracy by ensuring effective management practice is in place.

The report helps achieve the corporate objectives by detailing how the Council is delivering the Council's budget in line with the approved budget.

4 Other Implications**(a) Financial**

The financial implications are contained within this report.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A
Human Rights	N/A	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A	N/A
Employment Issues	N/A	N/A

Equalities Issues	N/A	N/A
Community Support	N/A	N/A
Communications	N/A	N/A
Community Safety	N/A	N/A
Financial	N/A	N/A
Timetable for delivery	N/A	N/A
Project Capacity	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA

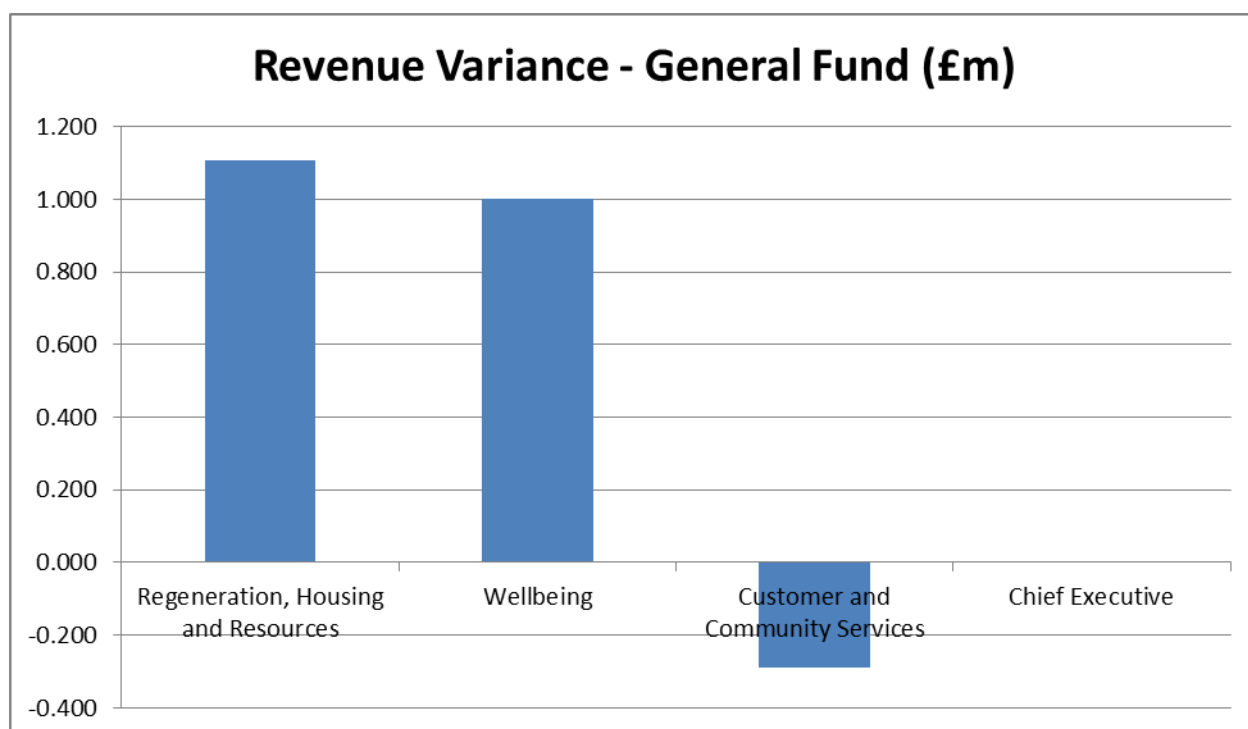
5 **Key Messages**

5.1 **Revenue – Forecast Outturn**

5.1.1 The Council is forecasting over spends of **£1.604m** as at month 6 after allowing for additional funding sources. The financial position has worsened compared to month 5, when the Council was forecast to over spend by **£1.416m**, and the previous Q1 Cabinet report which reported an overspend of £1.119m.

5.1.2. The main reason for the increase in overspend is due to new pressures in the Regeneration, Housing and Resources Directorate. More detail is provided in paragraph 6.

5.1.3 The forecast outturn variance by Directorate is shown below.



5.1.4 The Housing Revenue Account for 2016/17 was originally expecting a deficit of £0.064m. As at the end of period 6 the forecasted net outturn is a surplus of £0.396m as shown below. The net variance is therefore £0.460m

HRA Revenue

Budget Monitoring - September 2016

Division	Annual Forecast		
	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
HRA Expenditure	37.102	36.642	(0.460)
HRA Income	37.038	37.038	0
Total Operating Budget	0.064	(0.396)	(0.460)

5.2 Capital – Forecast Outturn

5.2.1 The overall consolidated capital programme (including the HRA and general Fund) for 2016/17 is £106.454m. As at the end of period 6 the forecast net outturn is £73.449m. The net variance is therefore £33.005m (31%). This is explained further in paragraph 7.

6 Revenue Expenditure

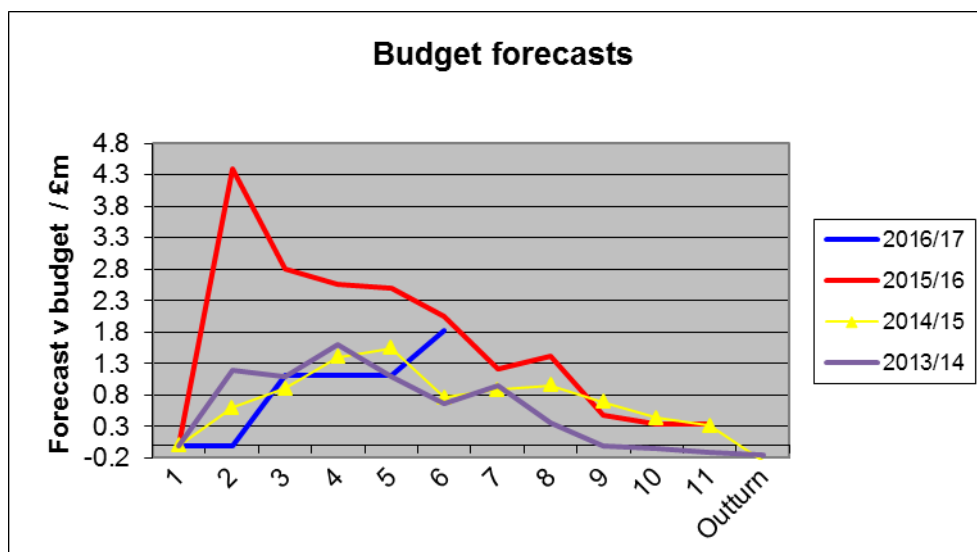
6.1 Period 6 Forecast Outturn by Directorate

Directorate	Net Current Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance: Over / (Under) Spend
	£'M	£'M	£'M
Wellbeing and Schools	59.957	60.957	1.000
Customer and Community Services	17.310	17.021	(0.289)
Regeneration, Housing and Resources	23.068	23.961	0.893
Chief Executive	3.844	3.844	0.000
Corporate	(0.445)	(0.445)	0.000
Total General Fund	103.734	105.338	1.604

Council Tax	48.691	48.691	0.000
Business Rates	30.000	30.000	0.000
Revenue Support Grant	24.243	24.243	0.000
Collection Fund	0.800	0.800	0.000
Corporate Financing	103.734	103.734	0.000

Net (Surplus)/ Deficit	0.000	1.604	1.604
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6.2 The table above shows the variances expected in each directorate. The budget forecasts compared to previous years can be seen below.



6.3 The Council is forecasting overspend of £1.604m as at month 6. The quarter 1 budget monitor report was forecasting an over spend of £1.119m due mainly to increasing pressures on the Adult Social Care budget. In particular, increasing pressures on the domiciliary care budgets due to increasing levels of need for existing clients. This risk is still estimated to be about £1m by year end although the Department is actively trying to contain the costs. At the end of quarter 2 there are new pressures within the Housing and Environment and Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration Services in the Regeneration, Housing and Resources Directorate, within the

6.4 Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration is forecasting an over spend of £423k as at the end of period 2. The asset acquisitions programme is not as advanced as expected at this stage of the year therefore income generated as a result of purchasing fee earning assets is forecast to be lower than the budget. The service is actively pursuing new opportunities via the Council’s Strategic Acquisition Fund to generate additional revenue income for the Council. These over spends have been offset by total savings of £330k elsewhere within the directorate. An increase in building control and planning application fees will generate £187k additional receipts. In addition staff vacancies in the Transport service will contribute savings of £150k. Work is continuing within this directorate to minimise any potential overspends. The movements can be seen in the table below.

	£000s
Overspends	
Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration – Asset Acquisition Income	760
Savings	
Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration – Building Control/Planning Application Fees	(187)
Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration – Transport vacancies	(150)
TOTAL	423

- 6.5 The RHR - Housing and Environment service is forecasting a new over spend. There is a total projected over spend of £470k in this service area. £400k is due to homelessness pressures on temporary accommodation costs. There will be a reduction of £45k in the social services grant receivable and capital recharges recovered for the Disabled facilities grant. In addition the service is facing a £25k agency staff pressure.

	£000s
Housing and Environment Overspends	
Temporary accommodation	400
Social Services Grant Receivable and Capital recharges	45
Agency Staff	25
TOTAL	470

Other Issues

- 6.6 Within the Customer and Community Services directorate a saving of £289k has been attributed to staff vacancies across this service area.
- 6.7 Compensation costs arising in Wellbeing and Community of £386k are estimated to be incurred due to early termination of leases to buildings associated with the Leisure Strategy. These monies will be capitalised and they have not been reported as a pressure in this monitor.
- 6.8 All services continue to work on their published action plans to ensure that all overspends and pressures are reduced. The current forecasted outturn can be seen in Appendix A.

7 Capital Expenditure

- 7.1 As mentioned above the Council expects to spend 69% of the total capital programme by the end of the 2016/17 financial year. The analysis of this spend is as follows.

	16-17 revised budget	Actual Sept 2016	Projected Outturn	Slippage %
Directorate	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Resources	34,860	10,864	17,196	51%
Education and Wellbeing	24,002	2,435	23,702	1%
Customer & Community Services	23,306	3,334	11,007	53%
Chief Executive	33	24	33	0%
Housing Revenue Account	14,333	5,078	11,376	21%
Affordable Housing	9,920	1,696	10,135	-2%
Total	106,454	23,431	73,449	31%

7.2 As part of the configuration of the Capital Programme, and in order to assess the nature of the high level of slippage, a review of all capital projects are being carried out with service managers

8 Conclusion

8.1 The Council overspend is currently estimated to be £1.604m at year end. The Council is committed to delivering services on budget during 2016/17 and work is ongoing to reduce this forecasted financial position.

9 Appendices Attached

'A' - Summary revenue forecasts

10 Background Papers

'1' - Supporting working papers held in finance

Directorate	Net Current Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance: Over / (Under) Spend
	£'M	£'M	£'M
<u>Wellbeing</u>			
Adult Social Care and Health Partnerships	31.051	32.051	1.000
Children, Young People and Families Services	29.253	29.253	0.000
Central Management	0.424	0.424	0.000
Public Health	(0.435)	(0.435)	0.000
Total Wellbeing	60.294	61.294	1.000
Total Schools	(0.337)	(0.337)	0.000
Total Wellbeing and Schools	59.957	60.957	1.000
<u>Customer and Community Services</u>			
Customer Services & IT	0.355	0.355	0.000
Learning & Community	2.596	2.596	0.000
Wellbeing & Community	3.052	3.052	0.000
Enforcement and Regulation	1.725	1.725	0.000
Strategic Management	0.407	0.407	0.000
Transactional Services	8.156	8.156	0.000
Contracts, Commissioning & Procurement	1.019	0.730	(0.289)
Total Customer and Community Services	17.310	17.021	(0.289)
<u>Regeneration, Housing and Resources</u>			
Strategic Management	0.160	0.160	0.000
Corporate Resources	0.006	0.006	0.000
Housing and Environment	14.419	14.889	0.470
Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration	8.483	8.906	0.423
Total Regeneration, Housing and Resources	23.068	23.961	0.893
<u>Chief Executive</u>			
Chief Executive	0.342	0.342	0.000
Strategic Policy & Communication	2.222	2.222	0.000
Professional Services	1.281	1.281	0.000
Total Chief Executive	3.845	3.845	0.000
Total Corporate	(0.445)	(0.445)	0.000
Total General Fund	103.734	105.338	1.604
% of revenue budget over/(under) spent in total			1.6%

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	21 November 2016
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mike England, Interim Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources Paul Thomas, Interim Head of Housing Services
(For all Enquiries)	(01753) 875300
WARD(S):	All
Portfolio	Housing and Urban Renewal - Cllr Ajaib

PART I
KEY DECISION**DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY FOR SLOUGH**1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to introduce to Cabinet a draft new Housing Strategy for Slough for the period 2016 to 2021. Cabinet is asked to approve the draft Strategy as the basis for a consultation with residents, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders. Following consultation, the document will then be brought back to Cabinet for final approval

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

The Cabinet is requested to resolve;

- a) That the draft Housing Strategy 2016-2021 be approved.
- b) That the Strategy be issued for consultation with residents, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders.
- c) That the Strategy be brought back to Cabinet after the consultation for final approval.

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

The Housing Strategy will act as the delivery mechanism to achieve a number of the Council's corporate aims and is well aligned with the JSNA. The Strategy is specifically aimed at delivering outcome 2 of the Five Year Plan: There will be more homes in the borough with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough. The Housing Strategy has been developed in tandem with the preparatory work for the Local Plan.

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

The connection between health and wellbeing and good quality housing is well established. The Housing Strategy sets out the Council's ambition to regenerate neighbourhoods, improve the quality of housing and to contribute to the supply of new homes in Slough.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Housing Strategy is specifically linked to the delivery of outcome 2 of the Five Year Plan:

- There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough

The Strategy also supports the delivery of the following outcomes:

- More people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs. Having a good quality, secure home is linked to health and wellbeing.
- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances. The Strategy specifically aims to develop homes for young care leavers

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. However, given the wide-ranging nature of the policy proposals within the Strategy there will be financial impacts arising from the delivery of those policies. These will be highlighted as each individual policy item is brought forward for consideration.

(b) Risk Management

There are no reported associated with his report. The draft Strategy itself deals with a number of Housing matters and policies where there are risks around delivery, both for the council and for residents. These are discussed in detail in the body of the report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The draft Strategy deals with the Council's statutory responsibilities in a number of different areas of activity, for example;

- Powers of enforcement against private landlords;
- Obligations towards homeless households;
- The Council's responsibilities as a landlord.

Where relevant, legal implications relating to these areas are discussed within the body of the Strategy.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The strategy advances equality and all reasonable steps have been taken to understand and mitigate negative impact. If following a review of the allocation policy a decision is made to change it a further review will be required to understand the impact on protected groups.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 The Slough Housing Strategy sets out the priorities, opportunities and challenges for housing in Slough over the five years to 2021. However, it also forms one of the building blocks for the growth and development of the town over the next 20 years, so that Slough becomes a place where people work, play, rest and stay. It has been developed alongside the preparatory work for the Local Plan to ensure a consistency of approach in looking over this longer timeframe. So in addition to some shorter term objectives the Strategy introduces some ideas which look to the much longer term such as the future of the Council's housing stock, the provision of a better range of homes for older people and providing a balance of homes to rent and to buy.

5.2 The Strategy sets out 5 key themes;

Theme 1; New Housing Supply – ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources.

Theme 2; Private Sector - that the private housing sector provides sufficient good quality market housing through support for landlords and tenants and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.

Theme 3; Council Homes - are managed and maintained to a high standard and the Council builds new homes for Slough residents

Theme 4; Homelessness and Housing Need - that homelessness and rough sleeping are reduced through prevention

Theme 5; Special Needs and Vulnerable Groups - that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community particularly young people, older people, people with disabilities and those on restricted incomes.

5.3 Within the document, each objective is accompanied by key points of evidence and an Action Plan. The latter are reproduced at the end of the Strategy as a consolidated Action Plan which will be the format in which progress will be monitored over the next 5 years. Publication of the final document will be accompanied by an Evidence Base supporting the proposals in the Strategy.

Theme 1; Supply of New Homes

5.4 The Strategy sets out in detail the case for planning for more new homes in Borough over the next 5 years and beyond to meet existing demands and to cater for population and economic growth. This new provision needs to be both to buy and to rent and to be balanced to meet the full range of housing needs, including key workers who currently have difficulty in finding suitable accommodation. A major priority will be the provision of affordable housing for

households who cannot accommodate themselves in the market, incorporating the range of affordable types envisaged by the National Planning Policy Framework. The Strategy sets out how the Council itself intends to take a pro-active lead in ensuring the delivery of new homes. Key points in the Action Plan include;

- Enabling the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- A commitment that the Council will directly deliver or facilitate a programme 200 units per year of new housing, including affordable housing, over the life of the Strategy and beyond.
- Maximising the provision of affordable housing on Council-owned land through infill development and estate renewal, including the net gain of up to 1,000 units on HRA land over the period 2016 to 2031.
- Prioritising available funds and council assets to provide for the delivery of affordable housing schemes in partnership with SUR and Housing Associations.
- Working with private and public sector partners to acquire and assemble sites to facilitate the delivery of new housing.
- Developing initiatives to increase housing opportunities for key workers.
- Improving partnership arrangements with housing associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes.
- Extending the programme of Council mortgage lending through our existing LAPP scheme.
- Providing new homes for particular groups within the community where required, for example those needing extra care or care leavers.

Theme 2; Private Rented Sector

5.5 One family in four in Slough rents their home from a private landlord and this number is growing. Whilst most landlords provide a good service a significant minority do not meet their legal obligations and are responsible for tenants living in unsuitable and sometimes dangerous conditions. National statistics show that this is the Housing sector most likely to display poor housing conditions. This is compounded in Slough by very high levels of overcrowding. This can lead to poor health and educational and economic disadvantage. The Council has important legal obligations to ensure good standards in private sector homes.

5.6 The draft Housing Strategy commits the Council to adopting a pro-active approach to supporting good landlords and taking rigorous enforcement action against poor ones. Key action points include;

- Create two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies to act as exemplar private landlords in the borough and to assist homeless households and others on low or modest incomes to access affordable private sector homes.
- Undertake a feasibility study for introducing a borough-wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive out rogue or criminal landlords from Slough.
- Following the announcement of the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing, implement the scheme once the commencement date has been announced.
- Undertake rigorous enforcement and prosecution against rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.
- Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.
- Use all available powers to bring empty properties back into use.

- Work with utility companies and other agencies to insulate homes and improve the energy ratings of older buildings.
- Through partnership working, particularly with Adult Services, Public Health and the CCG, develop services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and reduce the impact of poor housing on the health of borough residents.
- Build a well-resourced and self-financing Private Sector Housing Service to support good landlords and carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities towards tenants and landlords.

Theme 3; Council Homes

5.7 The Council's housing stock is a vital resource for the residents of Slough. The 7,100 rented and leasehold properties are the Council's most valuable physical asset. The finances relating to the homes are handled in a separate financial account – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.) The Council is committed to investing in its housing stock to further improve the quality of residents' homes and to build new council homes. In the short term the HRA is stable with plans to invest £100m in existing homes over the next 7 years and £40m in new council homes. However, there are threats and uncertainties in the medium term, mainly resulting from changes in Government policy. These issues include a mandatory 1% reduction in rents; a requirement by Government for the Council to pay it a capital sum resulting from the sale of higher value voids; the introduction of "Pay to Stay" for tenants with a household income over £31,000; and the outcome (due in January 2017) of a comprehensive new survey of the condition of the housing stock. The re-commissioning of the repairs, maintenance and investment services will offer the opportunity to shift the emphasis of these services to 30% routine repairs and 70% planned maintenance and investment works. The new contract will also provide opportunities deliver a more streamlined, accessible service to residents.

5.8 The draft Housing Strategy proposes the following key action points;

- Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account in the autumn of 2016.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council's housing stock, for completion by January 2017.
- In the light of the results of the condition survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan in March 2017.
- In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and option appraisal of the Council's housing stock for completion by December 2017.
- Complete the existing programme of 190 new homes on Housing-owned land and seek to continue the programme beyond 2020.
- Adopt the following priorities for improving the services to residents;
 - o Awarding a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract for council homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of repair for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide maintenance services.
 - o Engaging and enabling residents so as to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services.

- o Increasing resident satisfaction through greater responsiveness to customers and in particular through the greater use of digital technology.
- Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for council tenancies in the light of the Housing and Planning Act

Theme 4; Homelessness and Housing Needs

5.9 The Housing Strategy sets out in some detail how the combination of the pressure of a growing population, rising rents and house prices and static or reducing levels of welfare benefits have led to increasing levels of homelessness in the last 2 years. This is evident both in the numbers of households accepted as homeless and in the scale of the use of temporary accommodation, including Bed & Breakfast. The number of Rough Sleepers also appears to be on the rise. For Slough, unlike other boroughs which are facing some of the same pressures, there is the additional factor of the pressure of the placement of homeless families into Slough by other councils and in particular London Boroughs. This is placing additional pressure on the local housing market, stretching local health and care services and leading to unsatisfactory outcomes for the households concerned. The overall approach of the Strategy is to focus on homelessness prevention in collaboration with partner agencies. The headline action points are to;

- Develop and adopt a Preventing Homelessness strategy in collaboration with clients, landlords, the voluntary sector and other partner agencies.
- Develop new partnerships with private and third sector landlords to maximise opportunities for tenancies for homeless families and individuals.
- Establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire homes to alleviate the pressures on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast provision.
- End the use of Bed & Breakfast for families with children.
- Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme.
- Work with the Health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough by other Local Authorities and require those authorities to review their placement and notification policies.
- Undertake an early review of arrangements for Rough Sleepers during periods of cold weather.

Theme 5; Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable People

5.10 Against a background of a growth in the number of older people in the Borough over the next 20 years the Housing Strategy discusses the requirements for specialist accommodation both for people who need support and for people who have mobility problems or a disability. It also highlights the links between health and poor housing conditions. Going forward the document stresses the need for close collaboration in the development of services between Housing, the Children's Trust and Adult Social Care. Amongst the key action points are to;

- Build on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health and disability housing needs and undertake further detailed work with partners and stakeholders to examine what housing options are required to best meet current and future demand and changing needs.

- Through our new Subsidiary Housing Company, develop new partnerships with the Children’s Trust, Health services and Adult Social Care to maximise opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost effectively.
- In collaboration with the Children’s Trust, ensure there is an adequate supply of accommodation for care leavers.
- Deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough during the life of this strategy where there is established local need.
- Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Slough.
- Within the review of the Scheme of Allocation, ensure full account is taken of the needs of people with a disability.

Monitoring of the Strategy

5.11 The high level outcomes of the Housing Strategy will be monitored under outcome 2 of the Five Year Plan: ‘There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough.’ The Strategy fundamentally aims to deliver more and better homes with a focus on local working people. The focus for the monitoring of progress will be the consolidated Action Plan at the end of the document.

Consultation on the Strategy

5.12 It is good practice for the Council to undertake a comprehensive consultation on its Housing Strategy before its final adoption and indeed it is a requirement to do so. If approved by Cabinet, this document will be formally issued for comment to a wide range of stakeholders, including Government Departments, neighbouring authorities, statutory agencies, residents and voluntary groups, housing associations, private developers and other partners. It is also planned to hold a half-day conference on the Strategy before Christmas 2016. All comments received during the consultation will be reviewed and considered before a final version of the Strategy is brought before Cabinet for approval.

6. Comments of Other Committees

Not applicable.

7. Conclusion

The Housing Strategy is the main vehicle for the delivery of Outcome 2 of the Council’s Five Year Plan, that “there will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough. “ This draft strategy is wide-ranging in its scope and covers the range of housing tenures and the key issues Housing issues facing the people of the Borough. It is proposed that this draft now be the subject of a wide consultation before its final approval.

8. Appendices Attached

‘A’ - Draft Slough Housing Strategy

9. Background Papers

‘1’ - Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2016

‘2’ - Learning Disability Plan 2016-2019

- '3' - Community Safety Plans
- '4' - Children and Young Peoples' Plan 2015-2016
- '5' - Centre of Slough Strategy 2015 onwards
- '6' - Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2027
- '7' - Economic Development Plan for Growth 2014-2018
- '8' - Asset Management Plan 2014-2017
- '9' - Get Active Leisure Strategy
- '10' - Climate Change Strategy 2011-2014

Slough Borough Council

Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021

Consultation Draft

October 2016

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the new Housing Strategy for Slough.

We have ambitious plans for the success and growth of our Town over the next 20 years. We want Slough to be a place where people work, rest, play and stay. This means supporting economic growth by providing a full range of housing opportunities in good quality homes that people can afford.

This Housing Strategy is an important building block in our plans, alongside our new Local Plan which is currently in development. This Strategy covers a five year period but we are also looking to the longer term, so that in 20 years time we have a range of housing and support services that match the ambition and needs of our residents.

The population of Slough, and the number of people living here will grow dramatically over the next 20 years. We need to provide housing both for people who are already here and for those residents who will come as a result of developments such as Crossrail. This means providing a balance of housing to rent and to buy, but with a particular emphasis on homes that are affordable.

A good and secure home is central to the quality of life. It affects physical and mental health, job prospects, educational attainment and the ability for families to prosper. So although most people in the Borough are well-housed, that is why we need to tackle some problem areas.

- One household in four in Slough rent their home from a private landlord and most landlords provide a good and valuable service. But we need to address the minority landlords who are exposing their tenants to poor housing conditions.
- We have a growing homelessness problem, some it exported from London, It is vital for the sake of the families concerned that we work hard to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place.
- We need to do more to meet the needs of people in the community who have specific housing needs, such as care leavers or older people needing extra care.

We have a vital and valuable resource in the 7,000 homes that the Council owns and we need to make sure that we nurture and improve those homes for the benefit of existing residents and those that are to come, despite challenging changes that are currently being imposed by the Government. This means developing a vision for what our homes will look like in the longer term.

This Strategy commits the Council to pro-actively promoting the development of new homes, including itself delivering or facilitating the provision of at least 200 new homes per year. However, the success of the Strategy will depend also on the activities of others, including private developers, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector, housing associations, our partner Slough Urban Renewal and residents themselves.

The council will continue to work hard with its many partners to deliver all the action plans within the Housing Strategy and I look forward to seeing them delivered over the coming months and years.

photo

***Councillor Zaffar Ajaib, Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal
Slough Borough Council***

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Executive Summary

- The Housing Strategy is an important element of the Council's plans to build a town where people want to work, rest, play and stay. It covers a five year period but we are also looking to the longer term, so that in 20 years time we have a range of housing and support services that match the ambition and needs of our residents. The Strategy is presented under 5 themes.

Theme 1 : New Housing Supply

- The population of the Borough will grow rapidly over the next 20 years. When added to the existing demand for homes this means substantial numbers of new homes are needed each year.
- Rising house prices and private sector rents mean that many residents cannot afford accommodation at market rates.
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assesses the need for new homes at 927 units per year up to 2036. The Council will seek to achieve this but this depends on there being sites available for development.
- Although many of the new homes will be built by other agencies the Council itself is very pro-active in bringing forward development. This Strategy commits the Council to delivering or facilitating an average of at least 200 units per year over the life of the Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.
- A balance of new homes to rent and to own is required but a particular priority will be the provision of a range of affordable housing for people who cannot accommodate themselves in the market. This will include homes for key workers.
- New Subsidiary Housing Companies will assist in providing homes for vulnerable groups, such as care leavers.

Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing

- One Slough household in four rents their home from a private landlord and the proportion is growing. Most landlords provide a good service and standard of accommodation.
- However, national statistics show that the worst housing conditions are found in the private rented sector and some rogue landlords provide poor and unhealthy accommodation.
- The Council intends to actively support good landlords but will vigorously use its legal powers, including prosecution to make rogue landlords comply with their obligations. It will investigate a new registration scheme for private landlords and implement the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing.
- The Council will actively use its powers to bring empty properties back into use.
- Two new Subsidiary Housing Companies will act as exemplar private landlords in the Borough and help homeless households and others on modest incomes to access homes in the private sector.

Theme 3; Council Homes

- The Council owns over 7,000 tenanted and leasehold homes. They are its most valuable physical asset and play an increasingly significant role in the town in providing accommodation for people on low or modest incomes.
- Major investment plans are in place which will mean £100m spent on existing homes over the next 7 years and the building of 190 new Council homes.
- Service improvements are planned through a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract due to start in 2017 and wider engagement with residents.
- The financing of council housing is in a period of uncertainty, largely because of changes introduced by the Government. One of these is the forced reduction in rents over the 4 year period from 2016/17, which has removed substantial income from the Housing

Revenue Account (HRA.) A major review of the Business Plan will be needed in March 2017 because of this.

- In collaboration with residents the Council will undertake a major Options Appraisal to look at the future of the Council's homes over the next 20 years.

Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need

- Homelessness is increasing. More people are being accepted as homeless and the number of families in temporary accommodation, such as Bed and Breakfast, is rising very sharply. Rough sleeping is also an issue and may also be on the rise.
- This is due to rising prices in the private sector and static or reducing levels of welfare benefits.
- The problem is being exacerbated in Slough by homeless families moving from London, placed here by London Boroughs. Often this is without adequate notification to services in Slough and this can lead to vulnerable people not fully accessing services.
- The Council will develop a Preventing Homelessness Strategy in partnership with the voluntary sector and other agencies.
- I will end the use of B&B for families with children.
- The Scheme of Allocation for social housing will be reviewed to look at the priority homeless people receive;
- A Subsidiary Housing Company will acquire homes to alleviate pressure on temporary accommodation.
- The Council will work with Health services and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough.

Theme 5: Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups

- Population projections show that the number of people in Slough aged over 65 will grow by 40% in the next 10 years. The number over 85 will grow even more sharply.
- The number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will also increase. There is a clear link between poor housing conditions and poor health.
- Although there is already a range of specialist accommodation available more will be required to meet the growing demand. A greater range of options is also required, including for people who are currently owner-occupiers.
- The Council will develop a long-term strategy for older persons housing in the Borough, looking at increasing the options available for older people in the borough;
- The new Subsidiary Housing Company will be used to look at opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost-effectively.
- There will be an adequate supply of suitable accommodation for care leavers.
- Joint working between Housing and Adult Social Care will deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough and other forms of supported accommodation.

Introduction

Improving Housing quality and standards is a key component of the Council's ambition to make Slough a place to work, rest, play and stay over the next 20 years. In order to meet the needs of existing residents and to support the increase in population and jobs and the economic growth that will accompany it, we need to provide a broad and balanced range of new accommodation to own and to rent. We also need to improve the quality of existing housing.

Housing forms one of the major outcomes in the Council's 5 Year Plan for the Borough. Outcome 2 reads;

"There will be more homes, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough with the necessary infrastructure to support and sustain the community."

This Housing Strategy will help to deliver this outcome as well as the broader objectives of the overarching Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy. It draws together the key housing issues in the Borough into one document and summarises the Council's approach to addressing them. It has been prepared in parallel with the development of the Local Plan which will set out the planning and spatial framework for the Borough in the period up to 2036.

Our plans are ambitious, both for the Town and for the provision of Housing. We want to welcome the growth that is coming and harness it to fashion a high quality and successful environment where people want to stay and have access to good quality accommodation that they can afford.

We recognise that success will involve many different organisations and agencies. Residents, private developers, statutory agencies, housing associations and the voluntary sector all have an important part to play. The Council cannot by itself meet the significant housing challenges facing the Borough. We hope that this Strategy will form the framework against which our partners can join together to improve housing opportunities for all the residents of the Borough.

Structure of the Strategy

The document is structured into five key themes:

- **Theme 1 : New Housing Supply** - Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources.
- **Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing** - Ensuring that the private housing sector provides sufficient good quality market housing through support for landlords and tenants and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.
- **Theme 3; Council Homes** - Ensuring council homes *are managed and maintained to a high standard and the Council builds new homes for Slough residents.*
- **Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need** - Reducing homelessness *and rough sleeping through effective prevention work.*
- **Theme 5 : Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups** - Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people and those with special housing needs, for example, young people, older people and people, people with disabilities.

The Action Plans from each of the themes are brought together at the end of the document in a format which will be used to monitor the strategy over the next few years.

Theme 1 : New Housing Supply

Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- Slough has 51,000 homes accommodating 149,400 people with a predicted growth of a further 18,154 people over the next five years.
- Housing supply: 56% of households own their own home/have a mortgage; 24% are private rented, 20% are social rent homes (council and housing association);
- Slough has high levels of overcrowding compared to neighbouring areas;
- House Prices average £304,000 (Zoopla, August 2016), with one of the highest rates of increase in the country over the previous year;
- Affordability; the ratio between average house prices 11:1 and average income levels is 11:1;
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates a requirement for 927 new homes per year over the next 20 years;
- Pressure on housing supply is indicated by the growth of homeless households in temporary accommodation which has grown sharply in the 2 years to September 2016;
- Slough is under pressure from households moving from London, including households placed in Slough by London Boroughs;
- Land supply is a key constraint for building new homes in Slough
- Low development viability restricts the capacity to provide affordable housing and contributions to infrastructure.

This chapter describes the overall position on housing and housing need in Slough and sets out the current information on the need for new homes. It also outlines the pro-active role the Council itself intends to play in ensuring the delivery of new homes for residents of the borough.

Our Objectives

In setting out our Strategy on the supply of new homes we have a number of objectives;

- To provide homes that will support economic growth and enable residents to build their lives and careers by staying in Slough;
- To meet the new build requirements set out in the SHMA ;
- To provide a balance of new housing to own and to rent to cater for the requirements of all income groups;
- To provide affordable housing for the range of income groups who need it;
- To facilitate opportunities for households to move to different types of housing for people at all stages in their life and as their circumstances change;
- To make the best use of resources in providing new housing;
- To provide for new homes for special needs groups and vulnerable people within the community;
- To ensure that new homes are of high quality and make a contribution to the quality of life in Slough.

Background

Population and Housing in Slough

Slough has a population of 147,821 which is expected to grow by 6,900 over the next five years (ONS). It has the most diverse population in Berkshire, which grew by 18% between 2001 and 2013. The population is due to continue growing. It is anticipated there will be an increase of almost 20,000 households between 2013 and 2036 (38%.) This is much higher than the 22% projected increase in England as a whole. These increases will be accompanied by an increase in the workforce.

Slough also has a very young age profile with 9.2% of the population of pre-school age and 20.3% at school.

A particular characteristic of households in Slough is the very high level of overcrowding. In the 2011 Census 21% of households were living in overcrowded conditions compared to just 8.5% for England as a whole. This figure represented a significant increase in overcrowding in Slough since 2001. Allied to this is the very high level of "concealed" households - that is, households living within other households (often with relatives) and yet to form. The number of such households has doubled since 2001 and is now the 3rd highest in the whole country. Slough also has a relatively high proportion of larger families, with 15% of households containing five or more people.

56% of households in Slough own their own home; 24% rent their homes from private landlords and 20% are social housing tenants (renting from the Council or housing associations). These proportions have changed sharply since 2001, with a reduction in the proportion of households owning their own homes and an increase in those in the private rented sector.

Housing in Slough is rapidly becoming more expensive. In August 2016, average house prices reached £304,000 (Zoopla, Aug 2016.) This was one of the most rapid price increases in the country compared to the position a year previously. The ratio of average house prices to average incomes in the borough had reached 11;1.

This brief outline of the housing situation in Slough points to a future in which the Borough is looking forward to rapid growth in the population and the workforce, to add to existing pressures on the housing market. The high levels of overcrowding and the rapid rise in market prices (and rents) suggest both that substantially more homes are required over the period of this Strategy and beyond and that the "affordability" of these homes will be a major consideration.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Borough has the benefit of a major new assessment of the need for new homes, published early in 2016. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a detailed study of the Housing situation in Slough (and neighbouring authorities), drawing on information about current housing requirements and future need arising from population and economic growth.

Slough is set within a wider "Housing Market Area" which also includes the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and South Buckinghamshire. The SHMA identifies the "objectively assessed need" to provide 927 new homes year on year in Slough over the period 2013 to 2036. This is higher than the Council's current target

of 550 homes and higher than either of the other two local authority areas within the Housing Market Area.

As part of its detailed analysis, the SHMA also made recommendations for the size of dwellings to be provided, to be used as a guide on individual developments.

Recommended Mix of New Homes (SHMA, 2016)				
	1 Bed	2 Beds	3 Beds	4+ Beds
Market Housing	13%	25%%	45.0%	16.0%
Affordable Housing	42%%	30.7%%	22.1%%	4.6%%

The Council accepts the analysis of the SHMA (subject to the analysis of housing need below) and the need for the provision of new homes on the scale proposed. This is consistent with its long term vision for the growth of Slough and with its ambition to provide an adequate supply of high quality accommodation for people who want to live and stay in the Borough. Via this Strategy the Council is committed to maximizing the supply of new homes as long as development is sustainable and consistent with the other objectives of the 5 Year Plan.

Other Measures of Housing Need

The Council accepts the analysis of the SHMA. The urgency of the need to provide additional housing at the recommended scale is amplified by consideration of local pressures that are not fully taken account of in the SHMA. The SHMA is concerned in particular with longer –term economic and population trends, using nationally-available, but inevitably broad-brush data sources. The Council itself has access to other data which reflect day to day pressures experienced by residents of the Borough.

The Housing Register

One such source is the Housing Register. From January 2014 the Council restricted access to its Housing Register in order to reflect the limited availability of social housing and the fact that many people then on the Register had no realistic prospect of receiving an offer of accommodation. Prior to that, around 8,000 households had expressed a wish to be considered for an offer of social housing in the Borough. Of these, 43% required 1 bedroom; 31% required 2 bedroom, 20% required 3 bedrooms and 5% needed 4 bedrooms or more. Since 2014, the Register has been reduced to a figure of just over 2,000 households. Even so, the shortage of affordable accommodation still means a long wait for applicants. In 2015/16, households had waited an average of 2.65 years for a 1 bedroom home, 3.9 years for a 3 bedroom home and over 5 years for a home of 4 bedrooms or more.

Homelessness

A further key issue is homelessness. The Council has statutory responsibilities to provide accommodation for homeless households. Frequently, this is temporary accommodation, often in accommodation owned by private landlords. As families on low or modest incomes find it increasingly difficult to accommodate themselves in the private rented sector as a result of rising rents and static or falling levels of benefits, this pressure emerges as homelessness. The use of temporary accommodation is

therefore a sensitive bellweather of the pressure being felt in the local housing market by households on lower or modest incomes.

In Slough, the use of temporary accommodation is rising rapidly. At 31 March 2015, the Council had 156 households in temporary accommodation. A year later this had risen to 225. By September 2016 the total in temporary accommodation stood at over 300. At this rate of change, the position in Slough will soon be approaching that of a typical London Borough. Each year, the Department for Communities and Local Government publishes data on the level of homelessness acceptances in each local authority area, expressed as a proportion of the population. For 2015/16, the rate for Slough was 4.43 per 1,000 of the population, higher than the 3.04 for the London Borough of Hillingdon and only slightly behind the Hounslow figure of 5.52.

However, this expresses only a part of the current pressures on the Borough. Published statistics refer to the **placing authority**, not where they are placed. In reality, the pressure on the housing market in Slough is being made considerably worse by movement outwards from London and from other neighbouring authorities. Some of this is caused by the placement by London Boroughs and other authorities of homeless households in temporary accommodation **in** Slough. Some of the issues arising from this for the households concerned are discussed under Objective 4 below. Councils placing outside their area are required to notify the receiving authority of the placement. Over the last 3 years Slough has been notified of some 450 placements into the Borough by 28 different authorities. These include all the other Berkshire authorities, South Bucks and 11 different London Boroughs. It is believed that the true level of placements is far higher than this and that in reality not all placements are notified. It is believed this figure excludes some instances where other authorities have purchased properties in Slough, have used accommodation on nightly-rates or where they have discharged their homelessness duty into the private sector. Housing officers believe that it is likely that the total number of placements into Slough over this period is nearer 1,000 households.

Key Workers

The Council is aware that there are some vital services, for example in education, which are being hampered in their recruitment of key staff because of the difficulty of securing suitable and affordable accommodation. It is often the case that while such staff may not be able to afford to buy a home or to pay market rents, they are also excluded from the usual routes into affordable housing and in particular social housing. There is a very limited stock of accommodation for this group of workers, who may be able to afford rents which are higher than social housing rents but who cannot afford accommodation in the market. The Council wants to try and address this through the work of this strategy. This could be via new models of provision, perhaps via the new Subsidiary Housing Companies, or through the provision of new affordable homes specifically for this group.

Heathrow Expansion

At the time of writing the Government has not yet announced its decision on the expansion of Heathrow. Should this decision be made, this would be a further significant factor pointing to an increased requirement for new homes in the Borough.

The Council believes that these special and live pressures on the housing market in Slough will not fully have been taken into account in the SHMA and that they amplify the need for additional accommodation at the recommended level..

Affordable Housing

Market housing in Slough, both to rent and to buy is becoming more expensive. There has been a 40% increase in average house prices over the last 3 years with a 20% increase in the last 12 months alone. As noted above the ratios between prices and incomes are widening and it is becoming more difficult for households on even average incomes to find accommodation in the market. This position is unlikely to ease. The regeneration of the Town Centre, the introduction of Crossrail will offer reduced commuter journey times into central London and the promise of future fast rail links with Birmingham and the North with HS2. In both cases substantial numbers of new homes are planned as part of the regeneration, but demand for new housing will also continue to increase due to the growth in employment opportunities and population in the borough. It is therefore important that other opportunities for housing development are identified and existing housing committed housing sites encouraged to come forward for delivery, especially during the next five years.

While it will be important to achieve a balance in the new housing which is provided the Council sees it as a high priority to provide sufficient affordable housing to allow people to establish themselves and to stay in Slough even if they cannot afford market accommodation. The information earlier in the chapter points to the wide-ranging evidence that significantly more affordable housing is required. The Local Plan sets a target that 40% of all additional dwellings built in Slough to meet local housing need should be “affordable.” The ability to deliver this through planning applications has been hampered by low development values and viability. The review of the local plan will need to reassess the viability of the local plan requirements as part of an examination of the deliverability and soundness of the plan.

Over the last few years the term “affordable” has been used in variety of different ways.

The SHMA and Affordable Housing

The SHMA itself includes a considerable amount of material on the need for additional affordable housing. It uses the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition that affordable housing is “social rented”, “affordable rented” or “intermediate” housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. “Intermediate” housing is taken to include shared ownership and rented housing provided to households who can afford to pay between 80% of market rates and the full market rate. “Social rented” homes are provided by Local Authorities or Housing Associations at or below “Target” rents. “Affordable rented” housing provided by Housing Associations or local councils at rents between Target rents and a figure which is 80% of the market value. In other words, the SHMA discusses affordable housing as accommodation available to a wide range of income groups whose common factor is that they cannot afford to house themselves in the market.

The SHMA report also makes some general assessments on the annual household income required to purchase or rent in Slough without additional subsidy. For purchase in the lowest quartile of the market the figure is £50,000 (this assessment is before the sharp rises in house prices in the year to August 2016.) For rental the equivalent figures are; lower quartile private rent, £23,100; affordable rent, £18,500; lower quartile social rent, £15,000. Across the study area as a whole, one fifth of households had an income of below £20,000 per year and a further one third of between £20,000 and £40,000. The median income in Slough in mid - 2014 was £28, 816 and the mean income £37,952.

By making assumptions about what proportion of their income households could be expected to spend on their accommodation the SHMA is able to make a broad

assessment of the scale of how many of the households requiring accommodation in Slough over the period to 2036 would need “affordable” housing to this definition. Looking at the likely demand and comparing this with the supply of existing affordable housing over that period the SHMA quotes a net requirement of 671 affordable homes per year. It emphasizes that this cannot be compared directly with the overall requirement of 927 units per year because it has been derived through a different method. Equally the SHMA suggests that this cannot be directly applied as a target and that it needs to be balanced with a range of other issues, not least whether it is practicable and viable to provide affordable homes on that scale. Nevertheless, it is a useful marker for the fact that a significant proportion of households looking to build their lives in Slough will be unable to do so without some intervention that brings their housing costs below market levels.

The SHMA also make some broad recommendations about the type of affordable housing to be provided. It suggests that approximately 20-25% of the need for affordable housing could be met by “intermediate” homes, that is between 80% of market rates and full market rates. The remainder would be met by rented housing at 80% of market levels or below. It does not make recommendations about the appropriate split between “social rent” and “affordable rent” due to the complexity of the relationship between the two, the changing nature of the funding arrangements and the role of the availability of Housing Benefit to support rent payments by households on low incomes.

Starter Homes

In addition to revised funding arrangements for affordable housing in recent years the Government has now introduced the concept of Starter Homes. Although at the time of writing the detailed implementation is still to be explained it appears that over next five years this will include the provision for 20% of new homes on each new development to be “starter homes” for sale. These will be sold at 80% of the local market price to people under 40 buying their first home in line with new legislation to increase home ownership levels. These homes will count towards the affordable housing contribution on larger developments and the market discount will need to come from the same pot of developer contributions that is used for other affordable housing and infrastructure needed to address development. Affordable homes for rent will therefore be over and above this provision for Starter Homes. This may in future be the route through which the assessment within the SHMA of the need for homes at between 80% and full market levels will be met. It may also become the primary route into home-ownership for households aspiring to own their own home for the first time.

The Council's Approach

The Council wishes to support the future growth and development of the town through the provision of a balance of new housing which allows residents to build their lives and stay in the town and which also provides opportunities to move on to a range of other accommodation as their careers and circumstances develop and change. This means planning for a range of high quality affordable housing as well meeting the needs of those who will look to the private market for their accommodation.

The Council is determined to maximize the provision of affordable housing. Primarily this will be housing to rent although it will look for opportunities to facilitate low cost home-ownership (see the LAPP scheme below.) It recognizes that in the future aspirations for home-ownership may be met via the Starter Homes scheme.

In thinking about the cost of affordable rented homes there are a number of considerations;

- First, the viability of individual schemes in an era where there is no longer national subsidy available for affordable rented housing. Depending on the site, the provision of affordable rented housing will be easier in some places than in others. There will often be a trade-off to be made between the number of affordable units which can be achieved and the level of rents. Viability may also vary between parts of the Borough. Accommodation at lower rents may be more viable on greenfield sites than on Town Centre or complex brownfield sites;
- Second, many of the households seeking accommodation are on low incomes and cannot afford rents at “affordable rent” levels without subsidy;
- Third, however, the SHMA has shown that amongst the households which would be looking to access affordable rented housing there is a wide spread of incomes, including families who could afford to pay rents up to 80% of market rates but who cannot afford to house themselves in the market. These households commonly do not have access to council or housing association accommodation through traditional routes and there is a very limited stock of accommodation in the Borough available to this group. In this sense they are caught between their inability to access the market and the limited likelihood of accessing social rented housing;
- Fourth, the Council is also aware that under the terms of the Housing and Planning Act the Government is intending to introduce its policy of “Pay to Stay,” from April 2017. This will mean that rents paid in social housing (for Housing Associations, on a voluntary basis) will vary according to the income of the tenant.

Balancing these factors together the Council will therefore promote affordable rented housing at a range of rents, from traditional social housing rents to rents that are within the reach of households on middle incomes. However, it would not normally wish to see new affordable rented housing provided at rents above the Local Housing Allowance levels which are accessible to people claiming Housing Benefit. This is currently between 70% and 75% of market levels for most sizes of property.

Delivery of New Homes

Performance in Recent Years

The task in delivering new homes on the scale envisaged by the SHMA is challenging. However, performance in recent years demonstrates that this may be achievable. In 2015/16, across all housing tenures, 789 new homes were completed, well in excess of the Local Plan target of 550. This followed a total of 507 in 2014/15. The great majority of delivery in these years was on large sites.

Projected Future Delivery

The Slough Housing Trajectory estimates the number of homes likely to be completed over the period to 2036. Over the next 5 years, to 2020/21, the availability of known large sites means that delivery is likely to average between 700 and 750 homes per year. In the 3 years beyond that the combination of known large sites and other “core options” shows the prospect of reaching the SHMA target of 927 homes per year, taking account of how long it may in reality take to build our strategic sites. In the years after that, i.e. from 2024/25 onwards, the scarcity of sites in Slough appears to make the prospect of meeting the SHMA target difficult or impossible within the boundaries of the Borough.

Support for Private Sector Delivery

The Council recognises that the majority of new homes provided in the Borough will be built by private sector developers. We will support the development process through the Planning service via the provision of timely advice about the preferred mix and tenure of homes on individual developments. This will include advice about the required contribution of affordable housing. Where appropriate, we will support private sector development through assistance with site assembly and through asset management, where Council interests in neighbouring or ancillary assets can be used to facilitate development. This will particularly be the case where active asset management can achieve wider regeneration benefits for Slough over and above the provision of new homes. Where possible, the Council will look to use its Subsidiary Housing Companies (see below) to support and encourage private sector development of new homes.

A Leading and Pro-Active Role for the Council

The Council has already recognised that in order to achieve the delivery of the new homes required for the people of Slough now and in the future, it will itself need to act as the leading player and catalyst for development. It will not be sufficient to rely on the private sector to deliver the homes required. It is already aggressively promoting and achieving the delivery of new homes through a variety of mechanisms.

It is a commitment of this Housing Strategy that the Council will directly facilitate the delivery of an average of 200 new homes per year during the life of this strategy and the Local Plan. This will be through a combination of direct delivery and provision by partners on behalf of the Council. These homes will be of a range of tenures but with the main emphasis on affordable housing.

Development on Council-Owned Land - General Fund Sites

The Council is already directly using surplus General Fund land for the provision of new homes;

- At Ledgers Road, the handover of 73 new homes has begun in the Autumn of 2016. 23 of these will be passed as social rented housing to the Council's Housing Revenue Account, while the remainder are for one market sale to local people;
- A further scheme of 103 homes at Wexham Nurseries will provide 33 homes for the HRA and 70 homes for sale to local people.

Council Land - Housing Revenue Account Sites

The Council intends to maximize the development potential on its own land held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.) A new Business Plan for the HRA was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2016.

- A programme of 190 new council homes will be delivered in the years up to 2019/20 on existing identified sites, using a combination of retained Right to Buy receipts, S106 contributions and council funding;
- The Council is looking for further sites, such as under-used garages to allow for an increase in the scale of the programme;
- The Council is looking actively at the scope for wider estate renewal. This follows successful regeneration schemes at Common Road Langley and at Britwell. The overall aim would be to increase the amount and quality of residential accommodation, improve the overall quality of the environment and ensure there is an appropriate mix of house types and tenures. The next major scheme will be at the Tower and Ashbourne House tower blocks, which are already being

- decanted prior to demolition, a total of 120 flats. An appraisal of the site is currently being carried out to determine the best mix for the future development while maximising the number of replacement units;
- The new HRA Business Plan also commits the Council to undertake a fundamental Option Appraisal of its housing stock, for completion by December 2017. This will help determine the future of existing homes and estates over the next 15 to 20 years and look at how overall quality can be improved while maximizing the overall potential of HRA land;
 - It is estimated that over the 15 years from 2016 a net gain of approximately 1,000 housing units can be achieved on HRA land.

Joint Venture Delivery; Slough Urban Renewal

The Council is confident it can deliver its ambitious programme for the delivery of new homes. We have established Slough Urban Renewal (SUR), a joint venture with Morgan Sindall (MSIL) which has already proven successful in developing new homes for both sale and rent. The sites at Ledgers Road and Wexham are current examples. SUR is also delivering a range of community projects, including vitally-needed extensions to schools. The Council sees SUR as a key vehicle in enabling it to deliver new homes in the next few years, through a variety of means.

For example, it has been a long-term ambition of the Council to create a high-quality, mixed-use residential scheme at the end of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal. To date, the redevelopment of this area has been stalled due to an inability to assemble land required to meet the Planning objective of delivering a comprehensive scheme. In October 2016 the Council's Cabinet agreed to grant an option to SUR to redevelop Slough Basin in partnership with Waterside Places, the joint venture entered into by the Canal and Rivers Trust. This will provide some 240 new homes.

Site Assembly and Pro-Active Asset Management

Slough Basin is an example of where the Council has used its strategic role to promote the assembly of sites and actively used the leverage of its own assets to help deliver development and regeneration. The Council is working on this basis on other sites in the Borough and will continue to do so in order to deliver the development of the new homes required either directly, via SUR or by the private sector.

Strategic Acquisition

The Council has already developed the capacity for the strategic acquisition of sites. Given the land constraints already referenced in the Housing Trajectory it will actively look for opportunities for acquisition, either directly or via SUR, in order to assist in the delivery of sites identified in the local plan.. It will do so in particular to increase the delivery of affordable housing.

One Public Estate – Upton Hospital

Combined with our assertive asset management approach we have a shared ambition with our public sector partners to make efficient and productive use of our joint estates and to see land and property as an enabler for growth and service transformation. We will be pooling data on asset holdings and developing joint plans with our partners. One current example is at Upton Hospital, where there is the potential to release surplus land and buildings which can be reused for housing and new enterprise, boosting local jobs, growth and house building in the longer term. There is potential for up to 1,000 new homes on the site.

Horizon Scanning for Large Sites

We will co-ordinate the work of this Strategy with that on the emerging local plan to look to identify large sites which are suitable for the provision of significant numbers of homes in the medium and long term. One such example is the ICI site which potentially has the capacity for up to 2,000 new homes.

Subsidiary Housing Companies

The Council's Cabinet in June 2016 approved a proposal to establish two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies – Herschel Homes and Slough Homes. Two companies are required in order to allow for intervention in different areas of the market. The companies would be in the business of acquiring existing or newly-built homes. They would contribute to the provision of homes in a number of ways;

- Providing a potential buyer for new developments, for example at sites such as Slough Basin or those to be developed by private developers;
- Bringing empty properties back into use;
- Using existing accommodation to provide more affordable housing;
- Providing specialist accommodation for particular groups, for example care leavers or key workers.

Compulsory Purchase

Elsewhere in this Strategy we set out the Council's determination to pro-actively intervene to improve standards in the private rented sector. This will include the use of compulsory purchase powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty properties back into use. As an example, the Council's Cabinet in November 2016 will consider a proposal to issue CPOs on 7 long-term void properties in the Borough.

LAPP (Local Authority Partnership Purchase Scheme)

The Council has introduced the LAPP scheme, This is a modern shared ownership scheme to help local people buy a home in the borough. It is aimed at buyers who can afford mortgage repayments, but who cannot afford to buy a property outright, or who may not have the large deposit often required. The scheme is available on properties for sale up to the value of £400,000 and within the Slough postcode area. LAPP helps people to buy up to 70% share of a home by obtaining up to a 90% loan to value mortgage on their share. Slough Borough Council will buy the remaining 30% The buyer will then pay rent to the council for this share of the property. It is hoped that the scheme can eventually be expanded to help 100 Slough households into home-ownership.

Partnership with Housing Associations

The Council recognises that Housing Associations already make an important contribution towards Housing in the Borough and in particular the provision of social housing. 7% of households in Slough rent their homes from Registered Providers (Housing Associations.) We also recognize that Associations have the potential and the capacity to deliver new homes that the Borough requires, including affordable housing, but that this potential is not currently being fully exploited. We therefore intend to re-invigorate the partnership arrangements with local Housing Associations both to encourage the development of new affordable homes and to involve them more fully in programmes to improve the quality of life in the town.

Provision for special needs groups

The Council is committed to improving housing options for vulnerable groups ensuring availability within local communities particularly for young people, older people and people with disabilities as required and will be working with its various health and other partners to develop new accommodation options where there is an

identified need. It is a specific commitment of this Housing Strategy to facilitate the provision of more extra care units alongside the programme to maximise the delivery of new units.

The Local Plan and Land Constraints

This chapter has demonstrated that the Council has adopted a vigorous and interventionist approach in seeking the delivery of new homes to own and to rent. It accepts and will actively seek to meet the level of housing need set out in the SHMA to ensure that existing and future residents of Slough have access to good quality homes appropriate to their needs.. It will maximize the use of its own land and will actively acquire sites, either directly or through other vehicles, in order to increase the level and rate of completions. It will work positively through the planning process to encourage well designed developments that enhance the built environment. It will build partnerships with other agencies, including private developers, housing associations and other public sector bodies to assist delivery on other potential housing sites. It will use its strategic powers to assemble sites and build partnerships to allow development to be brought forward. Over the period of this Strategy there are sites and opportunities already identified which will deliver significant numbers of new homes.

In the medium and longer term, the pipeline of suitable housing sites may require further support to ensure that they come forward and in order to deliver the necessary housing. . It is anticipated that the review of the Local Plan currently underway will seek to address this issue. Considerations will include the question of whether it is feasible to meet all of the housing need up to 2036 within the borough boundaries or whether it will be necessary to pursue options for housing in other local authorities. The option for substantial housing to be located in South Buckinghamshire, possibly taking the form of a new “garden suburb” will require co-operation of the local authority and may also require considerable master planning input.

Action Plan

- Seek to enable the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the SHMA.
- The Council will directly deliver or facilitate a programme 200 units per year of new housing over the life of this Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.
- Maximize the provision of affordable housing on Council-owned land through infill development and estate renewal, including the net gain of 1,000 units on HRA land over the period 2016 to 2031.
- Prioritise available funds and council assets to provide for the delivery of affordable housing schemes in partnership with SUR and Housing Associations.
- Work with private and public sector partners to acquire and assemble sites to facilitate the delivery of new housing.
- Improve partnership arrangements with housing associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes
- Extend our programme of Council mortgage lending through our existing LAPP scheme.
- Produce a plan to improve housing opportunities for key workers.
- Provide new homes for particular groups within the community where required, for example those needing extra care or care leavers.
- Use our Subsidiary Housing Companies to assist in providing homes for vulnerable groups within the community.

- Pro-actively use powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty homes back into use.

Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing

Ensuring that the private housing sector provides sufficient good quality market housing through support for landlords and tenants and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- One Slough household in four rents their home from a private landlord;
- Most landlords provide a good service standard of accommodation but a minority are rogue landlords who provide unsatisfactory and unhealthy accommodation.
- Nationally, bad housing conditions are most commonly found in the private rented sector. One third do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard.
- The Council is currently working to provide detailed information about the condition of private rented housing in Slough.
- The number of service requests from private rented housing, including complaints and requests for advice, rose from 683 in 2014/15 to 918 2015/16;
- It is estimated that there are approximately 3,500 Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Borough. The number will be clarified later in 2016 by BRE research.
- 64 HMOs are currently licensed under Mandatory Licensing and a further 42 HMOs under the Chalvey Additional Licensing Scheme.
- The Council's Housing Regulation Team is currently working on 11 long-term empty properties.

Objectives

The Council wants to ensure that Slough has good quality, affordable private sector housing which meets the needs of residents, improving health, well-being, and social mobility and makes Slough a thriving place to live and work. To achieve this we have the following objectives;

- Improve the condition of private sector homes through assistance to tenants and landlords and through robust regulation where necessary;
- Improve the standard of the management of private sector homes in the Borough;
- Support residents to access affordable, well-managed private sector homes;
- Increase the supply of private sector housing by bringing empty properties and abandoned commercial buildings back into residential use.
- Support disabled and vulnerable home owners to live independently in safe, secure and warm homes.

Background

The great majority of residents in Slough live in privately-owned homes, both owner-occupied and privately-rented. Private housing is therefore a critical resource for the Borough, its residents and its economy. To a large degree the private sector satisfies the requirements of many residents to own their own homes or to occupy accommodation which is suitable for them at particular times in their lives.

As in most other parts of the country the proportion of Slough households living in privately-rented homes has been increasing. The latest information suggests that over 25% of households now rent their home from a private landlord, higher than the national figure of 17%. Most landlords provide good quality homes which are well-managed and cater for a wide range of income groups.

The Council itself has a range of partnership arrangements with private landlords, particularly where it is preventing families becoming homeless or placing residents in private rented accommodation as an alternative to expensive and unsuitable Bed & Breakfast hotels. Private sector homes are a vital resource when there is not enough permanent social housing available.

However, while most private sector homes provide a good standard of accommodation, there are also some severe problems;

- Nationally, conditions in the private rented sector are worse than in other housing tenures. A third do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard;
- Many tenants in Slough are living in overcrowded conditions;
- Research by Shelter nationally shows that over half of tenants had experienced at least one of the following problems over the previous 12 months; mould or damp; leaking roofs or windows; electrical hazards; pest infestations; a gas leak or inadequate heating. 10 % of tenants reported their health has been affected in the last year because their landlord has not dealt with repairs and poor conditions in their property and 9% of parents said their children's health has been affected. The Building Research Establishment has estimated that that poor housing is costing the NHS over £600m per year;
- Poor housing conditions, particularly associated with the private rented sector, have an adverse effect on public health and well-being and exacerbate health inequalities.
- The energy efficiency standard of a home and inadequate heating systems can lead to fuel poverty for low income households and further exacerbate the health effects of living in poor quality housing.
- For a number of elderly, disabled or vulnerable residents, particularly owner-occupiers, they now need support or adaptations to their homes to allow them to continue to live independently
- In a small minority of cases, landlords are deliberately keeping their properties empty. Empty homes are a wasted resource and can be a major source of nuisance to local residents. The Council is proactively working on 14 sites and 7 of these are at an advanced stage towards a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Regulation of HMOs

The Council has statutory responsibilities to ensure there are good standards of accommodation in the private sector and regulatory and enforcement powers available to assist in achieving this objective. The use of these powers of regulation will be extended following the announcement in October 2016 that Government will expand the mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs.)

Improving Data on Private Rented Housing

The Council is in the process of updating its information about private rented homes in the Borough using research carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE.) The main purposes of the research are to;

- Obtain an up to date picture of private rented homes in the Borough;
- Identify and highlight the extent of the main "Category 1" hazards found in homes in Slough. This is a hazard that presents a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety;
- Identify where to target resources to achieve the greatest health outcomes, for example by relieving excessively cold homes, fuel poverty, dampness and overcrowding .

Dealing with Rogue Landlords

The Council will target rogue landlords who exploit vulnerable people by renting out unsafe, illegal and overcrowded structures. We will use stock modelling and other available intelligence to take robust action against rogue landlords persistently break the law. We will develop a pro-active programme of inspections of properties rented by rogue landlords and estate agents and use all our statutory powers to ensure they comply with their legal duties. The Council has set up a multi-agency taskforce help tackle this issue.

Landlord Registration

Many local authorities across the country have concluded that the best way to support tenants and good landlords and to improve the private rented sector would be the mandatory registration of rented properties. This would promote the letting of properties as a business, help the Council to develop a programmed and methodical approach to regulating the properties in the worst condition and drive out the rogue and criminal elements from the market. The Council will be investigating the feasibility of introducing borough-wide registration of all rented properties, This would mean that for a relatively small fee landlords register their properties with the Council. This would then give landlords access to expert advice and support on ensuring the best use of their investment.

Energy Efficiency

The private rented sector has the highest proportion of poorly-insulated, energy-inefficient buildings. The Energy Act 2011 contains powers such that from 2018 landlords should ensure their properties meet a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or that they have installed the maximum package under the Green Deal. The Council will use the evidence from its BRE stock modelling to build a business case for bringing external investment to improve energy efficiency into the housing stock in the Borough, particularly the older private sector stock in the owners-occupied and private rented sectors.

Using the RMI

The start of the Council's new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment (RMI) contract in 2017 provides an opportunity for the Council to provide a package of support to private landlords and help them to provide a better standard of accommodation. This will also make it more attractive for the landlords concerned to offer their properties to the Council rather than to London Boroughs as has happened on a large scale over the last few years. In conjunction with the ambition to bring in external funding referred to above, the RMI can also help to tackle fuel poverty amongst older or vulnerable residents.

Action Plan

- Create two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies to act as exemplar private landlords in the borough and to assist homeless households and others on low or modest incomes to access affordable private sector homes.
- Undertake a feasibility study for introducing a borough-wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive our rogue or criminal landlords from Slough.
- Following the announcement of the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing we will implement the scheme once the commencement date has been announced.
- Undertake rigorous enforcement and prosecution against rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.
- Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.
- Use the new RMI contract to provide support and services to private landlords.
- Use all available powers to bring empty properties back into use.

- Work with our partner agencies to tackle the problem of illegally-occupied outbuildings.
- Create and operate a professional, ethical and effective social letting scheme to help good landlords as well residents who are being exploited by rogue landlords and agents.
- Work with utility companies and other agencies to insulate homes and improve the energy ratings of older buildings.
- Through partnership working, particularly with Adult Services, Public Health and the CCG, develop services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and reduce the impact of poor housing on the health of borough residents.
- Build a well-resourced and self-financing Private Sector Housing Service to support good landlords and carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities towards tenants and landlords.

Theme 3; Council Homes

Ensuring council homes *are managed and maintained to a high standard and the Council builds new homes for Slough residents.*

Evidence Base - Key Points

- The Council owns 7,100 tenanted and leasehold homes, managed through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Over the next 7 years there will be £100m investment programme in existing homes and £40m invested in building new council homes.
- The award of a new repairs and investment contract to start in 2017 will provide a focus for improved services to tenants.
- However, there are threats to the viability of the HRA, mainly brought about by Government policy. These are the mandatory reduction in rents for 4 years from 2016/17; a requirement to make a payment to the Government following the sale of “higher value” voids; and Pay to Stay which will mean tenants with a household income of over £31,000 paying a higher rent.

Objectives

The Council has a number of important objectives in planning the future of Council homes in the Borough;

- To place tenants and leaseholders at the centre of the development of services and planning for the future of council homes;
- To keep homes in good repair and to maximise the potential of council homes for the long-term benefit of the people of Slough;
- To take opportunities to provide additional affordable homes on council-owned land;
- To develop and provide high quality and responsive services for tenants and leaseholders

Background

The Significance of Council Housing

Slough Borough Council owns and manages 7,100 rented properties across the borough and is the freeholder for a further 1,700 leasehold homes to which it also provides services. This is the Council’s most valuable asset. Around x% of households in the borough rent their home from the Council. These homes are financed through a special account – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.)

A wide and diverse range of residents are accommodated in council homes across a range of income groups. However, council homes are a particularly important resource for households on low or modest incomes who cannot afford to house themselves in homes available on the private market. Its significance is increasing as house prices and private sector rents escalate. Demand for council homes is high and far outstrips supply. This explains the length of the Housing Register and the growing need to use temporary accommodation for homeless households.

The Council’s housing stock is a particularly vital resource for people who are vulnerable or disabled or elderly, who will not be able to find a home elsewhere. In an environment where market housing is increasingly unaffordable for many residents, council housing is also vital

for the economic future of the town in that it provides affordable accommodation for people who work in the borough.

For all of these reasons the Council's wants to retain and enhance its homes for the long-term benefit of Slough. At the same time, as this Strategy is being written, council housing in Slough, as elsewhere, is subject to fundamental external change and pressure. This means taking a long-term look at the future of this critical asset and maximising its contribution to the future of the town.

Residents at the Centre of Services

The Council wants to place residents – tenants and leaseholders – at the centre of its strategy for council homes. This means improving the responsiveness of the services provided and broadening the ways in which residents can become involved in monitoring and developing services. Central to this will be the use of digital technology to improve the delivery, quality, timeliness and value of services.

The centrepiece of the Council's drive to improve services to residents will be a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract which will begin in December 2017. This will cover both day to day repairs and planned maintenance and improvements and will allow for a long-term and more planned approach to maintaining and enhancing these important physical assets. A particular priority will be to shift the balance of works to property so that 70% is planned, cyclical maintenance and investment and only 30% is reactive routine repairs. The Council will also take the opportunity of this new contract to build local. In-house capacity to carry out maintenance work on public and private assets.

Responding to Change

At the time of writing this Strategy the Government is introducing a number of changes through the Housing and Planning Act and other legislation which will have a major impact on the future of council homes in the Borough. Chief amongst these are;

- The Government has taken control of council rents and these will fall by 1% in each of the 4 years from 2016/17. While this benefits existing tenants it will have a major impact on the HRA, including money available for investment;
- From April 2017 the Council will be forced to sell some its higher - value homes as they become empty and pass some of the proceeds to the Government;
- Again from April 2017 tenants with household incomes over £31,000 will be required to pay more rent. Under this "Pay to Stay" policy, rents could rise towards market levels depending on the level of income;
- The Government is changing the rules on new council tenancies and the granting of fixed-term as opposed to lifetime tenancies. This will not affect the position of existing tenancies.

These changes are being introduced at the same time as further measures to reform the benefit system, particularly the reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap and the further rollout of Universal Credit, both of which could significantly affect the finances of individual tenants and the HRA itself.

The combination of these measures means that the Council will need to look fundamentally again at access into council homes and how to ensure that homes are used to their greatest benefit. This will include a review of the existing Tenancy Strategy, the Scheme of Allocation and at the effectiveness of existing policies to encourage under-occupying households to move into smaller accommodation.

HRA Business Plan

In 2012, the Government of the day reached an agreement with Local Authorities which still owned their housing stock, aimed at providing long-term stability for the HRA. This “Self-Financing” regime included a settlement on outstanding debt and the transfer of risk to the Council. In return, the Council would be free to plan its housing finances for the long term.

The changes outlined above effectively set that agreement aside. A new 30 year Business Plan is being prepared and this will be subject to a further major review in 2017 when more will be known about the Government’s intentions and the Council will have comprehensive and up-to-date information about the condition of its homes.

Major changes are already in train. For example;

- The regeneration of Britwell has included the provision of around 300 new homes;
- The current development programme will provide a further 180 affordable Council homes over the next 3-4 years;
- The council has decided to redevelop the tower blocks at Tower House and Ashbourne House.

However, alongside residents, the Council now needs to take a fresh and long-term look at the future of the assets which are its council housing; the resources which will be available for keeping good-quality existing homes in good repair; and the need and scope for replacing homes which are outdated and worn-out with more and better homes which maximise the potential benefit for the residents of Slough.

Action Plan

- Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account in the Autumn of 2016.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council’s housing stock, for completion by January 2017.
- In the light of the results of the condition survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan in March 2017.
- In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and option appraisal of the Council’s housing stock for completion by December 2017.
- Complete the existing programme of 190 new homes on Housing-owned land and seek to continue the programme beyond 2020.
- Adopt the following priorities for improving the services to residents;
 - Awarding a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract for council homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of repair for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide maintenance services
 - Engaging and enabling residents so as to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services ;
 - Increasing resident satisfaction through greater responsiveness to customers and in particular through the greater use of digital technology.
- Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for council tenancies in the light of the Housing and Planning Act.
- Undertake a formal review of the scheme for the Allocation of social housing in Slough.
- Develop proposals for the more effective use of council homes by increasing the number of tenants choosing to downsize when their family circumstances change.
- Monitor “right to buy sales” and adjust the HRA business plan accordingly.

Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need

Reducing homelessness *and rough sleeping through effective prevention work.*

Evidence Base – Key points

- 2500 applicants on the Housing Register (people needing accommodation)
- The Council had a total of 2,373 homelessness approaches in 2015/16; of these 963 needed housing advice and 1,410 were on an emergency basis;
- The number of households accepted as homeless in Slough increased from 74 in 2013/14 to 241 in 2015/16, an increase of 225%.
- The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation increased from 156 at 31 March 2015 to 225 a year later. By September 2016 the total had exceeded 300 including some households in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- The market in Slough is experiencing increasing pressure from other Authorities, particularly London Boroughs, who are placing homeless households in Slough.
- The effect of Welfare Reform is to create more homelessness through the impact of the affordability of private sector accommodation.
- Rough sleeping is an issue and may be on the increase.

Objectives

The Council has a number of important objectives in addressing Homelessness in the Borough;

- To prevent homelessness and minimize the need to place households in temporary accommodation;
- To ensure there is a good advice and support network in Slough for both statutory and non-statutory households, including single homeless people;
- To ensure there is a supply of affordable alternative accommodation available to assist in preventing homelessness;
- Where it is necessary to use temporary accommodation, to ensure that it is suitable and of a decent standard;
- To minimize the cost to the council tax payer of the use of temporary accommodation.

This chapter summarises the current position on homelessness in Slough. It sets out the causes of the pressure in the market and commits the Council to building a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy based homelessness prevention and wider partnership working.

Background

Pressure from the Market and from Benefit Changes

In Slough, those households on low or modest incomes who do not yet have access to social housing are mainly accommodated in the private rented sector. Households in this position have been under increasing pressure in the last few years.

This is due to partly to the effect of the growth of population. However, it is also more directly due to increasing rents and to restrictions in the availability of benefits. Following the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which capped the

level of Housing Benefit available, the gap between the LHA and market rents has grown. As an example, the maximum Housing Benefit available for a 2 bedroom flat in Slough is £840 per month. The average market rent, in contrast is £1,100 per month. For some families, the Overall Benefit Cap, which restricts the total amount of benefit which can be received, acts as a further reduction on the help available with rent. The overall impact of this is to make it more difficult for households on low or modest incomes to find and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector.

One symptom of this is overcrowding and Slough already has the eleventh highest incidence of overcrowding of all local authorities in England. Private renting is also the least secure form of accommodation and we know that many thousands of our residents are renewing and recycling their private sector tenancies on short term six month agreements. As a result, many are becoming increasingly vulnerable to homelessness .

The Increase in Homelessness and Its Impact

The combined effect of these factors has been an increase in homelessness. Some of this hidden - for example the number of people who are "sofa-surfing " or withstanding overcrowded conditions in the private sector. However, some of it has emerged as stark upturns in applications and pressures on the local authority;

- In 2015/16 there were a total of 2,373 approaches to the Housing Service, of which 1,410 were on an emergency basis;
- The number of homeless households accepted as homeless in Slough increased from 74 in 2013/14 to 241 in 2015/6, an increase of 225%.
- As a consequence, the number of households placed in temporary accommodation also increased rapidly from 156 on 31 March 2015 to 225 a year later. The numbers continued to rise in 2016 and had topped 300 by September.

Unfortunately, some of these households have had to be accommodated in Bed & Breakfast hotels, a problem also facing most neighbouring councils, and particularly those in London. The Council has however, begun to buck the trend in recent months by succeeding reducing the number of B&B, from 46 in September 2015 to 21 a year later.

Many of these pressures are also being experienced by neighbouring areas, though the increase in Slough has been higher than the norm. However, one additional factor specific to Slough has reinforced the difficulty. That is the increasing tendency for households to move outwards from London into Slough and in many cases for homeless households to be placed in Slough by other councils. In the last 3 years, a total of 450 notifications have been made to the Council by authorities of households moved into the Borough. These have been made by 28 different councils, including 11 London Boroughs. It is believed by the Council's officers that this is a considerable underestimate and that the total number of placements is likely to be twice this level.

This is one more factor which serves to increase the difficulty for local households in the market. Competition from London Boroughs both makes it more difficult for Slough households to find accommodation in the market and more difficult for the Council to find housing for its homeless families.

The links between having a good, secure home and the overall quality of life are well-established. Equally, the relationship between homelessness and other forms of disadvantage are well known. Homeless people are more likely to have health problems, relating to both physical and mental health. Children within homeless families risk having their educational prospects severely damaged. Employment prospects are affected by not having a permanent place to stay. These risks are

amplified when families are forced to spend some time in unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation such as B&B. These linkages are highlighted in Slough's Wellbeing Strategy.

The movement of households from London, many of them placed by London Boroughs, has brought particular difficulties for local health and care services. Unfortunately, some of the households being placed in Slough are not being provided with sufficient support to allow them to settle properly to access local services, such as GPs, dentists or schools. The fact that in some cases the Council and other local services are not being notified of the placement is making matters worse. At worst, vulnerable people, for example those with mental health difficulties, are being placed in Slough without the support of the placing authority to allow them to find services and without local health and other services having access to records when the people concerned present themselves seeking services.

Although the Council's primary concern is improving the position on homelessness in the Borough in order to improve the life chances of the families concerned, there is a pressing financial reason to do so as well. Temporary accommodation, particularly B &B, is expensive for the council tax payer as well unsuitable for the families concerned. It is vital to protect the resources available for other services, such as Adults or Children's Social Care, by minimising homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.

Homelessness Pressure likely to Grow

Unfortunately, there are a number of reasons to believe that homelessness will continue to grow. The threat for Slough is that the levels of homelessness and usage of temporary accommodation seen in neighbouring London Boroughs will spread outwards to the Borough. All of the same pressures which led to this crisis in London are present in Slough.

The concern is that a number of factors will combine to increased levels of homelessness. These are;

- Continued population growth leading to overcrowding and further increases in house prices and rents;
- The 4 years freeze in welfare benefits, including Local Housing Allowance, announced by the Chancellor in the Budget for 2015;
- The reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap scheduled for late 2016;
- The further roll-out of Universal Credit to families and vulnerable groups and the associated risks of failure to claim, non-payment, rent arrears and debt.

The Council is developing a Strategy to mitigate these risks.

Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Slough is fortunate in having a network of voluntary agencies and support and advice services offering services to single homeless people and rough sleepers. In some cases their clients include those who do not come within the statutory obligations of the local authority to accommodate homeless people. Often, however, joint working between the voluntary sector and the council can bring the support which allows vulnerable client to access services.

The voluntary and statutory agencies working in this field meet regularly at the Slough Homelessness forum. A number of specific initiatives are coordinated through is group, including a Winter Nightshelter and the London and Slough Soup Run.

Although data are difficult to compile in this area, the general view of the voluntary sector is that Rough Sleeping in Slough is on the rise. Estimates vary between 30 and 60 people, with a significant proportion being of Polish origin. A new Rough Sleepers count is will take place in Autumn 2016.

The development of our Homelessness Prevention Strategy will fully involve our partners at the Slough Homelessness forum and our strategy will be scoped to include consideration of how we can help better coordinate services to Rough Sleepers and single homeless people. We will also carry out an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.

Our Local Response to Homelessness

The most effective way to deal with homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. Our focus will be on preventing homelessness now and in the future. We therefore intend to invite our partner agencies in the voluntary and statutory sectors to join us in developing a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy, changing and improving the way we collectively work with to prevent homelessness.

Working with Private Landlords

We understand that the private rented sector in Slough will continue to be the main housing option for many residents, but that it is very often problems arising with private sector tenancies which are the immediate trigger for homelessness. We therefore intend to develop a new strategic and positive working relationship with private sector landlords to improve affordability and preventing homelessness approaches to the council. We believe our current number of approaches can be stabilised if we can successfully work with private landlords to meet local needs of residents. We aim to allocate our resources to preventative approaches rather than providing unwanted Bed & Breakfast or Temporary Accommodation for homeless households. We aim to eliminate the use of B&B for families with children.

Subsidiary Housing Company

In addition to a fresh partnership with private landlords we intend to intervene directly in the market to provide a greater supply of affordable accommodation for homeless families or as a preventative alternative to homelessness. We will establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire existing housing for use for households threatened with homelessness. The new company will act as an exemplar private landlord and help promote good standards in the sector. Alongside the new Subsidiary Company the Council will put in place improved management arrangements to bring together landlords and tenants to make the most effective use of the accommodation available. We hope to increase the quality and choice of accommodation available to homeless and potentially homeless households.

Support for Households in Temporary Accommodation

We also understand the need for additional support for some of the homeless individuals and families who approach us and those who are temporarily housed or placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation. A key need is to enable households to develop the relevant skills for independent living or to take advantage of work opportunities to be able to sustain their tenancies longer term. At a management level we are looking to increase debt/money management advice and at closer working and mediation with landlords to prevent evictions.

Review of Allocations Policy

Although many homeless households will continue to be accommodated in the private sector, it is a key aim of this Strategy to increase the supply of permanent affordable housing. We intend to undertake a review of the Housing Allocation Policy,

which governs which categories of household are allocated social housing. Amongst other matters this review will look at the priority which should be given to homeless households.

Placements in Slough by other Local Authorities

We have also recognised the vulnerability of households placed in Slough by other authorities and the urgent need to address their access to local services. We will work with our local partners, particularly in the Health sector to better co-ordinate the sharing of information about these individual and families and to insist upon better data sharing and cooperation by the "exporting" authorities.

Action Plan

- Develop and adopt a Preventing Homelessness strategy in collaboration with clients, landlords, the voluntary sector and other partner agencies.
- Develop new partnerships with private and third sector landlords to maximise opportunities for tenancies for homeless families and individuals.
- Establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire homes to alleviate the pressures on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast provision.
- End the use of Bed & Breakfast for families with children.
- Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme.
- Work with the Health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough by other Local Authorities and require those authorities to review their placement and notification policies.
- Undertake an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.

Theme 5 : Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups

Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people and those with special housing needs, for example, young people, older people and people, people with disabilities.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) estimates that that the number of people over the age of 65 in Slough will increase by 40% in the next 10 years. The SHMA estimates that between 2013 and 2036 the number of people aged over 85 will increase by 120%.
- The JSNA also estimates that in 2012, 9,322 residents between the ages of 16 and 65 had a physical disability.
- The SHMA reports that the number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will increase by over 50% by 2036.
- The SHMA projects that between 2013 and 2036 there is a net additional requirement of 957 units of older persons accommodation, (including specialist housing), or 42 per annum, predominantly market housing.

Objectives

Our objectives in relation to people with special housing needs and vulnerabilities are to ensure that ;

- People with long term conditions are supported by suitable housing which is safe, warm and resource efficient allowing access to appropriate prevention services including adaptations to stay well and maintain their independence.
- People with mental health, learning or physical vulnerabilities, whether in childhood, adulthood, or in older age have choice of access to suitable or specialist accommodation, maintain their independence and report a better quality of life.
- Children leaving care have available to them a range of accommodation which is suitable to their needs;
- The best use is made of existing housing resources, for example the existing stock of social housing.

Background

The Need for Specialist Accommodation

There is already a range of accommodation and housing options for people who require specialist accommodation or who are vulnerable. This includes sheltered accommodation and a range of supported housing. However the available evidence suggests that more will be required over the life of this Strategy and beyond. This is closely to increasing life expectancy and the projections that there will be more older people in the future.

The Borough is fortunate in having two up to date assessments of requirements in this area – the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the SHMA. The JSNA estimates that that the number of people over the age of 65 in Slough will increase by 40% in the next 10 years. The SHMA estimates that between 2013 and 2036 the number of people aged over 85 will increase by 120%.

Amongst older people, they are disproportionately likely to own their homes outright or to live in social housing. There are also significant degrees of under- occupancy – that is, people occupying homes where they have at least 2 more rooms than they would normally require. Again, the SHMA suggests this is disproportionately the case for people owning their homes outright or living in social housing (the numbers of such households are 2,533 and 336 respectively.)

On disability, the JSNA estimates that in 2012, 9,322 residents between the ages of 16 and 65 had a physical disability. Looking forward, the SHMA projects that the number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will increase by over 50% by 2036. Again, people with a disability are more likely to be outright owners or to live in social housing.

In estimating the need for additional specialist accommodation the SHMA concentrates on the needs of older people with dementia or mobility problems. The table below, drawn from the SHMA, compares the estimated need for older person’s accommodation (including specialst housing), with the existing supply of sheltered and extra care housing. It concludes that an additional 987 units are required in the period up to 2036, or 42 per annum. Although 200 of these are in the affordable sector, the majority of the requirement is for market accommodation.

Need for Units of Older Person’s Accommodation 2013 – 2036 (SHMA, 2016)			
	Market	Affordable	Total
Overall Need	817	725	1,542
Existing Supply	60	525	585
Net Need	757	200	957

This analysis points to a number of long-term strategic issues in relation to housing for older people;

- How to deliver additional accommodation at a scale to meet projected demand over the next 20 years. This strategy already recognises the need for additional extra care housing but overall requirements stretch considerable beyond this;
- The need to find market options, particularly for older owner-occupiers who would wish to move from their existing accommodation;
- How to address the scale of under-occupation, in both the under-occupied and social sectors. This could involve providing better alternative options for people to move to and assistance in doing so. Reducing under-occupation would also help to release valuable housing resources.

These questions sit alongside those already being addressed by Adult Social Care and the Health services in seeking to allow older people to continue to live independently. This will be one of the key Housing issues for Slough over the next 20 years. It is therefore proposed that the agencies concerned come together to develop a long-term term strategy for older person’s housing in the Borough. This would include looking at the suitability and future use of the Council’s existing stock of sheltered accommodation.

Housing and Health

Adequate and appropriate housing is widely acknowledged to be a crucial underpinning of health and wellbeing. In general, poor housing and home conditions can be associated with both physical and mental effects on residents’ health. It is

associated with asthma, skin allergies and respiratory diseases and is linked to physical accidents and injuries. Poor housing can also lead to depression, isolation, anxiety or aggression. Noise related stress from poor sound insulation is associated with lack of sleep, mental stress and depression.

Through this Strategy we are therefore committed to a closer alignment of services provided by Housing, Health and Adult Social Care, aimed at early intervention and promotion to improve the quality of life; promoting independence and choice; reducing health inequalities by focusing on groups most affected by poor housing; and integrating services where this is appropriate.

Joint Working between Housing, Health and Adult Social Care

In addition to the strategic requirement for the alignment of work between Housing, Health and Adult Social Care, there are a number of more specific initiatives to be pursued during the life of this Strategy;

- There are 2 Extra Care Schemes already in Slough for residents over the age of 55 who have some care and support needs. However, more provision is required and the Housing and Adult Social Care services are working together to develop up to 3 additional extra care schemes on a mixed tenure basis including flats for sale. Extra Care Schemes will help residents to continue to live in self-contained accommodation which allows them to maintain their independence, dignity and personal choice. We will also look at other options for providing accommodation with care;
- Exploring further options for supporting people to live in their own homes, if appropriate with equipment and adaptations, potentially with a revised plan for the use of Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Slough already has a considerable resource for people with a disability in its stock of social housing which has already been adapted or is capable of being adapted. However, the monitoring of adaptations which have been carried out and the matching of vacancies to the requirements of individual residents needs to be improved;
- Within the direct new build programme on council land, the Council has made provision for new units for people with learning difficulties;
- Promoting measures to prevent illness such as improving energy efficiency and installing aids and adaptations to reduce the likelihood of accidents in the home. This will be pursued alongside the greater use of digital technology to enhance the delivery of person-centred care in the home;
- Ensuring timely housing advice is provided to all people with long-term mental health issues on admission to hospital and working towards a consistent approach to the assessment of priority for re-housing;
- A review of Housing Related Support services in the borough, which provide a range of supported accommodation to groups such as young homeless people or those with mental health problems;
- As noted above the development of a long-term strategy for older person's housing in the Borough.
- Supporting the needs of family carers in order to support their role as carers.

Joint Working with Children's Service and the Children's Trust – Care Leavers

It is a major priority of this Housing Strategy to enable children leaving care to access a range of suitable accommodation. The Housing service will work closely with the Children's Trust and Adult Social Care to help deliver effective pathways to support vulnerable children addressing both specific housing and care needs.

Joint protocols are already in place between the homeless team and the Children's Trust to ensure that Looked After Children (LAC) do not fall between gaps in services and receive an additional preference on the Housing Register. Many receive an offer of council housing as soon as they are legally able to sign a tenancy agreement at 18 years of age. However, we understand that taking on the full responsibilities of a secure tenancy may not be the best outcome for many care leavers and some may prefer shared accommodation with a degree of on-going support. The lack of this and other housing options has been raised by young people in the Ofsted Report. The Council is committed to exploring how this would work and putting such arrangements in place.

There are a number of issues to be taken forward in the joint work between the services;

- Working with the Trust and the young people themselves to understand in detail the range and types of accommodation that care leavers would prefer;
- Developing new models of accommodation and support, including shared accommodation, using the vehicle of the Council's new Subsidiary Housing Company (see below);
- As part of the review Housing Related Support services reviewing the current range of supported accommodation available to care leavers;
- Ensuring the existing protocols and pathway into social housing is working effectively.

Review of the Scheme of Allocation

As outlined elsewhere in this Strategy will Council will be reviewing its Scheme of Allocation, which governs the flow of residents in social housing in the Borough and the priority to be given to different groups. This review will include in particular the priority afforded to care leavers and to people with a disability and who are unlikely to be able to work.

Subsidiary Housing Company

The Council intends to set up 2 wholly-owned subsidiary housing companies to acquire existing or newly-built properties. One of these companies will target its activity at securing accommodation for specific groups within the community, primarily households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The intention is also to use this vehicle to look to secure accommodation tailored to the needs of particular groups and which may not be available through existing mainstream housing provision. This will entail joint working between Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's services and the Children's Trust to identify the model of provision required and the support necessary to the occupiers and to build a sustainable business plan for each project. The potential for this model will need to be explored as the new company grows but the intention is to start with modelling and if possible implementing new forms of accommodation for groups of care leavers.

Staff Trained to Safeguard Vulnerable People

All front line Housing staff are trained in safeguarding protocols for children and adults. The Council is working with partner agencies to identify specific roles that housing staff can play in safeguarding in the borough.

Action Plan

- Build on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health and

disability housing needs and undertake further detailed work with partners and stakeholders to examine what housing options are required to best meet current and future demand and changing needs.

- Through our new Subsidiary Housing Company, develop new partnerships with the Children's Trust, Health and Adult Social Care to maximise opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost effectively.
- In collaboration with the Children's Trust, ensure there is an adequate supply of accommodation for care leavers.
- Undertake a review of Housing- Related Support services in the borough.
- Deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough during the life of this strategy where there is established local need.
- Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Slough.
- Within the review of the Scheme of Allocation, ensure full account is taken of the needs of people with a disability.
- Improve the recording and matching of adapted properties to ensure the best use of existing council stock.

Implementation of the Strategy

Actions already in hand/underway

This section is to be completed closer to Strategy Release day to capture what has already been delivered this year and projects commenced.

Implementation and monitoring

The high level outcomes of the Housing Strategy can be monitored through the mechanisms of the 5 Year Plan under Outcome 2 and the Overarching Wellbeing Strategy.

The Strategy will be monitored by members through reports to Cabinet and progress scrutinised by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Action Plans and outcomes can be monitored through existing mechanisms such as the Tenants Panel or the homelessness forum. The Council will consider whether to hold an annual conference to assess progress against the Strategy.

Links with Other Strategies

Slough's Wellbeing Strategy

The council intends to take the unique opportunity that housing offers to engage, change and improve the way housing works within the delivery of better health outcomes for the borough in partnership with Public Health.

We recognise that as well as building new and "healthy homes" there needs to be a clear "read across" to any changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme.

We intend to create more inclusive processes to engage health and social care professions alongside residents in delivering better housing, health, education, and work outcomes for homeless and vulnerable people with housing needs.

Links to the council's Five Year Plan

We are specifically aiming to deliver Outcome 2 of the council's overarching Five Year Plan: "There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough"

However, there are strong links with several other outcomes, particularly;

Outcome 1; Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay.

Outcome 5: Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient, and have positive life chances.

Outcome 6: More people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs.

Outcome 7: The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximized.

Links with other relevant strategies and plans

- **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy-2013-2016**
- **Learning Disability Plan 2016-2019**
- **Community Safety plans**

- **Children and Young People's Plan-2015-2016**
- **Centre of Slough Strategy-2015 onwards**
- **Sustainable Community Strategy -2007-2027**
- **Economic Development Plan for Growth 2014-2018**
- **Asset Management Plan-2014-2017**
- **Get Active Leisure Strategy**
- **Climate Change Strategy -2011-2014**

Action Plan				
Action	Who	Target Date	Progress	RAG
Theme 1: New Housing Supply				
Seek to enable the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the SHMA.				
The Council will directly deliver or facilitate a programme 200 units per year of new housing over the life of this Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.				
Maximize the provision of affordable housing on Council-owned land through infill development and estate renewal, including the net gain of 1,000 units on HRA land over the period 2016 to 2031.				
Prioritise available funds and council assets to provide for the delivery of affordable housing schemes in partnership with SUR and Housing Associations.				
Work with private and public sector partners to acquire and assemble sites to facilitate the delivery of new housing.				
Improve partnership arrangements with housing associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes				
Extend our programme of Council mortgage lending through our existing LAPP scheme.				
Produce a plan to improve housing opportunities for key workers.				
Provide new homes for particular groups within the community where required, for example those needing extra care or care leavers.				
Use our Subsidiary Housing Companies to assist in providing homes for vulnerable groups within the community.				
Pro-actively use powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty homes back into use.				
Theme 2: Private Sector Housing				
Create two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies to act as exemplar private landlords in the borough and to assist homeless households and others on low or modest incomes to access affordable private sector homes.				
Undertake a feasibility study for				

introducing a borough-wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive our rogue or criminal landlords from Slough.				
Following the announcement of the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing we will implement the scheme once the commencement date has been announced.				
Undertake rigorous enforcement and prosecution against rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.				
Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.				
Use the new RMI contract to provide support and services to private landlords.				
Use all available powers to bring empty properties back into use. Work with our partner agencies to tackle the problem of illegally-occupied outbuildings.				
Create and operate a professional, ethical and effective social letting scheme to help good landlords as well residents who are being exploited by rogue landlords and agents.				
Work with utility companies and other agencies to insulate homes and improve the energy ratings of older buildings.				
Through partnership working, particularly with Adult Services, Public Health and the CCG, develop services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and reduce the impact of poor housing on the health of borough residents.				
Build a well-resourced and self-financing Private Sector Housing Service to support good landlords and carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities towards tenants and landlords.				
Theme 3: Council Homes				
Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account in the Autumn of 2016.				
Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council's housing stock, for completion by January 2017.				
In the light of the results of the				

condition survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan in March 2017.				
In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and option appraisal of the Council's housing stock for completion by December 2017.				
Complete the existing programme of 190 new homes on Housing-owned land and seek to continue the programme beyond 2020.				
Adopt the following priorities for improving the services to residents; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract for council homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of repair for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide maintenance services • Engaging and enabling residents so as to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services ; • Increasing resident satisfaction through greater responsiveness to customers and in particular through the greater use of digital technology. 				
Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for council tenancies in the light of the Housing and Planning Act.				
Undertake a formal review of the scheme for the Allocation of social housing in Slough.				
Develop proposals for the more effective use of council homes by increasing the number of tenants choosing to downsize when their family circumstances change.				
Monitor "right to buy sales" and adjust the HRA business plan accordingly.				
Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need				
Develop and adopt a Preventing Homelessness strategy in collaboration with clients, landlords,				

the voluntary sector and other partner agencies.				
Develop new partnerships with private and third sector landlords to maximise opportunities for tenancies for homeless families and individuals.				
Establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire homes to alleviate the pressures on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast provision.				
End the use of Bed & Breakfast for families with children.				
Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme.				
Work with the Health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough by other Local Authorities and require those authorities to review their placement and notification policies.				
Undertake an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.				
Theme 5: Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable People				
Build on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health and disability housing needs and undertake further detailed work with partners and stakeholders to examine what housing options are required to best meet current and future demand and changing needs.				
Through our new Subsidiary Housing Company, develop new partnerships with the Children's Trust, Health and Adult Social Care to maximise opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost effectively.				
In collaboration with the Children's Trust, ensure there is an adequate supply of accommodation for care leavers.				
Undertake a review of Housing-Related Support services in the borough.				
Deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough during the life of this strategy where there is				

established local need.				
Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Slough.				
Within the review of the Scheme of Allocation, ensure full account is taken of the needs of people with a disability.				
Improve the recording and matching of adapted properties to ensure the best use of existing council stock.				

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016
CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Stimpson, Planning Policy Lead Officer.
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875820
WARD(S): All
PORTFOLIO: Councillor Ajaib, Housing & Urban Renewal

PART I
KEY DECISION

APPROVAL OF LOCAL PLAN ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1 Purpose of Report

To seek approval of the Local Plan Issues and Options document which will be the subject of a six week public consultation exercise in January.

This is the next stage in the process of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. The Local Plan is the Statutory Development Plan for Slough and supports the decision making process for new development in the Borough.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the draft Issues and Options Document for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough (2016-2036) be approved for public consultation, with delegated powers to Officers, following consultation with the Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal, to make any necessary minor changes prior to publication.
- (b) That delegated powers be granted to Officers, following consultation with the Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal, to publish a Local Development Scheme setting out a timetable for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.
- (c) That delegated powers be granted to Officers, following consultation with the Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal, to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how the Councils stakeholders and community will be involved in preparation of Planning Policy documents.

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

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The review of the Local Plan is directly linked to the following priorities in the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

- Health
- Economy and Skills

- Regeneration and Environment
- Housing
- Safer Communities

It will also contribute to Improving the image of the town.

3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Review of the Local Plan will contribute to the following Outcomes:

- 1 Slough will be the premier location in the South East for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay.
- 2 There will be more homes in the borough with the quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough.
- 3 The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living and cultural opportunities.
- 4 Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action. The costs of the proposed consultation can be met from existing budgets.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	No risks identified	
Property	No risks identified	
Human Rights	No risks identified	
Health and Safety	No risks identified	
Employment Issues	No risks identified	
Equalities Issues	No risks identified	
Community Support – There will be a need for a formal public consultation exercise.	A public consultation strategy will be developed.	
Communications	No risks identified	
Community Safety	No risks identified	
Financial	No risks identified	
Timetable for delivery – The review of the Local Plan is dependent upon a number of internal external factors which could delay the time table.	Contingency plans for a delay to the timetable can be put in place.	

Project Capacity – The review of the plan will require additional resources.	A Project Plan for the Review of the Local plan has been produced, a budget secured.	
Other		

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need to complete an EIA at this stage of the plan preparation process.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Government require all Local Authorities to have an up to date Local Plan that sets out how many homes it will provide, and its approach to permitting new development. We have reached an important stage in the Review of the Local Plan which involves producing an “Issues and Options” document. It is important to note that this is not a draft plan but a discussion document which is being put forward for public consultation. The results of this will be fed into a “Preferred Options” document which will be followed by the production of a “Submission” version of the plan which will be submitted to the Secretary of State and then be the subject of a public inquiry. The timing of the later stages of the plan will be at least partly dependent upon external factors such as any proposals for Heathrow airport and the results of Duty to Co-operate discussions with neighbouring authorities.
- 5.2 As the name suggests, the Issues and Options document sets out what the Council considers to be the key issues and drivers of change that the Review of the Local Plan will have to address and some Spatial Options which show where development could take place in the future. A Copy of the Draft Consultation Document is set out in Appendix 1. A brief summary of its contents is set out below:
- 5.3 The document contains a “Vision” for Slough, 14 “Objectives” and an outline of what future policies could be in order to implement the strategy in the emerging plan. The consultation document will have a number of specific questions for the public and statutory Consultees to answer but we will also be seeking any other comments that people may have.
- 5.4 It also sets out some ambitious and aspirational ideas for the future growth of Slough and contains some fairly detailed Spatial Options for major new development around the Borough. It should be noted that although the options are considered to be realistic, they have not yet been fully tested and are not being endorsed by the Council at this stage.

Aim of the Plan

- 5.5 At its simplest we want to make Slough a better place for Slough people. We also recognise that it has an important role to play within the region and want Slough to continue its role as a thriving commercial centre.
- 5.6 Slough has been very successful in accommodating growth in the past and we want it to continue to do this for the benefit of future generations. Most of the new housing and facilities that we are proposing are required to meet the needs and aspirations of our existing population and so it is important that it takes place in a way that supports our local communities.
- 5.7 We want to enable our residents to improve their health, wealth and well-being, and establish the reputation of the town as a place where people '*choose to work rest play and stay*'.
- 5.8 One of the key words within this is that we want Slough to be a place where people want to stay. Our aspiration is to make Slough a place where people have everything that they need to be able to 'live locally' and are able to stay throughout the various stages of their life.

Objectives

- 5.9 In order to achieve our vision for Slough we have identified 14 objectives. The two key ones are to enable around 927 new houses a year in or around Slough and to create 15,000 new jobs over 20 year period.

The Big Strategic Issues

- 5.10 The consultation document identifies the following big strategic issues. The Local Plan will have to address these if we are going to be able to achieve our vision and meet the objectives that we have set ourselves. These are:
- *How can we meet as much of our Objectively Assessed Housing Need of 927 dwellings a year as close as possible to where these needs arise?*
 - *How we can offer a wide choice of high quality housing and create balanced communities?*
 - *How can Slough maintain its role as an economic "powerhouse"?*
 - *How can we support the creation of an additional 15,000 jobs?*
 - *How we can revitalise Slough town centre as a major retail, leisure and commercial centre?*
 - *How can we get the maximum benefits out of the growth of Heathrow airport and mitigate for any adverse environmental effects?*
 - *How can we enable our suburban areas to continue to absorb the growth in population without losing the distinctive character of individual neighbourhoods?*
 - *How can we deal with the problems of traffic congestion to ensure that people can get around Slough?*
 - *How can we enhance the quality of the built and green environment in Slough and improve the overall image of the town?*

Proposed Policy Response

- 5.11 We have developed a number of possible ways in which the Local Plan could address these issues.
- 5.12 In order to try to build enough houses to meet our needs we will have to identify a range of new sites both within and on the edge of the urban area, including using the Duty to Co-operate to investigate providing some outside of the Borough.
- 5.13 We want to be pro-active in our support for future economic growth and create the right climate for new investment so that Slough continues to be recognised as an “economic powerhouse”. The demands on land for housing means we will only provide very limited new land for employment uses and so we will have to create more jobs through increasing densities in existing employment areas, supporting job creation that doesn’t need new buildings (service jobs), and directing development of more offices to the town centre. If the third runway at Heathrow is built this could create up to 77,000 new jobs at the eastern end of the Borough which would help to meet our future employment needs.
- 5.14 We also need to halt the decline of the town centre as a shopping centre and revitalise it as a commercial and residential area where people choose to work and live..
- 5.15 To achieve all of this we will have to change the perceived image of Slough. One way in which we will do this is by insisting that all new development is high quality and well designed.
- 5.16 We will also have to have a strategy for encouraging investment in the town and making sure that we get the best value for every pound that is spent in Slough.
- 5.17 We need to make the most of our diverse neighbourhoods to enable people to be able to live locally within their community which means providing facilities and creating an environment where people feel ‘happy and at home’ and they can meet many of their day to day needs without using their cars.
- 5.18 It is recognised that the scale of growth being proposed to meet the needs of our population will add to congestion and if not properly controlled will have an impact upon the attractiveness and quality of environment. As a result the plan will have to find ways of mitigating these effects as far as is possible. This could include having to have policies which restrain the use of the private car so that more people use public transport or walk or cycle.

Development of the Spatial Options

- 5.19 Having established what the strategic issues are for the Local Plan it is necessary to consider how these can be addressed by identifying where major new development could go within the Borough.
- 5.20 As a result we have produced a number of strategic ‘Spatial Options’ to be put forward for public consultation which are as follows:
- A. Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
 - B. Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)

- C. Create a new residential Neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
- D. Regeneration of the selected areas:
 - D1 - Canal basin
 - D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip (Trade Sales etc. A4)
 - D3 – Chalvey regeneration
- E. Estate Renewal
- F. Intensification of the suburbs
- G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
- H. Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
- I. Release land from the Green Belt for Heathrow related development (in Colnbrook and Poyle)
- J. Expansion of Slough
 - J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb)
 - J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
- K. Build in other areas outside of Slough

- 5.21 It is estimated that even if all of the Options from A to H came forward along with small sites and all of the other sites we know about we could still be around 8,000 houses short of meeting the Objectively Assessed Need of 927 a year. This is why the options of expanding Slough or building elsewhere (Options J and K) will have to be considered.
- 5.22 These options are beyond our direct control and could only be achieved with the agreement of the relevant authorities as a result of Duty to Cooperate negotiations. It is, however, important that these options are included in the Issues and Options consultation so that the public are aware that the Council is doing all it can to meet housing need and what the implications could be for meeting or failing to meet these.
- 5.23 It should also be noted that with the exception of the option to provide for more airport related development at Colnbrook and Poyle (Option I) none of the options provide any new employment land. Indeed many of them involve the loss of land which is currently in employment use. As a result it is extremely unlikely that we will be able to meet the potential need for up to 180 hectares of new land for business uses such as warehouses due to the shortage of land.

Next Stages for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough

- 5.25 The Government's expectations are that all Local Authorities will have a new Local Plan in place at the beginning of next year. This is clearly not going to happen in many cases but the focus is likely to be on the authorities who have not produced a Plan since 2004 and those which are not providing enough housing to meet Objectively Assessed Needs. The Government is taking powers to directly intervene where it considers that sufficient progress is not being made. As a result it is very important that we produce the Issues and Options document on the suggested timescale.
- 5.26 Progress of the plan after this is dependent on external factors which include the uncertainty about what is happening at Heathrow and the need to try to co-ordinate the plan making process with our neighbours.

- 5.27 We have not yet published a Local Development Scheme which sets out key dates for the subsequent stages of the plan. The DCLG recommended that we should do so once a decision about Heathrow has been made.
- 5.28 Although the Government has announced its support for the proposed third runway it has set out a very long decision making process. As a result the Inquiry into the Review of the Local Plan may have to be delayed so that it can be synchronised with the Inquiry into the proposed third runway at Heathrow.
- 5.30 The other big issue which affects the timing of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough is how we can coordinate it with the South Bucks/Chiltern plan. They have not included the proposal for a northern expansion of Slough in their latest Green Belt Preferred Options consultation. Nevertheless we will have to continue to promote this through the Local Plan process and if necessary seek to get agreement that there will be an immediate partial review of the South Bucks/Chiltern plan just to deal with this issue.
- 5.31 In the meantime we need to make progress as much progress as we can with the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. As a result we could produce a “Preferred Options” plan in September 2017 followed by a “Submission” version in early 2018. As explained above it may not be possible to actually submit the Local Plan for a Public Inquiry at this stage because of the need to coordinate with other plans and proposals.
- 5.32 We will have further discussions with the DCLG and Planning Inspectorate about this but it is recommended that delegated powers be given to publish a Local Development Scheme with a timetable for the next stages of the Review of the Local Plan.
- 5.33 We also need to produce an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how we will engage with the community throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. This will include a range of methods to engage and inform parties who have expressed interest in the Local Plan, or may be affected by it.

6 Comments of Other Committees

- 6.1 Information reports on the Issues and Options for the Review of the Local Plan have been put to the Planning Committee at its meetings on 2nd November and the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 17th November. The Planning Committee had no comments. Any comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committees will be reported orally to Cabinet.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Approval is being sought for the “Issues and Options” document for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough which will be the subject of a six week public consultation exercise in January.
- 7.2 In addition Delegated Powers are also being sought for the Officers to produce and Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement to support the consultation exercise.

8 **Background Papers**

'1' - Strategic Housing Market Assessment – GL Hearn Feb 2016

'2' -Economic Development Needs Assessment – NLP Feb 2016

9 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Issues and Options document for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.

APPENDIX 1.

REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH: ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT. DRAFT VERSION 09/11/16.

DRAFT

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1. INTRODUCTION

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

1.2. HOW DOES THIS FEED INTO THE LOCAL PLAN (2016-2036)?

- 1.2.1. The new Local Plan can have a major role in the way Slough develops over the next 20 years. In doing so it will have to take account of the Government's planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also has to take account of the Council's other strategies such as the 5 Year Plan and the strategies and plans of other organisations.
- 1.2.2. The new Local Plan for Slough will eventually contain a number of policies and site allocations to guide future development in the borough. It will set out our housing allocation and where development will happen including land for housing, employment, infrastructure and community uses. It will also identify areas to be protected such as public open space and areas important for biodiversity. Once adopted it will become the key document in the determination of planning applications in Slough.
- 1.2.3. Many planning issues cover a much wider area than the Local Plan. The council has a requirement under the Duty to Cooperate set out in the Localism Act 2011 to engage with other planning authorities on a constructive and on-going basis throughout the preparation of a Local Plan, so that strategic, cross boundary matters are dealt with effectively in individual Local Plans. The publication of this Issues and Options document is an important step which will help to inform future discussions with our Duty to Cooperate partners.
- 1.2.4. Any new policies and proposals that are eventually included in the Local Plan will have to demonstrate that they are sustainable, realistic and supported by the necessary evidence. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report has been prepared and is available at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>. This sets out the baseline information for Slough and identifies issues the borough is facing.
- 1.2.5. A high level Sustainability Appraisal of the Spatial Options in this document has also been carried out and is available at the link above.

1.3. WHAT IS THIS CONSULTATION ABOUT?

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

- 1.3.2. Please provide any comments by February 27th 2016. An online form, setting out these questions, is available on the website <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>. Please e-mail responses to: planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk,

1.4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

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

1.5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE COUNCIL'S EXISTING PLANNING POLICIES?

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

2. SECTION A: CONTEXT

2.1. AIM OF THE PLAN

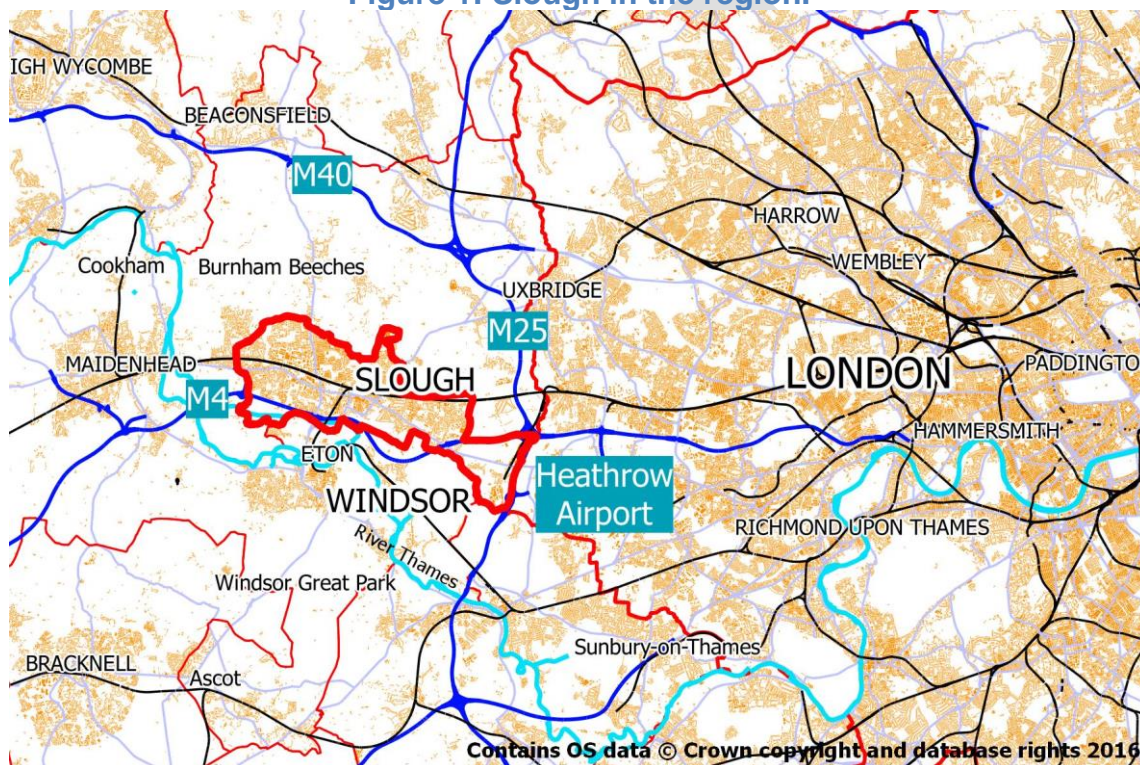
- 2.1.1. It is important not to pre-determine what the final version of the Local Plan will look like until we have considered all of the options and listened to what people have to say. Nevertheless it is helpful to set out from the beginning what we think that the aims of the plan should be.
- 2.1.2.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

2.1.5. In order to provide some context for the Review of the Local Plan it is necessary to understand Slough as it is today, consider what lessons we can learn from the recent past and attempt to identify the key drivers of change that will affect what will happen to it in the future.

2.2. SLOUGH TODAY

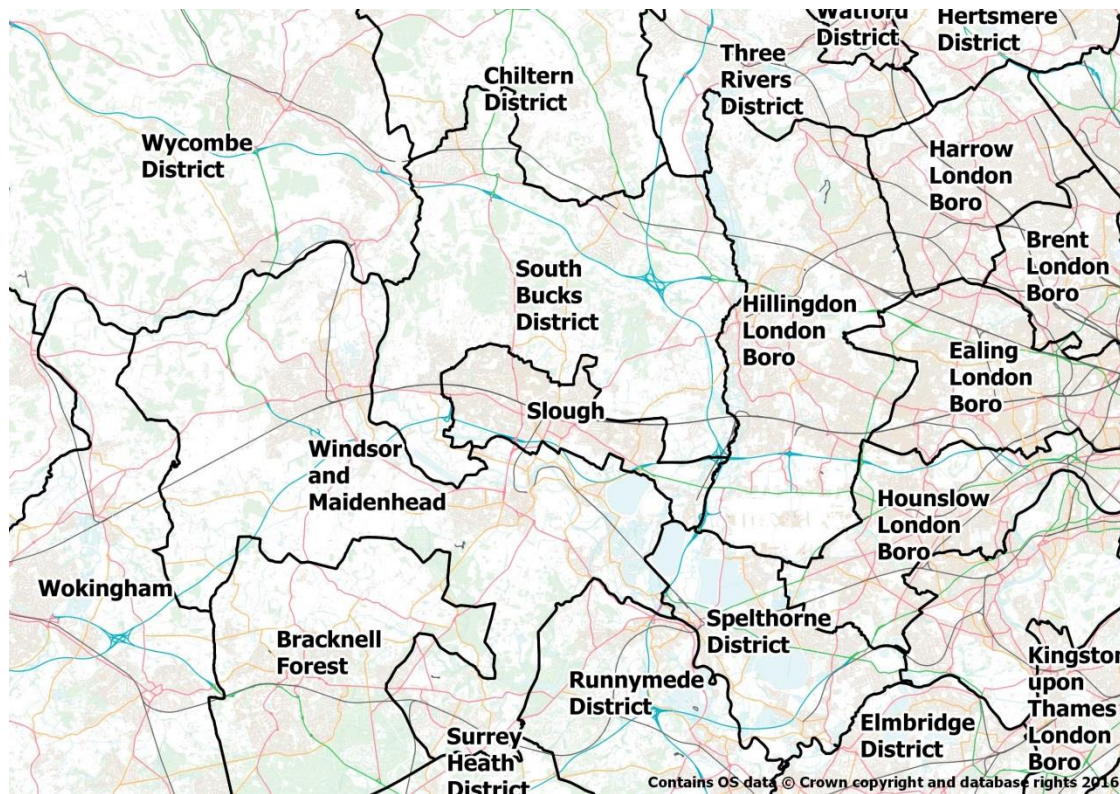
2.2.1. Slough is situated to the West of London in the Thames Valley. It has developed through the amalgamation of villages along the Great West Road, and has retained its linear shape as the area grew during the 20th century. It shares most of its northern and western boundary with South Buckinghamshire District Council (Buckinghamshire CC) and its southern boundary with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It bounds the M25 and the London Borough of Hillingdon to the east near Heathrow and has a very small boundary with Spelthorne Borough Council (Surrey CC) at the south east corner of the Borough.

Figure 1: Slough in the region.



Data from Ordnance Survey (2016).

Figure 2: Slough's neighbours.



Data from Ordnance Survey (2016).

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

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

2.3. PAST PERFORMANCE

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

Table 1: Key statistics of Slough

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

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

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

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

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

2.3.7. Conclusion

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

2.4. KEY DRIVERS OF CHANGE TO 2036

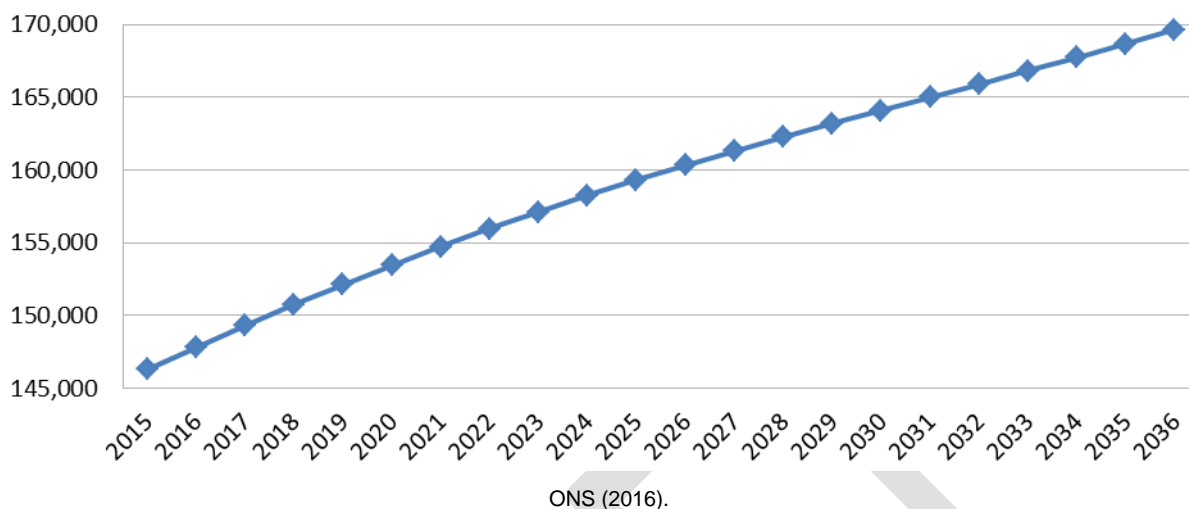
2.4.1. Just as Slough has changed over the past twenty years, we anticipate that it will continue to change over the lifetime of the plan. This section sets out what we think the key trends and developments will be which will help to shape the future of Slough. This concentrates upon those things which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

2.4.2. Slough's population will continue to increase

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

2.4.4. The Government Office of National Statistics (ONS) projects that Slough’s population will increase by over 15% from almost 148,000 in 2016 to around 169,611 in 2036 (see Figure 3: Slough Population Projections 2015-2036.).

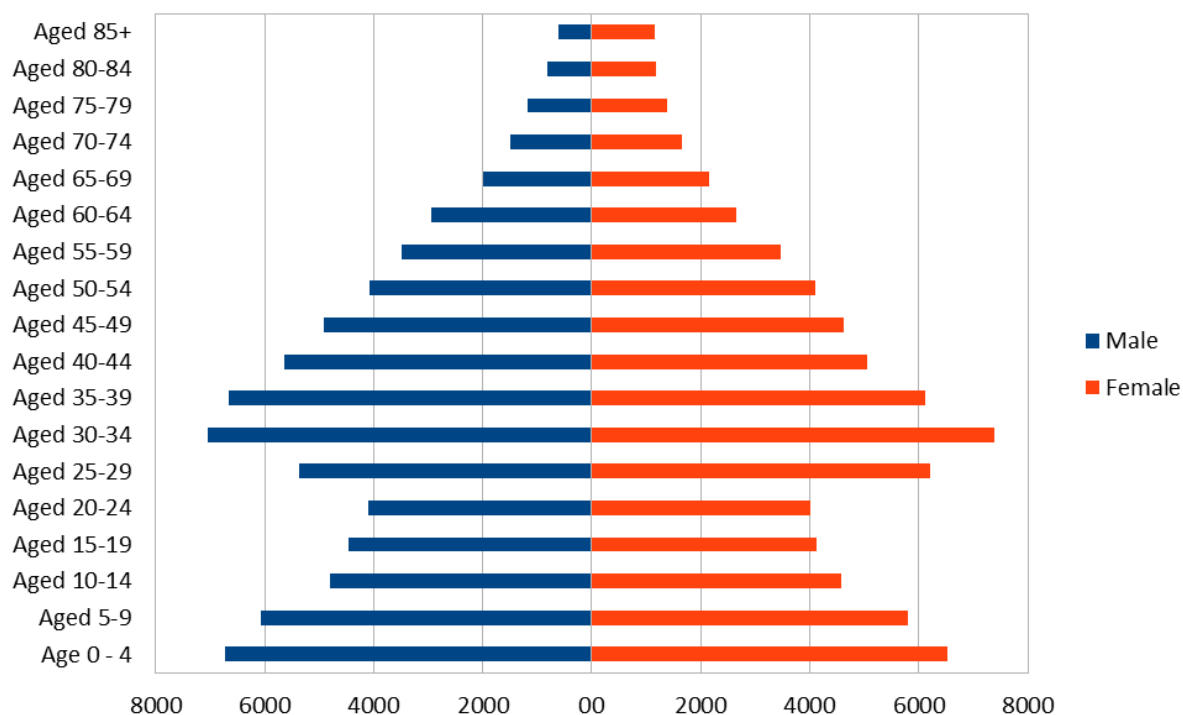
Figure 3: Slough Population Projections 2015-2036.



ONS (2016).

2.4.5. The main reason for the large projected increase in population is that Slough has a high 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 woman¹.

Figure 4: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2014

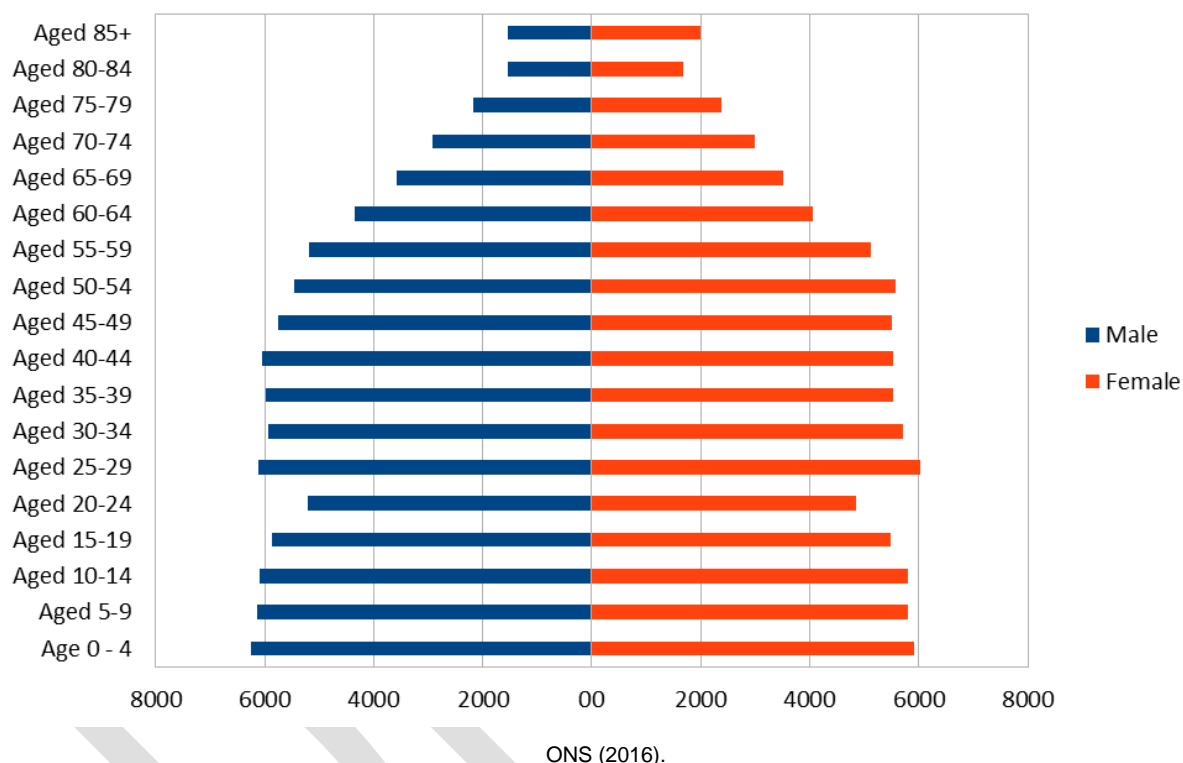


ONS (2016).

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

- 2.4.6. In addition to the population increasing in Slough over the plan period, the age profile will also change. A comparison of the graph for 2036 in Table 2 with the one for 2014 shows that Slough will have a much more balanced population with almost equal numbers of people in all age brackets up to 60. Although there will be relatively fewer people over 60 than other age groups there will still be a significant increase in the number of elderly people compared to today. This change in the age profile will have an effect upon the type of housing and services that we will have to provide.
- 2.4.7. Overall having a large percentage of people of working age will be an advantage providing we can ensure that there are enough jobs for them.

Figure 5: Slough Population by Age and Sex 2036



- 2.4.8. The growth in population is the main reason that we will need more houses in Slough. The Berkshire authorities commissioned GL Hearn to carry out a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and predict what the 'Objectively Assessed Housing Need' (OAHN) will be over the plan period. This concluded that Slough needed 927² new homes a year. This is a much higher building rate than we have managed in the past. If we were to build 927 homes a year from 2013 to 2036 there would be 21,321 new homes in Slough. This would result in a 41% increase in the housing stock which was 52,212 in 2013 (HFR, 2013).
- 2.4.9. The increase in population will also raise pressure on existing physical and social infrastructure and potentially create additional congestion on roads.

² GL Hearn, 2016, Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment. www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/Berks-SHMA-Feb-2016.pdf

2.4.10. Shopping patterns are changing and Slough town centre is at risk

2.4.11. In the Core Strategy (2008) Slough town centre was classified as a “Primary Regional Centre” which drew shoppers from beyond the Borough’s boundary. This is reflected in the fact that in 2006 Slough was ranked as the 57th most important shopping centre in the country. Ten years later Slough has dropped significantly to 147th (Javelin Group, VENUESCORE 2016). By comparison Reading remains a top destination and is ranked 14th in the country.

2.4.12. This means that Slough is no longer a sub-regional centre and will continue to decline unless significant action is taken.

2.4.13. A household survey conducted by Cushman & Wakefield in January 2015 showed that Slough’s catchment area had reduced significantly to around 60,000 people. This means that it is not even serving the whole of the population of the Borough and that many Slough residents are going to other destinations for their main shopping. 12% of the interviewees stated they didn’t shop in Slough because of the poor range of non-food shops. A further 13% said that Slough had an unattractive environment or was not a very nice place.

2.4.14. Shopping patterns are changing everywhere as result of the internet and the rise of online shopping. This means that only those centres which are offering ‘destination shopping experiences’ or leisure activities are prospering. Slough town centre is not in this category and there is a significant risk that the demand for retail uses will continue to decline.

2.4.15. The rise in click and collect and other changes to consumer patterns mean that more people like to shop locally in smaller stores on a day to day basis which are more convenient for them than the large superstores. There are three large superstores in Slough with two others close to its western boundary. It is unlikely that any more will be needed in the plan period and the role of the existing ones may change.

2.4.16. Shopping provision is not evenly provided across the Borough in that there are no superstores or retail parks in the east which also has fewer local facilities. The change in shopping patterns means that District Centres, Neighbourhood centres, Local parades and individual corner shops are likely to have an increasingly important function in meeting consumer needs in the future.

2.4.17. Heathrow Airport will continue to have a major impact upon the way that Slough develops.

2.4.18. Heathrow Airport already has a significant influence over Slough. In October 2016 the Government announced its support for its expansion through the construction of a third runway which will partly be built within the Borough at Colnbrook. The construction of the runway and all of the ancillary development that goes with it would result in major changes to the eastern part of the Borough. There would also be changes to the road network and travel patterns, as well as the environment of the area.

2.4.19. It is estimated that there could be up to 77,000 new jobs by 2030 of which 5,000 would be apprenticeships. The overall benefit to the economy could be a billion pounds a year. The new runway would also mean that Heathrow would be even better connected to more long haul destinations around the world.

2.4.20. The expansion of the airport will also have a number of impacts on the environment. These include potential increased noise and worsening air quality. There will also be more traffic and

the loss of open land within the Colne Valley Park. There will also be the loss of some premises to make way for the new runway.

- 2.4.21. All of this will have implications for Slough which the Local Plan will have to deal with.
- 2.4.22. It will be a few years before any detailed permission for the third runway could be granted which means that there will be a period of uncertainty about the proposal. Even if the new runway is not built, there will still be growth at Heathrow.
- 2.4.23. It should be noted that the various housing and employment forecasts quoted in this document do not take account of the possible expansion of Heathrow. These will have to be updated as decisions are made about the new runway.
- 2.4.24. **Slough has very little available land for growth, therefore a new approach to accommodating development is needed.**
- 2.4.25. Slough Borough has a very small geographical area of just 32.5 km². With a population of 148,000 people and major employment areas it is one of the most tightly bound and urbanised local authorities in the UK. The population density of 45 persons per hectare (pph) means that Slough is ten times denser than the South East as a whole (4 pph) and is almost comparable to the density for London which is 55 pph (ONS 2001)
- 2.4.26. Yet Slough must plan to accommodate both population growth and also growth and change in the economy, including provision of national infrastructure projects such as the Heathrow expansion.
- 2.4.27. This means that the Local Plan will have to find different ways of accommodating growth compared to the past. The scarcity of land has become a driver for change in its own right.
- 2.4.28. The shortage of developable land will have an effect upon how the necessary physical, environmental and social infrastructure required to support both population and economic growth is provided. It will necessitate most growth being accommodated on previously developed land rather than greenfield sites. The capacity to provide all infrastructure within the borough is an issue which will require co-operative discussions with adjoining local authorities. It is probable that further adoption of new digital technology will have to be expedited to facilitate changes in the way people live and work.

2.5. VISION

- 2.5.1. Very few local authorities in the UK have the opportunity to grow in the way that Slough has. We set out our aims for the Plan at the beginning of the document and, taking account of all of the available information, it is considered that the following for Slough in 2036 should be used as the basis of the plan making process. In formulating the vision we have taken account of other Slough Borough Council strategies and plans.

A Vision for Slough in 2036

Supporting the Council and its communities' ambitions for the Borough, by 2036 Slough will have a high profile image which recognises its important role in the region as a prosperous, confident, attractive, metropolitan place where people choose to work, rest, play and stay.

The centre of Slough will be an attractive, vibrant hub providing high quality offices, retail, leisure, landmark buildings and cultural opportunities for our diverse communities.

Slough will be an “economic powerhouse” with a large skilled resident workforce and a reputation as an excellent place to do business which will encourage established and new companies to invest and grow in the Borough.

As a result of Crossrail, the Western rail link to and expansion at Heathrow airport, Slough will be one of the best connected places. Accessibility within the town will have been improved through the development of convenient pedestrian, cycle and bus networks.

By encouraging investment, regeneration, innovation and high standards of design we will have created distinct environments with high quality public realm that create a sense of place.

Our proactive approach to meeting our housing need locally means Slough is a place where our residents feel a sense of belonging and are able to live in good quality and affordable homes. We are proud of our diversity and cohesion; we live in greener, safe and distinctive neighbourhoods with lifelong access to excellent education and job opportunities, and the facilities and services they need to live positive healthy lives.

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

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

2.6. OBJECTIVES

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

- A. *To meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) of 927 dwellings per annum within the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises within a balanced housing market.*
- B. *To provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough’s population that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard.*
- C. *To support innovation, growth and regeneration and ensure the Town Centre is the focus for high density housing and major retail, leisure, office and cultural development.*
- D. *To ensure Slough’s economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse by retaining its multinational HQs, having a diverse resilient economic base, and including opportunities for business start-ups and Smart technology.*
- E. *To create 15,000 jobs supported by a competitive local workforce who have the skills to meet businesses’ changing needs.*
- F. *To ensure Crossrail, the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and growth at Heathrow deliver benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.*

- G. To encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, reduce the need to travel, make non-car modes the best choice for short journeys and tackle traffic congestion.*
- H. To improve the health and well-being of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.*
- I. To provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.*
- J. To make Slough feel like a safe place through minimising the opportunity for crime and antisocial behaviour.*
- K. To improve the image and attractiveness of the town through insisting on high quality design for all new buildings and enhancing the public realm. To support the vitality, viability, distinctiveness of local centres and ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place.*
- L. To increase opportunities for leisure and recreation and improve the quality and use of Slough's parks and open green spaces and the links to these and the surrounding countryside including the Colne Valley Regional Park.*
- M. Protect the environment, and adapt to climate change and minimise its effects through protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity and water environment, and addressing flood risk, carbon emissions and pollution.*
- N. To protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value.*

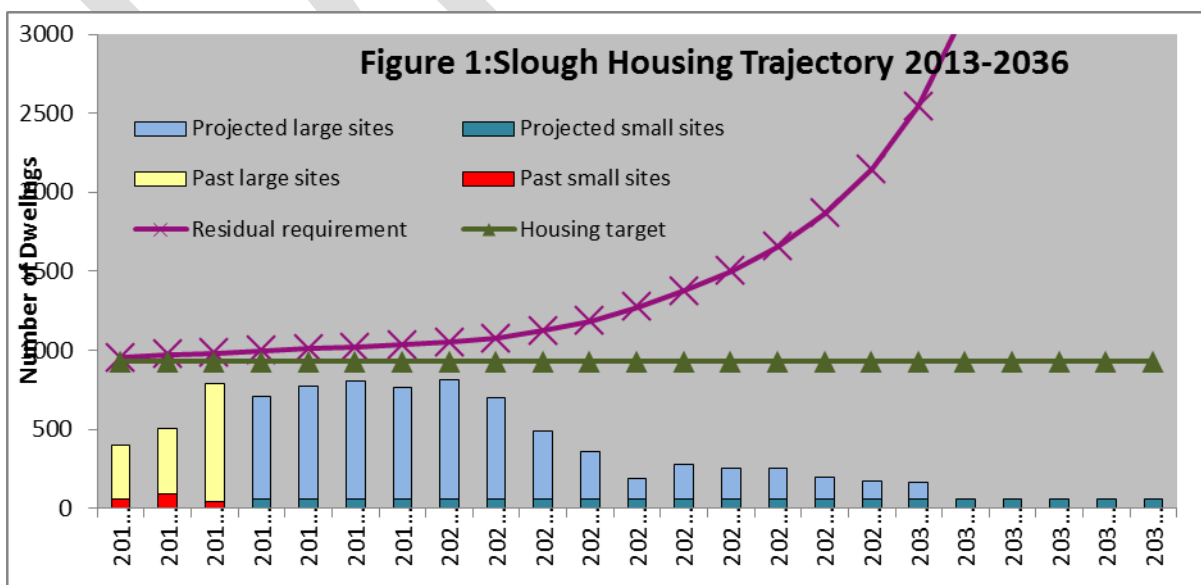
3. SECTION B: THE BIG STRATEGIC ISSUES

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

3.1. HOW CAN WE MEET AS MUCH OF OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED HOUSING NEED OF 927 DWELLINGS A YEAR AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO WHERE THESE NEED ARISES?

- 3.1.1. One of our Objectives is to meet as much as possible of the objectively assessed need for housing within the borough or as close as possible to where the need arises.
- 3.1.2. The results of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Berkshire (including South Bucks) (SHMA) which was published by GL Hearn in February 2016 shows that Slough’s Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) is for an average of 927 homes a year. This means that over the period of the study from 2013 to 2036 we would have to plan for a total of over 21,000 houses.
- 3.1.3. The study has been carried out in accordance with government guidance. It takes into account projections for how the population is growing, draws on information on rates of household formation, economic conditions, employment growth prospects, and an extensive range of other factors. The study also identifies the need for a significant amount of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 3.1.4. There are two significant constraints which affect our ability to meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs. The first is the shortage of land for development which has been highlighted above. The second is the potential lack of viability which could prevent new housing coming forward and being delivered at the rate, scale and quality that is required.
- 3.1.5. It has not been possible to deliver as many as 927 houses a year in Slough in the past. Slough has been able to achieve its previous target of 550 homes per year and the Core Strategy and Site Allocations have established planning policies that should continue to enable new homes to be built at that rate. The latest housing trajectory shows that, based on existing commitments including sites with planning permission and existing plan site allocations and proposals under discussion, up to 800 homes per year will be built over the next 5 years. After this, the level of house building will fall to well below the acceptable level unless we actively plan for new development and identify further land for housing.

Figure 6: Housing Trajectory 2013-2036



- 3.1.6. Historically, Slough has been able to meet its need for housing by building upon both brownfield and greenfield land. But not all of the un-built on land is suitable for housing – some is subject to flooding, some affected by airport extension plans, some is essential for environmental protection reasons. Some brownfield land would require such substantial remediation that redevelopment less likely to happen.
- 3.1.7. Former employment land has been changed to residential use in the past, but the need for housing has to be set alongside the need to retain and create new jobs and support the economy of Slough. In addition to existing allocated sites, new opportunities for large scale redevelopment of vacant or redundant employment and other sites will be identified through the Plan process. These may provide sites for sustainable expansion of housing in new neighbourhoods. There could be valuable opportunities for mixed use developments in the future particularly in the town centre and other local centres. Piecemeal development of smaller employment sites could also deliver more housing but this could equally endanger jobs and services in local areas.
- 3.1.8. In the past Slough has released Green Belt land in order to meet housing needs. The last of these sites are now under construction and so it will be necessary to consider more Green Belt land. There are, however, very few developable sites left within Slough's very tightly drawn boundary. As a result this option may not be a major source of new housing. It will be necessary to show that there are exceptional circumstances before any changes can be made to Green Belt boundaries, and the sites will need to be assessed for flood risk and other sustainability matters.
- 3.1.9. The Council has used its knowledge of Slough to identify potential housing sites and has also asked for suggestions in the public “Call for Sites” in early 2016. These exercises have identified a number of potential options for significant quantities of housing to be provided. The contribution from development on these options sites within the Borough are discussed in the policy directions and spatial options sections later in this document. But even taking an optimistic view of suitability and deliverability of building housing on the remainder of the sites that came forward through the “Call for Sites”, these will not come close to satisfying housing need later in the plan period.
- 3.1.10. Increasing need, coupled with a shortage of undeveloped land within the Borough means that we will have to look at range of alternative ways of accommodating new housing development. We will need to consider whether existing suburban areas could accommodate more intensive use of the land in a way that will still be acceptable to the way people in Slough want to live. The design, form and mix of new development should ensure that a healthy well designed environment is created for residents and that on smaller or more constrained sites, the character of the adjacent area is respected.
- 3.1.11. The needs of new and existing communities for schools, health care and leisure/green space will also need to be provided at appropriate levels. This will require additional land and resources.
- 3.1.12. If we still cannot meet all of our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs within Slough it will be necessary to look outside of our boundaries. Based upon the principle of meeting needs as close to where they are arising this would involve expanding the built up area of Slough. Other options will also have to be considered in discussions with other local planning authorities.
- 3.1.13. Experience has shown that even when we are able to identify sites in Slough, not all of them come forward for development. Some sites which have been promoted by landowners and received planning permission still do not get built. There can be a number of reasons for this, which includes developers "land banking" but the main one tends to be the lack of viability in the Slough market caused by Slough's comparatively low house prices. There are signs that

this may be changing but the Local Plan will have to try to ensure that measures are in place to encourage the delivery of new housing at a higher rate than has been achieved in the past.

- 3.1.14. The Housing Strategy (2016) explains how the Council will deliver more affordable housing on its own land, through estate renewal or as part of an acquisition and building programme. Although Government changes to housing benefits and the way that Councils are able to finance the management and expansion of their housing stock has yet to be fully clarified, the Council already has a programme of 190 affordable homes which it is delivering directly on its own land during the lifetime of the strategy. As a result of Slough's proactive approach it is estimated that 200 new units, including affordable housing, can be delivered or facilitated each year during the five year life of the Strategy. It is also estimated that over the next 15 years a net gain of 1,000 units can be achieved on land held by the Council. This will be a very welcome contribution to meeting housing need and policies to facilitate these coming forward should be developed.
- 3.1.15. The Council has a duty to plan for the housing needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. The Council needs to gather more evidence as to the need of these communities. Therefore it is proposed that planning policies to address these issues will be considered subsequently during the plan making process.
- 3.1.16. The Government has recently introduced requirements on councils to ensure that land is available through the planning system for people to build or commission homes for their own use. A register has been set up for people to register their interest. At present 15 people or groups have registered in Slough. The plan should consider how the council could encourage suitable sites to be brought forward on the market to meet this fairly limited level of demand.

3.1.17. Conclusion

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

3.2. HOW CAN WE OFFER A WIDE CHOICE OF HIGH QUALITY HOUSING AND CREATE BALANCED COMMUNITIES?

- 3.2.1. One of our Objectives is to provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard. Another Objective is to create a balanced housing market.
- 3.2.2. The evidence shows that the population of Slough is both growing and changing. We have aspirations that it should be a place where people can work, rest, play and stay. This means that we need to make Slough a place where people have the choice of accommodation to meet their lifestyle at different stages in their lives. We need to recognise the different needs of people in larger extended families with both children and elderly people living together, working

families, younger working people without children, single working people and elderly or people with disabilities who are possibly living alone, and others. We want to give those people who will be growing up, educated or working in Slough the choice to stay within their existing community. Retaining their social network can be beneficial for wellbeing and health, is good for the community and reduces the need to travel.

- 3.2.3. Most of the housing stock was built in the 20th century when Slough was a boom town. There is only a limited amount of the Victorian "heritage" property that you find in neighbouring towns. As a result we need to make the most of what we have in order to fill this niche in the market. There are very few houses in Slough at the top end of the market with none in the most expensive Council Tax band H and only 0.6% in band G (Valuation Office Agency, 2016). By comparison South Bucks District has 30% of its properties in these bands. As a result consideration needs to be given as to whether higher specification residential accommodation could be provided in Slough.
- 3.2.4. There is also a need for high quality family housing in Slough which can compete with what is on offer in the surrounding areas. Whilst the need for higher density development means that we are not going to be building new houses with large gardens we can try to make sure that there is a range of good quality housing built in and on the edge of Slough which can meet the needs and aspirations of the community.
- 3.2.5. In order to do this it will also be necessary to improve the quality of the environment and appearance of the street scene within some existing neighbourhoods.
- 3.2.6. In the last ten years on average around 60% of all of the new dwellings that we have built have been flats. Projections show that because of the nature of the sites that are likely to come forward in the future, up to 80% of new builds will be flats.
- 3.2.7. The Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) estimates the size of accommodation required for the affordable and market sectors. Slough needs 61% of private market dwellings and 27% of affordable housing to be 3 bedrooms or larger.
- 3.2.8. This indicates that there is still a high need for family housing in Slough. Whilst households have in many cases managed to adapt their living accommodation to try to meet their requirements, there clearly is a need for an ongoing supply of family housing.
- 3.2.9. As a result there is a question as to how the need for 3 bed units will be met in the future. Will we be able to accommodate all families in houses with gardens or will some have to live in apartments in the future?
- 3.2.10. Since new development is likely to contain a high proportion of flats it will be all the more important that we retain our existing stock of family housing if we are going to meet future needs. We also need to think about how we allow existing houses to be adapted to larger families and what impact this has on the open character of the suburbs.
- 3.2.11. As Slough's population gets older there will also be a need for properties that can be adapted to meet the needs of the elderly and new specialist accommodation can be provided within the neighbourhoods where people live. Similarly there are other groups in the population who have specific needs. Some of these could potentially find appropriate housing within the mixed use environment of the town centre and other larger developments. But for others, meeting such needs in suburban areas would enable people to live locally at all stages of their life.

3.2.12. The needs of local people will only be met if they can afford to live in the housing that is available.

- 3.2.13. Slough is different to many towns in that only just over half (56%) of homes are owner occupied while 24% of properties are privately rented. Although the privately rented proportion is very high compared to other areas, it is likely to grow as a result of increasing demand from people who can't afford, or don't want to buy a house. An increase in supply is therefore likely to come from institutions who will build and let whole blocks of flats, "buy to let " landlords who will acquire new or old property as an investment and a whole range of private landlords who provide a variety of accommodation including the 100 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) that there are in the Borough.
- 3.2.14. The remaining 20% of dwellings in Slough are in the "social rented" sector provided either by the Council or what were previously known as Housing Associations. The council has a stock of 7,100 homes, 6,000 of which are rented and the remainder leasehold.
- 3.2.15. Accommodation in Slough is relatively cheap compared to London and the surrounding areas. House prices have, however gone up by over 20% in the last year with the result that the average price in Slough is now £304,000. (Zoopla, August 2016). The latest statistics show that the average house price is 11 times the average wage in Slough (Land Registry & ONS, 2016). Rental levels have also risen.
- 3.2.16. Many people in Slough choose to live in extended families. There are also many "hidden households" who are sharing because they cannot afford a home of their own. The result is that 12.6% households in Slough live in overcrowded conditions compared to 3.6% in the South East (ONS, 2011). The average figure hides the fact that there are some properties, often containing extended families, which have very high levels of occupancy.
- 3.2.17. The criteria for being on the Council's waiting list have been made much stricter in recent years to reflect the reality of the number of homes available. Prior to that, there were 8,000 households on the register and seeking accommodation. Even after the change there are still around 2,000 who are registered as being in housing need. Homelessness has increased and the use of temporary accommodation is increasing rapidly. At 31 March 2015, the Council had 156 households in temporary accommodation. A year later this had risen to 225. By September 2016 the total in temporary accommodation stood at over 300. At this rate of change, the position in Slough will soon be approaching that of a typical London Borough.
- 3.2.18. It is an objective of the local plan to provide appropriate housing to meet local need, and this includes the provision of affordable housing for those people who need help to bring the cost of their housing down to below market values.
- 3.2.19. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) calculated that there was a need to build 671 new affordable houses each year over the plan period. The SHMA explains that the basis for assessing affordable housing need is not the same as for assessing overall housing need. Therefore there is danger in comparing the two figures directly. However since the affordable requirement would represent 72 % of the total number of new houses required to be delivered, it is highly questionable whether such a figure could be deliverable in practice.
- 3.2.20. How much affordable housing the plan should seek to deliver in order to meet housing need will have to take account of development viability. At the moment the core strategy requires that between 30% and 40% of all additional units in housing schemes of more than 15 units should be affordable housing. National planning policy is clear that local plan policy requirements should not deter development from coming forward by making it unviable. On greenfield sites where existing use values are low and remediation costs usually nil, a significant proportion of affordable housing will be viable alongside developer contributions for

the provision of infrastructure. Land owners still need an incentive in terms of a competitive return to a willing landowner to bring greenfield or indeed brownfield land forward for development.

- 3.2.21. For most brownfield sites there is only a limited amount of money available for contributions to infrastructure, affordable housing and other key requirements. This is limited by the existing use value, remediation and other enabling costs. So there is usually a need to choose what this contribution is used to provide for. Affordable housing associated with large market housing schemes will continue to make an important contribution to the supply, whether those units are on site as part of the development or whether a development funds an off site contribution so the housing can be built elsewhere. In some instances, the objective of raising the image of Slough through better but more costly design and the “Slough Pound” concept may take precedence over affordable housing contributions. However allowing higher densities in appropriate areas can achieve higher development values, better design and affordable housing/infrastructure in skilfully designed comprehensive new housing schemes.
- 3.2.22. Affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Within this definition are several forms of housing including “social rented”, “affordable rented” or “intermediate” housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. “Intermediate” housing is taken to include shared ownership and rented housing provided to households who can afford to pay between 80% of market rates and the full market rate. “Social rented” homes are provided by Local Authorities or Housing Associations at or below “Target” rents. “Affordable rented” housing is provided by Housing Associations or local councils at rents between the target rent and 80% of the market rent.
- 3.2.23. The plan needs to consider what mix of types of affordable housing is required to meet Slough’s needs. The SHMA also make some broad recommendations suggesting that approximately 20-25% of the need for affordable housing could be met by “Intermediate” homes. The remainder is to be met by rented housing at 80% of market levels or below.
- 3.2.24. However the mix needs to take account of the different impact that each type has on the viability of development coming forward. Therefore while there may be a preference for social rented housing (for example) there needs also to be some flexibility to achieve the best outcome given the circumstances.
- 3.2.25. The Council Housing Strategy has reached a balanced view to promote affordable housing at a range of rents, from traditional social housing rents to rents that are within the reach of households on middle incomes. This takes account of the viability trade-off between the number of affordable units and the additional costs in providing affordable rented units, that many of the households seeking accommodation are on low incomes and cannot afford rents at “affordable rent” levels without subsidy, the government policy changes such as “pay to stay” and other considerations.
- 3.2.26. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced the concept of “starter homes” which are homes for first time buyers to be sold at a discount of 20% from the market value. The Government has consulted on how this form of affordable housing should be delivered and will bring in secondary legislation to implement the requirements. Until we know what the requirement is it is not possible to assess how this will affect affordable housing provision, but it is reasonable to infer that getting a substantial number of rented housing units will be harder.
- 3.2.27. Conclusion**
- 3.2.28. In order to encourage people to live and stay in Slough we need to ensure that we have enough of the right sort of housing to suit residents at all stages of their lives. Housing is moving out of reach for increasing numbers of residents. We need to decide how much

affordable housing (social rented, affordable rented or some form of shared ownership) should be provided in the plan period. To get more investment in housing we need to improve development viability. Hard choices are required about what priority should be given to affordable housing against other plan priorities. Family housing is in demand and should be protected. But there is also a need for some specialist non family housing in suburban areas, allowing people to live locally and stay within their communities.

3.3. HOW CAN SLOUGH MAINTAIN ITS ROLE AS AN ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE?

- 3.3.1. One of our Objectives is to ensure that Slough's economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse.
- 3.3.2. The extent to which it is a powerhouse can be seen from the fact that the economic output of Slough (as measured in terms of its Gross Value Added) is £5.6b a year. The productivity of the average worker in Slough (as measured by GVA) £70,900 per year which is some 32% higher than the national average of £53,000.
- 3.3.3. Slough is part of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVBLEP) which has ambitious plans through the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to deliver a further uplift to the area worth £700m by 2020.
- 3.3.4. As a result it can be seen how important the future prosperity of Slough is, not just to local people, but the wider economy.
- 3.3.5. There are currently around 5,000 businesses in Slough which between them provide around 80,000 jobs (ONS Business Register and Survey, 2015).
- 3.3.6. Whilst Slough has a wide range of employers, which provides some resilience to the local economy, it is unusual in having so many corporate European and worldwide headquarters. These are particularly significant, not just because of the number of jobs they provide, but also because they have high value jobs which significantly boost the GVA per worker. As a result it is important that Slough continues to promote itself as one of the best located places for headquarter offices to do business
- 3.3.7. It is important that Slough continues to have a diverse and resilient economic base so that it is not over dependent upon particular sectors which may shrink in importance as a result of global, national or local changes to the economy. We also need to ensure that all of the small businesses which serve the local economy and make it function continue to be provided for.
- 3.3.8. One of the reasons that Slough is an "economic powerhouse" is that it has access to a large workforce. Currently around 39,000 people commute into Slough on a regular basis mainly to take the high skilled jobs. At the same time a similar number Slough residents commuting out, many of them to less skilled jobs. This results in a disparity between wages for Slough residents £529 per week compared with the average wages of those employed in Slough, which is £574 (Regeneris 2015)
- 3.3.9. In recent strategies, businesses have highlighted the difficulty in finding the right staff to meet their business needs. As a result it is important that local people are given the opportunity to improve their skills, either in education or at work, so that they are able to fill vacancies in the higher paid jobs. Not only will this help to maintain Slough as a major employment centre it will also help to boost the spending power in the town which will help to underpin existing businesses. As a result we will need to take the opportunity to increase the provision of higher

educational facilities in Slough which can improve skills and support innovation and research and development

- 3.3.10. It is also important that there will be a range of suitable new houses and flats in Slough to meet the needs and aspirations of the future workforce.

3.3.11. Conclusion

- 3.3.12. Slough has an important role as an employment generating and wealth creating town. The Local Plan will have to ensure that Slough remains as an attractive place to do business in order to make sure that it continues to prosper as a major economic powerhouse within the Thames Valley region.

3.4. HOW CAN WE SUPPORT THE CREATION OF 15,000 ADDITIONAL JOBS?

- 3.4.1. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to create 15,000 jobs in Slough over the plan period. Slough has always been a “working town” and in 2015 there were 80,000 jobs in the Borough. (ONS 2015 business register and employment survey).
- 3.4.2. The target to increase this by 15,000 comes from the Eastern Berkshire Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) and is based on Slough’s proportion of growth forecast for the whole of Berkshire by Cambridge Econometrics (2013). That suggests that, taking into account the projected growth in the all of the sectors of local economy, the number of jobs in Slough could increase by 14,680 during the 23 years to 2036. Of these 9,605 would be in “business uses” excluding health, education and retail.
- 3.4.3. These projections assume that economic growth in the local area is not constrained by supply-side factors such as population and the supply of labour and are trend based which means that they cannot take account of unforeseen changes in economic circumstances. As a result there can be no certainty that these forecasts of job growth will actually happen, especially if we do not have the right economic development strategies and planning policies that will be needed to deliver the infrastructure needed to support this growth.
- 3.4.4. Analysing recent employment performance shows that there has actually been an overall loss of 500 jobs (-0.6%) in Slough from 2008 to 2015 which is a higher rate of decline than nationally (-0.2%). There has been high growth in information and communications with 1530 new jobs (+13%) created in this sector and 1,140 jobs (+15%) created in the transport and storage sector. Over the same period there was a loss of 1,760 jobs (19%) in manufacturing, 1,690 jobs (17%) in Business administration and support and 1,039 jobs (28%) in construction. In spatial terms the greatest job growth has been along the Bath Road and the greatest loss in the town centre. The Slough Trading estate saw modest growth of 90 jobs during the period. (BRES (2008 & 2013) (Slough Business Focus Study and Strategic Response - May 2015).
- 3.4.5. The forecasts for Business Class jobs show the largest increases in office jobs (+4,240) and in distribution (+6,190), with a decline in manufacturing (-825).
- 3.4.6. Slough has a large number of HQ buildings supporting 4% of jobs in Slough, many of which are on the Bath Road rather than the town centre. There is, however, a general trend away from Business Park type locations, which rely upon high levels of car commuting, towards town centre locations with good public transport links. This is particularly true for companies that want to attract a young workforce.

- 3.4.7. There are a number of reasons why Slough town centre could become a major commercial centre and provide a higher proportion of new office jobs than the forecasts suggest.
- 3.4.8. Firstly the introduction of the Crossrail service in 2019 will make it much easier for residents in London to get Slough to work. It will also make it much easier for people working in Slough to access the City or Canary Wharf if they need to go there for business.
- 3.4.9. Secondly the much cheaper office rents in Slough compared to London, combined with its connectivity to the capital, will make it a very competitive location.
- 3.4.10. Thirdly the proposed passenger rail link from Slough to Heathrow (WRAtH), due to be completed in 2021, will make it attractive as a place for inward investment from overseas firms because staff will be able to make international trips more easily.
- 3.4.11. In order to compete with other areas the town centre will have to offer the sort of environment and range of facilities that modern day office workers expect. This would mean having better quality shops, a better range of leisure facilities and a better evening economy. Slough will also have to improve its image.
- 3.4.12. There are several speculative offices currently under construction or being refurbished in the town centre which shows that investors have renewed confidence in the area. If all of the major office schemes that are currently in the pipeline were to be occupied there would be 10,000 new jobs in the town centre which is much higher than previously projected. Slough has one million square feet of office supply which is second highest after Reading in the Thames Valley. 60% of this is high quality Grade A (Lambert Smith Hampton, 2016).
- 3.4.13. Apart from having a good supply of Grade A office accommodation, there is a concern that the town centre has lost and will continue to lose its stock of lower grade space as a result of the ability of owners to change offices into flats under the Prior Approval process without the need for planning permission. Whilst this may become a problem for firms looking for less expensive offices, there may be advantages in attracting businesses to a vibrant location where their employees have the opportunity to live as well as work
- 3.4.14. The town centre also contains a lot of service jobs. These are mainly in the retail sector but also include leisure and financial and business services. Whilst it is not expected that there will be an increase in retail jobs all town centres need a balance of uses to encourage linked trips and to maintain their vitality and viability. There should be scope to expand leisure services including food and drink which are performing an increasingly important role in successful centres. There is also a need for Slough to differentiate itself from its competition, possibly through a pro-digital vision for the town centre to have 'enterprise quarters' that take advantage of superfast Wi Fi, and deliver innovation and services for start-ups.
- 3.4.15. Outside of the town centre we can expect to see an increase in jobs as a result of the re-development or re-use of existing sites. The high cost of land and high rents that can be achieved for premises means that there is an incentive for owners to replace low value buildings with more intensive high value ones. In some cases, such as the construction of data centres, this can result in a reduction of employment. In most cases the high cost of doing business in Slough means that companies have to use their assets as efficiently as possible which means that worker densities tend to increase as a result of redevelopment.
- 3.4.16. One of the effects of this is to drive out some of the small businesses that support the Slough economy.
- 3.4.17. Small and medium sized enterprises (SME) are responsible for a significant amount employment. In Slough 14% of total jobs are in businesses with fewer than 10 employees. Start up rates for new businesses are high in Slough with 64.3 per 10,000 population.

Closures are however relatively high at 46.3 per 10,000 population in 2014 (Centre for Cities report taken from ONS Business demography data 2014). There may be many reasons for this but the lack of suitable affordable premises may be one.

- 3.4.18. Small businesses in Slough are tremendously diverse with many of them operating in the knowledge based sector such as Information and communications businesses and the pharma and life science businesses. Some of these occupy bespoke business incubator premises but many are home based. Facilitating the growth of these businesses could create a lot more jobs.
- 3.4.19. SEGRO have recently developed an offer to SME businesses on the Slough Trading Estate. They have small units available for as little as three to six months and importantly supplement the accommodation offer with business support and connections. This is a good example of how the Slough economy will have to adapt to be able to grow in the future.
- 3.4.20. Whilst many jobs are footloose and do not need land or premises, the traditional business sectors do.
- 3.4.21. The findings of the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) suggests between 148 and 180 hectares of new employment land will be needed in Slough for B Class Land between 2013 and 2036 in order to meet the potential demand for employment from the local population.
- 3.4.22. As explained above, it is considered that a higher number of jobs than expected could be created through office development in the town centre. There would still be a need for a large amount of new land to meet the projected growth in the industrial sectors, such as storage and distribution, which requires large sites for warehousing. As we have explained there is a shortage of land available for development in Slough. The few greenfield sites around the periphery of Slough are not particularly suitable for employment use and are more likely to be developed for housing if they come forward.
- 3.4.23. The only area where new warehousing could be built is in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. This is subject to a number of environmental constraints which limit the amount of development that can take place. It is also the area where the third runway for Heathrow is proposed to be built which would require a large land take for the airport and the supporting infrastructure. As a result it would be premature to be promoting any additional development in the location at this stage. Once the future plans and needs of Heathrow have been agreed there may be scope for more warehouse type development in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. Given the importance of Heathrow to the national economy it is considered that development should only be allowed in this location if it can be shown that it is needed to support the airport.
- 3.4.24. The proposed expansion of Heathrow could create up to 77,000 additional jobs and so this could make up for any shortfall in Slough.
- 3.4.25. Conclusion**
- 3.4.26. Slough has continued to adapt to changes in the economy with knowledge based businesses replacing traditional manufacturing. It has the potential to create more jobs in the future. It is likely that there will be more office jobs than trends suggest as a result of the revitalisation of Slough town centre as a commercial centre.
- 3.4.27. The shortage of land for new industrial or warehousing development means that it will be very difficult to provide the projected number of new jobs in this sector.

- 3.4.28. In order to provide the necessary employment in Slough the Local Plan will have to find ways creating new jobs in the service sectors and ensuring that existing employment land is protected.
- 3.4.29. The proposed expansion of Heathrow airport could help to provide the new jobs needed in the local economy.

3.5. HOW WE CAN REVITALISE SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE AS A MAJOR RETAIL, LEISURE AND COMMERCIAL CENTRE?

- 3.5.1. Our objective is to make the Town Centre the focus for all major retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development.
- 3.5.2. The future of the town centre is of particular significance for the way that Slough develops in the plan period. Not only will it become an increasingly important transport hub, it will also have to continue to provide a full range of facilities including new offices and it will have an influence upon the perceived image of Slough as a whole.
- 3.5.3. The evidence shows that it has been declining as a shopping centre and that it has been losing jobs as a result of major employers moving out and offices being converted to residential. It has also not developed a significant leisure offer or night time economy.
- 3.5.4. At the same time there can be high levels of traffic congestion around the centre and it suffers from a perception of having a poor environment.
- 3.5.5. As explained in the previous section there are a number of reasons why Slough town centre could become a major commercial centre and provide a higher proportion of new office jobs than the forecasts suggest. Investment is already taking place in new high quality office buildings which should be able to attract new HQ occupiers. This will help to change the quality of development and appearance of the centre.
- 3.5.6. There has already been a significant increase in the amount of residential development taking place in the centre which is likely to continue. The conversion of offices to flats and the construction of new high rise blocks will help to transform the centre and increase its vitality.
- 3.5.7. The major issue is what will happen to the shopping centre. The evidence shows that the quality of shops is declining and it no longer has a sub-regional shopping role. It is now operating as a very large “district centre”.
- 3.5.8. The good thing is that it is meeting local needs with the range of shops reflects the needs of Slough’s diverse population. Considering the size of the centre the vacancy rate of around 12% (which is the national average) is not as large as might be expected and footfall is still quite high. There are a lot more coffee shops in the centre which also show that it is beginning to adapt to a place where people will choose to socialise rather than just shop.
- 3.5.9. The Council’s “Centre of Slough Strategy” which was prepared in September 2015 concluded that it might be necessary to shrink the shopping centre and rely upon new residential development to regenerate the area. The major investment in major office development that has taken place since then shows that confidence has returned in Slough as a commercial centre and so it may be possible to boost the retail offer on the back of the new expenditure that should arrive when the new offices are occupied. The increase in new residents in the town centre should have the same effect.

- 3.5.10. There are other options that could be considered such as developing the centre as a specialist retail location which reflects the rich cultural mix of the town. Alternatively it could position itself as an “Outlet” centre with a different offer to competing towns.
- 3.5.11. Slough has not got a significant night time economy or an extensive leisure offer. As a there is the option of promoting it as more of a leisure destination which could, for example, aim at the family market.
- 3.5.12. Whatever approach is adopted it is clear that major investment and high quality design will be needed in the shopping centre in order to achieve our objective of revitalising the town centre.
- 3.5.13. All of this will require the plan to provide businesses with a clear, consistent and positive strategy for improving the town centre.
- 3.5.14. Whilst one of the objectives of the plan is to improve the vitality and viability of the District, Neighbourhood and local shopping centres this should not be at the expense of the Town Centre which has a vital role in enhancing the image of the Borough as a whole.

3.5.15. Conclusion

- 3.5.16. It is anticipated that current and proposed investment in new major office buildings will revitalise the town centre as a major commercial centre. It will also continue to be the location of major new residential development. The combination of these should help to regenerate the centre of Slough.
- 3.5.17. This will help to stimulate additional retail and leisure expenditure but major investment will be required if it is going to be a major shopping centre.

3.6. HOW CAN WE GET THE MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM THE GROWTH OF HEATHROW AIRPORT AND MITIGATE FOR ANY ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS?

- 3.6.1. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to ensure that growth at Heathrow delivers benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.
- 3.6.2. In October 2016 the Government announced its support for the construction of a third runway at Heathrow which will partly be built within the Borough at Colnbrook.
- 3.6.3. In addition to boosting the local economy and creating up to 77,000 new jobs by 2030, the expansion of Heathrow will have a number of other benefits for Slough. We will be working with all of the other Local Authorities in the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group to produce a vision and a non-statutory strategy for the sub region. Part of this will consider how the benefits from the expansion of Heathrow can be spread beyond the airport.
- 3.6.4. Slough town centre, which will be directly connected to the airport by the new passenger rail link (WRLtH), will be well positioned to benefit from inward investment opportunities. It could also attract ancillary uses such as hotels or conference facilities.
- 3.6.5. The Local Plan will therefore have to develop a strategy for capturing this investment within the local economy.
- 3.6.6. It is recognised that the expansion of the airport and construction of the new runway will have some adverse environmental impacts such as noise, air quality and increased traffic. The

Government is proposing new legally binding noise targets, encouraging the use of quieter planes and a more reliable timetable to provide respite for those living under the flight path. Heathrow has also pledged over £700 million for noise insulation for residential properties.

- 3.6.7. The work conducted by the Government has concluded that the new runway is deliverable within the air quality limits set out in the National Air Quality Plan (2015). This will, however require a number of mitigation measures to be put in place which include improved public transport links and the introduction of an ultra-low emissions zone for all airport vehicles by 2025. It will important that the relevant measures cover the wider area and are not just confined to the airport.
- 3.6.8. The total mitigation package for the local community most affected by the third runway could be up to £2.6 billion and there will be a role for the Local Plan in ensuring that appropriate measures are made for Slough.
- 3.6.9. The construction of the runway will mean that a number of existing facilities such as the British Airways Headquarters at Waterside Park and the Grondon's energy from waste plant will be demolished. The Local plan will therefore have to consider how these and other uses can be replaced.
- 3.6.10. Although the third runway has been approved by Ministers there is still a very long way to go in the decision making process. The next stage will be the publication of a Draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for public consultation. The results of this will be considered by a Select Committee which will hold an Inquiry. The final version of the NPS will then be approved by Parliament at the end of 2017. A planning application in the form of a Development Consent Order will then be prepared considered through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project process under the 2008 Act. This could mean that, following the Inquiry, detailed consent for the new runway may not be granted until 2023.
- 3.6.11. This long timescale for making a final decision about the third runway at Heathrow will make the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough very complicated. The Local Plan will have to safeguard the land that is needed for the airport and related facilities as well as any changes to the road network. It is envisaged that this will eventually be worked up into a Master Plan for the Colnbrook and Poyle area. This will inevitably be controversial and lead to objections to the Local Plan. As a result there is a danger that the Local Plan Inquiry could be dominated by Heathrow related issues which could make it a very long and expensive process.

3.6.12. **Conclusion**

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

3.7. **HOW CAN WE ENABLE OUR SUBURBAN AREAS TO CONTINUE TO ABSORB THE GROWTH IN POPULATION WITHOUT LOSING THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF INDIVIDUAL NEIGHBOURHOODS?**

- 3.7.1. The vast majority of Slough's residents live in the various neighbourhoods that make up the Borough.

- 3.7.2. One of the Objectives of the Plan is to ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place. These suburban areas have already absorbed a lot of the population growth that has been taking place. This can be seen from the large number of extensions that have taken place and the existence of a large numbers of outbuildings which are accommodating what are known as “beds in sheds.”
- 3.7.3. The extent of “organic” growth that has taken place in many neighbourhoods means that the scope for intensifying development, or “densification” as it is some times called, is likely to be more limited than it might appear. This is because household occupation is already high and the use of land is already being optimised. The layout of the town also means that there are very few areas with long undeveloped gardens where traditional “backland” development can take place and very few gaps between buildings where individual infilling can take place.
- 3.7.4. This means that to be effective any densification of the suburbs is only likely to work on a more comprehensive basis.
- 3.7.5. Where development or redevelopment does take place it will be important that it does so in a way which enhances the sense of place.
- 3.7.6. One of the characteristic features of the suburbs is their greenery. Unfortunately some of this is being lost as a result of front gardens and verges being used for parking and back gardens being concreted or paved over. As a result although Slough has many open spaces and parks it has a lot less trees than other urban areas. It only has around 24 trees per hectare compared to London which has almost twice as much at 45 trees per hectares. Despite this London has the ambition to increase tree cover by 20%. It is therefore important that where development does take place in Slough it replaces some of the greenery. There should also be an overall aim to increase the number of trees in the vicinity.
- 3.7.7. The quality of the street scene is also critical to the appearance of an area. As a result it is important that any new development, ranging from extensions to more extensive infilling, respects and enhances the street scene. This should be possible without inhibiting new innovative design.
- 3.7.8. Another objective is to protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of which are of local or historic value. The identity of some neighbourhoods are at least partly derived by the existence of Conservation Areas, historic buildings, parks, open spaces or local landmarks. It is therefore important that these are retained, improved and where appropriate celebrated.
- 3.7.9. A key feature of the neighbourhoods is the local facilities that they provide. One objective is to support the vitality, viability of local centres. Another is to provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.
- 3.7.10. It is considered that allowing some development in the suburban areas could directly or indirectly help to achieve these objectives and enable to access most of the things that they want in the local area.
- 3.7.11. One of the most important objectives of the plan is to improve the health and well-being of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives. It is considered that in most cases this can best be achieved by making our neighbourhoods as adaptable as possible so that people can live their whole life within their community so that they can get the support that they may need.

3.7.12. Conclusion

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

3.8. HOW CAN WE DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE CAN TRAVEL AROUND SLOUGH?

- 3.8.1. One of the reasons for Slough's success as an employment centre is its location in the Sub-region and excellent transport links to the rail, airport and road network. Whilst it is well connected to the outside world, travelling even short journeys within the Borough can be difficult as a result of high levels of congestion in the morning and evening peaks. Apart from making it difficult for local people to travel to work or school, increasing congestion could threaten our ability to deliver economic growth and revitalise the town centre.
- 3.8.2. Congestion has a number of costs. It was previously estimated that delays cost Slough businesses £34m a year. (LTP3) It also has an impact upon local communities and the environment. Having a lot of stationary vehicles in an area and can cause significant risks to health particularly in Air Quality Management Areas.
- 3.8.3. A lot of the congestion in Slough is caused by local people. 66% of residents commuting out of Slough do so by private car and many travel a short distance. This is the 6th highest proportion for all towns and cities in the South East. During the morning peak one in three car journeys is taking a child to school.
- 3.8.4. The geography of Slough means that there is only a finite capacity on the road system. We are investing in a number of improvement schemes but there is a limit to how much traffic management can achieve.
- 3.8.5. We are also investing in public transport such as the Slough Mass Rapid Transit scheme. It may be necessary for the Council to become more directly involved in the provision of the local bus service.
- 3.8.6. Major improvements to the rail services are due to be introduced in the future such as the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) and new link to Heathrow (WRLtH). There is also scope to improve the service to Windsor and create a new halt at Chalvey.
- 3.8.7. We have also been implementing a lot of smaller scale "soft" measures to reduce the need to travel and improve the alternatives modes of travel to the private car. Part of this involves developing a "hearts and minds" campaign.
- 3.8.8. Further improvements will, however, be constrained by the availability of resources, funding and the lack of space. As a result the Local Plan will have to set out a clear strategy for growth which can be used to justify obtaining the additional resources that will be needed to implement it.
- 3.8.9. The Local Plan will also have to develop new solutions for how people can get around, particularly for short trips, and make journey times much more reliable. This may involve adopting radical measures that restrain the use of the private car.

3.8.10. Conclusion

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

3.9. HOW CAN WE ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE BUILT AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT IN SLOUGH AND IMPROVE THE OVERALL IMAGE OF THE TOWN?

- 3.9.1. The rapid development of Slough since the mid twentieth century has left Slough with several legacies in terms of the image of the Borough. Some of these are more valuable than others when planning for the future.
- 3.9.2. On the positive side, suburban development has provided residents with valuable family housing in a spacious environment. Gardens provide personal leisure space and vegetation that contribute towards the quality of the environment as well as supporting biodiversity and space for water runoff. These gardens are however under pressure from increased car ownership, desire for more space in homes and residents with less time or inclination to maintain them.
- 3.9.3. With a few exceptions, Slough has suffered from a lack of attractive characterful buildings and spaces compared to more historic and less developed towns. This affects the perception of the town by visitors and residents.
- 3.9.4. Slough's perceived poor image can have a real impact if it means that house prices are depressed, shoppers no longer come to Slough, residents have less pride in where they live and skilled workers, educated in Slough's excellent schools, are not attracted to staying and working in Slough. A key issue is how to improve the appearance of the built and natural environment, particularly in the town centre, gateways to the town and in the neighbourhoods.
- 3.9.5. The Heart of Slough project has begun to address this issue for the town centre. New development such as The Curve and improvements to the pedestrian environment of a key road junction has begun a process of improving the image of the centre. This improvement has been based on innovative, high quality design that provides a landmark building and enhances the sense of place. This approach should be embedded in the new local plan proposals. Some key components of better design in the centre are active street frontages, designing out crime, distinctive architecture, high quality public realm, good maintenance and use of materials that will endure and mellow well with age.
- 3.9.6. Similarly the key gateways into the town, junctions and corridors which make up the network of public spaces and streets should be recognised for the value that these can add in terms of the town's image. Lessons can be learned from the way that streets and public spaces are welcomed as relief from the built up areas in dense urban areas. Providing more greenery within a street, where it is practical to do so, is one way to complement investment in public realm works and the Slough Parks Strategy. The appearance and feel of how streets work can also have a positive impact on peoples' decisions about how they travel, whether by car or changing to walking or cycling. This latter aspect of improving streets links with objectives relating to reducing congestion on the roads and enabling people to live locally.

- 3.9.7. Slough's parks make a significant contribution to the environment and amenities of the town. The largest one, Upton Court, acts as a metropolitan park which can hold large events as well as serving local recreation needs. There are fifteen district and fifty three local parks that provide important facilities for sport, informal recreation and exercise. Three of the parks (Salt Hill, Herschel and Pippins) have been awarded Green Flag status.
- 3.9.8. Open spaces become increasingly important if housing development density increases as residents need relief from busy streets and apartment living as well as recreation space. Furthermore high quality and popular attractive local parks contribute to attractive neighbourhood objectives. There is no space for park extensions and there is pressure for some buildings or works within parks, that complement the recreation use, but that also reduce some green space. So the challenge is to ensure existing open spaces are attractive whilst being used by more people and accommodating a wide range of recreation uses. Whilst the Council can continue its current investment, funding for greater enhancement is needed and opportunities to enhance existing facilities taken. More Green Flag status Parks can be aimed for. Open space enhancement needs to incorporate biodiversity, sustainable drainage and water quality objectives. The Council has recently invested around £2m in restoring Herschel Park which is a Grade II Listed Historic Park and Garden. This is a focal point for the Upton area. Large new residential developments will need to incorporate their own open space.
- 3.9.9. Another Objective of the plan is to protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value.
- 3.9.10. There are five Conservation Areas in Slough and around one hundred Listed Buildings many of which are structures, such as walls, rather than actual buildings. This reflects the fact that much of the Slough has been built comparatively recently and there are only a few historic areas such as those within Upton, Langley and Colnbrook.
- 3.9.11. A number of Locally Listed Buildings have been identified as being worthy of protection and it should be possible to consider whether there are others which would fall into this category in order to protect and enhance buildings of local value.
- 3.9.12. Regarding biodiversity, Slough has three local nature reserves: Cocksherd Wood, Haymill Valley and Herschel Park. It also has seven locally designated sites of wildlife interest including wetlands, a reservoir and a lake (Sustainability Appraisal of the Slough Local Plan, Scoping Report) All of these need to be protected and measures put in place to ensure that they are properly managed. Promoting biodiversity across the town is important for a number of reasons. Firstly trees, many green spaces and gardens provide habitat for birds, bees, insects and small mammals. Secondly links between green spaces helps wildlife survive. Retaining these non designated areas is difficult especially if more development is promoted. So the challenge is to balance loss of some small green areas with the creation of new wildlife friendly planting around the town.
- 3.9.13. One of the features of Slough is that while very urbanised itself, it is surrounded by attractive countryside. Because of its elongated nature it is comparatively easy for residents to get easy access to countryside recreation corridors such as the Jubilee River to the south, the Colne Valley Way to the east and the canal to the north. The use of these facilities could be encouraged by improving the footpath and cycleway links to them from the urban area.
- 3.9.14. All of the proposals to improve recreational, sports and leisure facilities will meet the Objective of providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.
- 3.9.15. The health and well-being of the population and workforce can suffer in modern towns due to lack of space, pollution, poor air quality, poor living conditions, limited recreation opportunities etc. A challenge for the local plan is balancing health and well-being objectives with the

potential adverse effects of further growth. In particular without strong transport and environment policies to limit use of diesel engine vehicles local air quality will be worse. In turn this affects people's health. Some existing roads with poor air quality are in areas where new homes are or are likely to be proposed. Policies will need to be able to influence the location of and design of new residential property to ensure living conditions are acceptable.

- 3.9.16. Higher density development can result in poor living conditions due to limited amenity space and light, excessive noise and lack of privacy. Whilst metropolitan style living cannot replicate suburban estate conditions, adherence to minimum standards and careful design can create successful living environments even in higher density developments. This is all part of 'good design'.
- 3.9.17. Climate change is a national issue but local planning authorities have a duty to limit the effect of new development on climate change and help communities adapt to expected change. Minimising carbon emissions from new development is the key aim which is addressed via transport policies and building design – better energy efficiency and use of low or zero carbon emission energy generation. The latter can be within a development or off site. An example of off site low carbon energy generation is district heating for which Slough is well placed having its own local power station with an existing heat network. Consequently an issue to address is encouraging expansion of this network and facilitating connection of appropriate new development to it.
- 3.9.18. Preventing new development being at risk of flooding is an aim of planning but it is also part of the climate change objective. It is an issue in Slough because flood zones cover large areas of the Borough within which development is severely restricted or prevented (through the National Planning Policy Framework and Environment Agency policy). Some flood zones cover areas in need of regeneration (e.g. Chalvey) or that are logical places for new development to be located. This issue needs to be addressed through careful planning; research of precise flood risk and innovative solutions for mitigating building in flood zones. A separate aspect of flood risk is surface water drainage. Sustainable drainage solutions are necessary to stop localised flooding after big storms.
- 3.9.19. Conclusion**
- 3.9.20. Sloughs lack of historic buildings, industrial past and legacy of rapid 20th century development has resulted in a poor image compared to nearby towns. It does have many pleasant residential neighbourhoods and interesting places. Improving the image can help attract investment for employment, new homes and shoppers to the town centre. In turn this can improve the quality of life for residents. The Local Plan therefore needs to focus on driving up the quality of design and creating an attractive sense of place in new developments. Equally a better quality of environment will improve the town's image.
- 3.9.21. In addition to requiring good design for new developments maximum benefits can be achieved by focussing improvements on key corridors and places, such as the town centre which are seen and used by most people. Within neighbourhoods the priority should be on improving the street scene – ensuring the front looks good and keeping any distinctive characteristics of individual neighbourhoods. More greenery within the street, where practical, would be a benefit. Park enhancements can also help improve neighbourhood quality. Protecting and enhancing historic features helps improve the image of streets.
- 3.9.22. Those aspects of the environment that need protecting, enhancing or, in exceptional cases replacing are green infrastructure (open spaces for recreation, biodiversity) water quality and heritage. Health and wellbeing objectives need to be met through protecting people from pollution (for example noise, soil contamination, air quality). Consideration of living conditions (privacy, light, amenity space etc.) in relation to new development will become more important

if higher density development takes place. Climate change needs addressing through green infrastructure and flood protection and, where practical, carbon emissions.

3.10. HOW CAN WE PROVIDE THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES TO SUPPORT NEW HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT?

- 3.10.1. The planned housing and employment growth will need infrastructure to connect and support it. This involves community, utility infrastructure and transport infrastructure. The latter is dealt with in Section 3.8 above. Flood defences and air quality monitoring are sometimes needed. Some infrastructure will need premises or land, some will need financial contributions from developers which can enhance and support existing facilities and services. It will be important that developers liaise with infrastructure providers well in advance of schemes coming forward in order to coordinate provision, which can reduce costs of provision and prevent delays in new development coming forward.
- 3.10.2. Utilities and health infrastructure plus commercial leisure and some education facilities are usually provided by private companies or public agencies without the need for the local planning authority to be involved other than coordination. However, at times, the Local Plan will need to protect or allocate key sites or corridors for infrastructure. Typical examples are for key transport links, flood mitigation, new schools, and community uses. Sometimes these will be within new development sites and serve a need beyond the development. Sometimes financial contributions from developers will be needed to provide infrastructure, on or off site, to support their development. Whilst some smaller developments may only need modest infrastructure the cumulative impact of multiple small developments will need to be addressed for some infrastructure types. Contributions by developers are costs that can sometimes make development unviable.
- 3.10.3. Facilities such as local shops are needed to support neighbourhoods and help achieve the objective of living locally and reducing car journeys. Ensuring key shops are available to residents in new and existing developments is a challenge. The market is normally relied upon to provide a range of local shops and services. For large new residential developments the Local Plan can require retail uses to be provided. Ensuring existing neighbourhoods retain a range of local shops is more of a challenge as the planning system cannot easily prevent closures. However, to support the 'living locally' objective policy options need to be explored that relate to protecting or promoting local shops.

3.10.4. Education

- 3.10.5. It is notoriously difficult to predict what the long term need for schools will be mainly because it depends upon whether we continue to get high levels of inward migration of adults with young children. The planned growth of new homes will inevitably result in some extra school places being needed.
- 3.10.6. Recent growth for primary school places has been mostly dealt with by building "bulge" classes on exiting sites. It is currently forecast that we will need around 20 bulge classes in order to meet a peak in five years time. Based upon birth data for 2014-15 there could be a surplus in all year groups after 5 years. Forecasts are regularly reviewed to establish what physical provision is needed in terms of new buildings or sites over the whole of the plan period. As there is limited space left for bulge classes on some sites land for new primary schools is likely to be needed if the forecasts go up in the future.
- 3.10.7. There are currently three new secondary schools under construction with a fourth one is planned which will include a primary school. This means that, assuming the planned

extensions of existing schools also take place, we should be able to meet the short term peak for school places which is expected in 2022.

- 3.10.8. New school places are normally funded by either the Council or by Government direct to free schools and academies. However new housing development will generate demand for places for which public funding may not be available when those new homes are occupied. Consequently, to ensure development is not delayed and education standards are maintained funding will be required from developers. If sufficient space is not available for the new school places large housing developments may need to incorporate land for a school.
- 3.10.9. There will also be a need for more provision for Special Education Needs (SEN) schools over the plan period.

3.10.10. Health Facilities

- 3.10.11. Wexham Park Hospital provides health facilities for a much wider area than Slough. It has a significant programme of investment to improve the buildings and car parking. The future growth of Slough is likely to require further hospital expansion. This is difficult on the constrained site. Furthermore it is constrained by Green Belt policy but the main part of the site is identified as a 'major developed site in green belt'; this provides some flexibility to allow for expansion without conflicting with green belt policy. An undeveloped part of the hospital site, in the Green Belt, has been put forward by the hospital as a future housing site.
- 3.10.12. Remaining health facilities at Upton Hospital, south of the town centre, are expected to be rationalised soon. It will be important to ensure this process makes allowance for the demands of future population growth. Upton is already an allocated site for health and housing development; this allocation will be incorporated in the Plan.
- 3.10.13. Continuing liaison with the NHS will establish what extra primary care facilities (Doctor's surgeries etc.) will be needed to support population growth. The Council is already in discussions with the NHS and local doctors about relocating and improving health centres at Britwell and Langley. This is part of the Council's idea of creating community hubs combining various local facilities in one building. This also links in with the concept of One Public Estate which is intended to rationalise public buildings, reduce public sector costs but renew public facilities at the same time.
- 3.10.14. A key issue is identification of and allocation of suitable future hub sites or surgery sites to prevent development by other more valuable uses. Protection of existing health facilities may be necessary to ensure neighbourhood facilities remain. This will support the neighbourhood orientated Local Plan objective and help ensure much of the population can live locally and walk, rather than drive, to surgeries supporting the transport objectives of the Plan. To support such policies or site allocations health organisations will need to provide evidence of need and guide the type of facilities proposed.
- 3.10.15. Where public funding for new health facilities to support new residential development is not available in the builder's desired timescale developer funding will be needed.

3.10.16. Recreation and Leisure

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

smaller developments integrating informal recreation space within the public realm might be acceptable for example.

3.10.18. Community Facilities

3.10.19. Community halls are needed to support local communities. This ties in with the Local Plan objectives of enabling people to be able to live locally and improving wellbeing. Large new developments will need to include new facilities or expand/improve existing facilities. Existing facilities may need protecting if they are the only remaining neighbourhood meeting place. The Council is reviewing its community facilities. As mentioned under Health above, some community halls will be renewed. However if a new hall is needed to support a large new development it will need to be provided as part of the development. Greater use of multi purpose spaces or sharing of meeting places will need to be explored and promoted to minimise the cost of provision but ensure neighbourhoods have reasonable access to community facilities.

3.10.20. Utilities

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

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

3.10.23. District heating can reduce carbon dioxide emissions compared to normal energy generation and distribution. Reduction of these emissions is a national and local objective and ties in with the Plan objective M regarding climate change. District Heating can provide hot water from a local but centralised point for space and water heating. The waste heat from the boiler can also produce electricity. As Slough has a local power station (run by SSE in the Trading Estate) with an existing small district heating network it is in an advantageous position to expand it to buildings with a high heat demand. A preliminary feasibility study has been carried out. Energy related policy will deal with promoting this network expansion and linking new buildings to it when available.

3.10.24. Flood Risk Mitigation

3.10.25. Infrastructure to minimise flooding from different sources. is dealt with by the Environment Agency. New development will need to be planned to avoid flood zones 2 and 3. But where, exceptionally, they are permitted any agreed mitigation will need to be funded by developers.

3.10.26. Flooding from surface water drainage is a Local Authority responsibility. Several parts of Slough are at risk of flooding after big storms or prolonged rainfall. New developments in these areas can be at risk of flooding and any new development could potential increase the risk of flooding on an adjacent site if not properly designed. Infrastructure to minimise this flooding in the form of sustainable urban drainage systems need to be incorporated in new development. This relates to climate change objectives and is addressed under design and environment policies. However some strategic sites that can be used to reduce local flood risk down stream

have been identified in the Call for Sites plus some outside the Borough. These sites will need protecting from built development. Works to create storm water storage may in some instances be linked to new developments down stream in which case funding of the works will need to come from those developments.

3.10.27. CONCLUSIONS

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

4. SECTION C: POLICY RESPONSE

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

4.2. CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTMENT

- 4.2.1. The Local Plan strategy will ultimately only work if people are prepared to invest in Slough. Identifying sites and granting planning permission does not mean that development will take place. At the height of the recession in 2012/3 there were only 182 houses built in Slough despite the fact that there were planning permissions for 4,323. Even in today's improved market there are sites where no development has started which have planning permission for over 1,000 houses.
- 4.2.2. Slough is seen as a good place to do business. In 2013 it was ranked as the 50th most competitive borough in the UK. This is still the lowest in the Berkshire and was a slight fall of 2 places since 2008. We are in a very competitive market and vulnerable to changes in the national economy, as a result we have to do what we can to attract investment to Slough.
- 4.2.3. Slough has a reputation for welcoming sustainable development and will continue to do so through pro- growth policies which spell out clearly to developers and residents, what is wanted and where it should go. This approach reduces risk for investors and gives confidence that Slough is a place to do business.

4.2.4. Improving the image of Slough

4.2.5. The second cross cutting strategy is to improve the image of Slough so that investors, businesses, workers and residents perceive an attractive dynamic, vibrant environment. Making the most of the location on the edge of London within easy reach of motorways and transport hubs is part of this. But it also relies on improving the quality of the built environment, the streets and public spaces. It also means providing housing to meet all lifestyles and ensuring that we have all of the high quality facilities and services that we need such as health and education.

4.2.6. Public investment leading the way

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

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

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

4.2.10. Optimising opportunities from Heathrow and Crossrail

4.2.11. The arrival of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) service in 2019 has already had an effect upon the housing and office market in Slough. Planning policies will be able to take advantage of the uplift in viability that this will bring to many schemes. They can also exploit the gravitational pull there will be towards the railway stations which will become even more attractive locations for development because of their improved connectivity.

4.2.12. The proposed rail link to Heathrow from Slough (WRLtH) will have a big impact upon the town centre which will be only 6 minutes away from Terminal 5. This should attract a lot more inward investment and help to revitalise Slough as a commercial centre.

4.2.13. The proposed third runway at Heathrow will be a £18.6 billion development taking place on Slough's doorstep. Planning policies will have to make sure that Slough gets its fair share of the £2.6 bn mitigation package and benefits from the new infrastructure and investment that will be taking place.

4.2.14. The shortage of suitable land in the Colnbrook & Poyle area means that there will be a limit to how much development can take place. In order to maximise the benefits of expanding Heathrow, planning policies will have to ensure that development will only be allowed if it is essential to support the airport.

4.2.15. Facilitate infrastructure development

- 4.2.16. The Plan will need to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided to support and accommodate the anticipated growth. This will include providing support for a wide range of infrastructure development including good connectivity, better digital and broadband services, health care, social infrastructure, education, recreation/leisure, water supply, sewage disposal, flood risk mitigation. This will be achieved through a combination of allocating space for or seeking developer contributions for necessary infrastructure plus liaising with infrastructure providers to help coordinate provision.
- 4.2.17. Existing communities are often concerned that accommodating new housing will put pressure on existing resources. The Local Plan will ensure that the needs of communities are met when large new housing developments are approved. Through the planning system we will work with developers and providers to identify opportunities; land and resources, for new facilities such as schools, play space and doctors surgeries. An infrastructure delivery plan will be prepared for the Local Plan.

4.2.18. Developer contributions and viability

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

4.2.21. The Slough Pound

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

4.2.23. **Town Centre First**

- 4.2.24. Slough town centre has been declining as a shopping centre and has lost some large employers in recent years. It still remains the focal point which is important for the image and wellbeing of the town as a whole. It is also an important transport hub.
- 4.2.25. As explained elsewhere the centre of Slough is likely to have a significant amount of new residential development. This would involve making the most of its good connectivity to attract people who will want to live in a vibrant, mixed metropolitan environment. The additional income from people living, working and spending in the new town centre will in turn attract the retail and leisure businesses that can serve the wider Slough population.
- 4.2.26. It is also considered that here is great potential to revitalise the town centre as a commercial centre by taking advantage of the availability of sites and its excellent location to attract new HQ office development.
- 4.2.27. To do all of this will require a significant amount of new investment. In order to encourage this it will be important that the Local Plan has policies to protect investment from inappropriate competition. This would involve adopting a strong “Centre First” policy which will prevent “town centre uses” such as major retail, leisure and offices from being built in less sustainable locations elsewhere.
- 4.2.28. By identifying areas for comprehensive redevelopment and insisting upon the highest standards of design for buildings and the spaces around them the Local Plan can provide further confidence for developers to invest in Slough town centre.
- 4.2.29. The Council will continue to invest in town centre regeneration projects and will be prepared to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers to assemble sites where this is necessary to see key developments delivered.

4.2.30. **Supporting growth in jobs**

- 4.2.31. Economic Assessments have indicated that 15,000 are required to meet the needs of population and economic growth during the plan period. Although sites for major developments such as new offices in the town centre can be identified in the Local Plan there is very little new land that can be made available for employment uses. As a result policies will have to support the intensification of businesses where this is appropriate.
- 4.2.32. There is a need to retain some of the low key businesses which service the local economy. With the potential; loss of existing business premises to residential uses through the Prior Approval Process, it may be necessary to have a policy which protects land in employment use wherever possible except in the particular circumstances of option sites where a housing provision is considered a strategic priority. Where existing buildings are redundant, redevelopment for employment will be encouraged in order to make the most of the scarce land available.
- 4.2.33. One area where it may be possible to create new employment opportunities is Colnbrook & Poyle. Local Plan policies will have to ensure that this is only allowed once the requirements of the proposed third runway at Heathrow have been established and any development can demonstrate that it is essential to support the airport.
- 4.2.34. There may also be scope for new business type and service employment in the town centre as a result of the rationalisation of existing retail and storage space. Policies will therefore have to be developed which facilitates this in a way which enhances the vitality of the centre.

4.2.35. Supporting education and workplace learning

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

4.2.37. Simplified planning for business

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

4.2.39. Support for new and growing businesses

4.2.40. In addition to trying to protect the network of small businesses in the Borough which support the local economy, policies will have to encourage the development of more incubator or nursery business premises, as clusters of such units provide both flexible premises for growing businesses.

4.2.41. As explained above there may be scope for encouraging small businesses to locate in surplus accommodation in the town centre.

4.2.42. Investing in digital infrastructure

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

4.2.44. Investment in housing

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

4.3. MEETING FUTURE HOUSING NEED

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

sustainable a way as possible which takes account of the impact upon the environment and ensure that scarce resources are used well.

4.3.2. Delivering enough homes

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

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

4.3.5. Higher density in new developments

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

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

4.3.8. Houses on smaller sites

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

4.3.10. Council's own housing delivery

4.3.11. The Council Housing Strategy aims to ensure that 200 homes per year are delivered or facilitated through Slough's own five year housing investment programme. This will include a range of housing proposals including estate renewal, building on the Council's own land and other land to be acquired. The Housing strategy includes a number of measures through which

the council will take an active role in bringing housing forward including site assembly and use of strategic powers.

4.3.12. Options for strategic sites outside Slough Borough Council

4.3.13. Initial calculations show that even if all of the identified potential housing sites in Slough, including those in the Spatial Options and others identified through the “Call for Sites”, were developed and an allowance is made for continuing small site development, there would still be a shortfall of around 8,000 houses especially in the latter part of the plan period. This is why the options of finding housing opportunities outside Slough’s closely drawn boundaries either northwards or southwards, have been developed.

4.3.14. Obviously these options cannot be achieved without the agreement of the relevant authorities and so will have to be pursued through Duty to Cooperate negotiations. Discussions are currently taking place with South Bucks and Chiltern Councils to see if we can agree a way forward for progressing the northern expansion of Slough through a partial review of the South Buck/Chiltern Plan. This could mean that it could be considered at examination in public at the same time as the Local Plan for Slough.

4.3.15. Providing a choice of housing for residents

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

4.3.17. Between 2004 and 2016, 61% of all dwellings built in Slough were flats. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016) identified a need for a range of accommodation in terms of both size and tenure. This showed that there will be a need for family sized accommodation in Slough with 45% being three bed 16% being four bed properties.

4.3.18. Local plan policies will set out requirements for a mix of home sizes within all developments in order to reflect the needs evidenced through the SHMA. It has been estimated that if we built everything in the current housing trajectory and all of the proposed spatial options around 80% of new dwellings would be flats. This will meet much of the need for one and two bedroom homes, but in future a proportion of these could be family apartments in order to provide a range of homes which may be more affordable to families than the traditional suburban house. This would also help to provide an opportunity for more mixed income and mixed tenure developments and would give scope for housing suitable for elderly or vulnerable people or those with special needs.

4.3.19. The other main policy response to support the supply of family sized accommodation would be to ensure that the existing stock of family housing is not reduced. The Core Strategy currently has a policy of there being no net loss of family accommodation and limiting new development in the suburbs to infilling with family houses. This approach may have to be continued in the Review of the Local Plan.

4.3.20. There are hardly any houses in Slough at the top end of the market. Part of the strategy of trying to have a balanced community and encourage people to stay in Slough means that in some cases we could be more ambitious about the type of property we provide. As a result it may be appropriate to encourage penthouses to be built on top of the blocks of flats in the town centre. This would have the effect of raising the quality of development.

4.3.21. **Releasing Green Belt land for housing**

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

4.3.26. **Providing affordable housing to those who need it most**

- 4.3.27. A key concern of the local plan is to provide affordable housing. House price inflation has increased 39% in the past three years and the average house price is now 11.1 times the average salary in the Borough. All other indicators such as the Council’s housing register and increases in homelessness also point to the urgency of providing more affordable housing
- 4.3.28. The SHMA uses the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition that affordable housing is “social rented”, “affordable rented” or “intermediate” housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. The intermediate housing includes a range of shared ownership alternatives. Recent legislation and emerging government policy has indicated that this definition will widened to include discounted price “starter homes” which will be required at a rate of 20% of new homes on each new development. As starter homes are unlikely to be affordable to those in most need, other affordable home tenures will be wanted in addition to any starter homes required as a result of national policy.
- 4.3.29. The current core strategy sets a target of 30%-40% of additional dwellings on developments of 15 or more homes to be “affordable”. The capacity to deliver at this rate through planning permissions for new development has been hampered by claims of low viability. Viability testing of the proposed local plan policies will assess whether a requirement at this rate will be sound going forward. The percentage of affordable housing required will vary according to where the site is located. In particular a substantial proportion of affordable housing on greenfield sites is normally viable as the cost of the land is much less than previously developed land (brownfield). The affordable housing policy should also be balanced against the goal to improve the image of Slough through an improved environment and achieve maximum value for the “Slough Pound” which we hope will drive up overall viability over time.
- 4.3.30. Where affordable housing as part of a new private development is viable, ‘on-site’ affordable housing is a preferred option because of the difficulty in finding land. However provision off-site, by the developer, might be accepted if the mix of homes meets local needs and the location is acceptable. A financial contribution towards affordable housing, in lieu of on-site provision, can be accepted for small sites or where the particular mix of affordable units wanted does not tie in with the proposed development.

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

4.4. FOSTERING CHOICES FOR COMMUNITIES

- 4.4.1. Our aspiration is to make Slough a place where people want to 'live locally' and are able to stay throughout the various stages of their life. The Plan therefore needs to provide for a full range of facilities and services to provide for peoples' changing needs and foster a sense of belonging. The major element of this is providing residents with opportunities that meet their aspirations to live and work locally.

4.4.2. Encouraging neighbourhoods to say what they need

- 4.4.3. One of the strengths of Slough is the number of diverse and distinct local neighbourhoods that it has. Although some are not as prosperous as others they all have something to offer their residents. The policies in the plan need to recognize this, and provide scope for residents to determine the character of their area and the way that it develops to suit their needs and those in the future. There is also the need to provide for additional facilities to meet the Plan's objective of providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives.
- 4.4.4. In the absence of any emerging Neighbourhood Plans, the Local Plan can provide the opportunity for residents to have a say in the way in which their area is developed and can potentially adopt different approaches to suit different areas. Any new strategy would, however, have to prioritise improving the street scene and protecting the amenities of residents.
- 4.4.5. We want people to be able to live their whole life in Slough if they want to, and make the most of their existing family and social networks. This is not always possible at present due to a lack of housing that they need or aspire to, or the services, schools and jobs they need or want within their local area.

4.4.6. Providing more housing within existing neighbourhoods

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

4.4.8. Enhancing the green environment

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

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

4.4.10. Living locally

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

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

4.4.13. Creating a sense of place in neighbourhoods

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

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

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

4.5. MAKING IT EASIER TO MOVE AROUND

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

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

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

- A high capacity, integrated affordable public transport system, enabled by the use of smart technology, which is the mode of choice for longer journeys;

- High volumes of walking and cycling, also enabled by the use of smart technology, which is the mode of choice for shorter journeys;
- Efficient use of the scarce and valuable capacity on main roads. Prioritising space for those journeys which are the most important to Slough's success;
- Reliable journey times by road and by public transport;
- Enhanced strategic road and rail connectivity to Heathrow, London, the Thames Valley and beyond to support businesses;
- Networks which are resilient to irregular incidents and which have the capacity for the future growth of Slough;
- Better air quality through lower transport-related emissions, and generally lower impacts of travel on communities.

4.5.4. Making road journeys more reliable is a key objective. This issue is addressed in the following four sections relating to locating development, pinch points, traffic management and smart infrastructure.

4.5.5. **Locating development in the most Accessible locations**

4.5.6. One of the best ways of trying to reduce congestion on the roads is to reduce the need for people to use their car. We can do this by locating as much new development as possible close to existing facilities in places like the town centre. We can also make sure that we locate new development in the most accessible locations to railway stations and bus routes i.e. transit orientated development. If there are very large new strategic housing sites new transport facilities must have to be provided for them such as they can become transit orientated development.

4.5.7. We can also make existing residential areas more self-sufficient by ensuring that they have enough facilities to enable people to live locally without having to get in their car.

4.5.8. **Removing Pinch Points**

4.5.9. There are some points on the road network which are more congested than others. We are currently in the process of constructing some major transport schemes to remove bottlenecks. These include the A355 Tuns Lane scheme which will improve traffic flow on this important north south route. The A322 Windsor Road widening scheme will make journeys quicker and more reliable on this strategic route.

4.5.10. There are proposals for further improvements to the roads which could provide additional capacity at "pinch points" and make the network operate more effectively. It has to be recognised that there is a limit to how far physical changes to the roads can be made given the fact that Slough is so densely built up and constrained. At the same time any additional capacity created will quickly be used up by the latent demand for travel.

4.5.11. Traffic management

4.5.12. Many of the road junctions in Slough are at capacity. We have introduced traffic signal management schemes (SCOOT / MOVA) at key junctions and links. It should be possible to carry out further traffic management schemes in future which smooth the flow of traffic or hold it back from sensitive areas.

4.5.13. There is a limit as to what can be achieved. Ultimately it may be necessary to bring in traffic management measures which deter through traffic from coming through Slough. This could include a form of congestion charging in the town centre which would be applied to traffic that does not have an origin or destination there. The introduction of a Low Emission Zone would also have the effect of deterring some non-essential HGVs and light vans from coming through Slough.

4.5.14. Smart infrastructure strategies which improve traffic conditions.

4.5.15. The introduction of new digital infrastructure and technology could in the future reduce the need for people to travel and smooth out the peaks. Making real time travel information available to people will make them better informed as to when to travel and use public transport.

4.5.16. Travel Planning

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

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

4.5.19. High Quality efficient and affordable public transport system

4.5.20. In order to ensure that as many people as possible can travel around Slough more easily will have to find ways of encouraging a modal shift away from the use of private car. This will require a number of measures including making significant improvements to public transport.

4.5.21. Better Bus Service

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

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

4.5.24. Bus services will only be successful if they are convenient and affordable. As a result subsidies for bus services may be required, particularly when they are being set up. New developments that generate extra traffic should contribute to infrastructure for non-car modes

of travel. It may also be necessary for the Council to become more directly involved in the way the services are run.

4.5.25. Better Rail Service

- 4.5.26. One of the reasons that Slough is one of the best connected locations in the Country is because of its rail service which makes it very accessible from London and the Thames Valley.
- 4.5.27. The new Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) service which comes in 2019. This will improve access to central London from all stations with Langley and Burnham in particular getting a better service.
- 4.5.28. The proposed passenger link to Heathrow (WRLtH) will make access to the airport by train very attractive from Slough town centre.
- 4.5.29. We are also looking at improving the current rail service to Windsor by increasing the frequency of the service between the two towns. This should also improve connectivity with other rail services. There could be a new Halt at Chalvey on the Windsor Branch line which would improve accessibility from this area.
- 4.5.30. The issue as to how passengers will travel to the stations needs to be addressed along with how much parking needs to be provided.
- 4.5.31. Improvements will also be made to the attractiveness and accessibility of stations in order to encourage more rail use. Consideration will also have to be given to through ticketing in order to make journeys cheaper and easier.

4.5.32. Increased walking and cycling

- 4.5.33. If we are going to have a modal shift away from the use of the car there will have to be an increase in walking and cycling.
- 4.5.34. Despite its compact nature a walking and cycling culture has not yet been established in Slough. This could be due to a number of things such as the busyness of the roads, noise, fear of accidents, lack of permeable routes, the poor health of some residents or the view of the car as a status symbol.
- 4.5.35. New developments will have to make sure that they improve the public realm in order to create environments that are attractive to walkers.
- 4.5.36. We will have to facilitate the use of more ultra low emission vehicles in order to improve air quality for walkers and cyclists.
- 4.5.37. Developments will also have to contribute towards creating safe, continuous and convenient walking and cycling networks particularly where they can provide a missing link or remove a barrier. Compulsory purchase powers may be needed to acquire land for key links.

4.5.38. Parking restraint

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

- 4.5.40. There will have to be some form of parking restraint at the destination of the journeys. The evidence shows that car commuting to places with plentiful parking is much higher than to places where private parking is limited. As a result selective parking controls will have to be introduced in order to reduce peak time car commuting.
- 4.5.41. In order to accommodate more high density development, parking restraint will have to be applied to all uses in places like the town centre. This will, however, have to ensure that the new homes remain attractive to a wide range of people.
- 4.5.42. Encouragement will be given to the establishment of Car Clubs within large developments which can provide resident's access to cars when they need them without having to own one and find somewhere to park it.
- 4.5.43. As travel patterns change it may be able to reduce the amount of public car parking available in places like the town centre and use the land for other purposes. Sufficient parking should be provided to maintain the attraction of the town centre as a retail or leisure destination.
- 4.5.44. Parking standards for new residential developments elsewhere need to recognise that most people will have a car and need to park it a way which has least impact upon local amenities. Initiatives to restrict car use, at peak times, rather than just car ownership need to be explored.
- 4.5.45. In order to reduce the use of the car there will have to be parking restraint at the destination of the journey. This will mean controlling the amount of car parking within new business developments.

4.6. INSISTING UPON DESIGN QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

- 4.6.1. One of the overarching themes of the plan is the need for good design in order to improve the image of Slough. This can improve the viability of development, enhance the wellbeing of residents and workers, and attract visitors and investors.
- 4.6.2. **Good design is non negotiable**
- 4.6.3. Good design should be not negotiable. We will not accept lower standards in Slough than anywhere else and in many cases expect better. The Council has led the way with the design of public buildings such as The Curve and the new bus station and we expect other developments to follow this example. This approach will be backed up by the use of design guides and site development briefs. Local Plan policies will flag up to prospective developers that they need to factor in good quality design to their costing before they purchase sites.
- 4.6.4. We will assess new developments in accordance with the "Slough Pound" principle which will seek to ensure that investment delivers the maximum benefits in terms of the regeneration of an area. This will mean that good design will often be the top priority.
- 4.6.5. All new major proposals should demonstrate how the development will enhance the character of the built environment and contribute positively to the sense of place. In many cases this can involve the use of innovative architectural designs.
- 4.6.6. New buildings will be expected to be designed with active frontages at street level, which improve the street scene, to be constructed of high quality materials that will maintain their appearance over time, to respect the context and enhance any special features in the area.

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

4.6.8. Enhancing key corridors and gateways

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

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

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

4.6.12. Quality in other public realm spaces

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

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

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

4.6.16. Design priorities in residential areas

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

4.6.18. Achieving a sense of place in new neighbourhoods

4.6.19. Achieving high standard of design within the major new development areas which form part of the Spatial Options will be particularly important. The new neighbourhoods should be design to achieve a sense of place and be distinctive in appearance. What these areas look like could vary considerably. There could be traditional suburban type developments on the edge of the town. Sites near the centre of Slough can be higher density and metropolitan in style. Although

it will be important that new neighbourhoods relate to and are linked with existing adjoining areas they will not have to reflect their appearance.

- 4.6.20. For higher density development to succeed good quality design is essential. The spaces around the base of big buildings and the prominent tops of tall buildings against the skyline warrant special attention. Higher density can also be achieved through street based development; the traditional street is an enduring feature of successful towns. Design policy can promote this to help quell fears about high density development. Functional design is equally important especially for high density housing. So strong policies are needed to control refuse storage, cycle stores, crime prevention measures etc.
- 4.6.21. A good design policy will cover the natural environment also. Landscaping is often an afterthought but well planned and specified planting and surfaces can make a big difference to the attractiveness of developments. A policy is needed to secure long term maintenance of communal amenity space.
- 4.6.22. One site specific policy needed, to enhance the image of an area and encourage investment, is removal of overhead power lines in north Slough, near the canal. This is relevant to the Canal Basin, Akzo Nobel and the Green Belt site at Rochfords. Removal would benefit existing neighbourhoods also.
- 4.6.23. Residential standards**
- 4.6.24. Good design in residential developments should address living conditions for residents and neighbours. This is important for the health and wellbeing of people. Key considerations will be access to garden/amenity space; day and sunlight; privacy and, if necessary, minimum space standards. Policies will need to be flexible enough to allow for high density development without compromising resident's essential needs.
- 4.6.25. Introduction of a minimum dwelling size policy can be explored. Government policy only allows Councils to adopt a nationally described space standard if there is evidence that this is needed in the area. However blanket adoption of this policy can mean fewer homes might be built.
- 4.6.26. Environmental protection policies**
- 4.6.27. Policies will, as now, prevent exposure to unacceptable levels of pollution such as noise, soil contamination and artificial light. This will include reducing the impact upon homes, schools and other activities that are affected by excessive noise from roads, the railway and aircraft from Heathrow. However greater emphasis on improving air quality will be needed in order to meet health objectives. Transport policies to reduce car use will be important. Policies can also help to implement a low emission strategy through, for example, promotion of electric vehicle use and, where practical, requiring the use of less polluting vehicles (in particular diesel trucks) for large scale construction operations and distribution development. Measures will also have to be taken to protect residents in areas of poor air quality by, for example, requiring the fitting of air filters. Minimisation of carbon emissions from new buildings will be sought, within the parameters of new Government guidelines, to allow Slough to contribute to national and local climate change aims. Promotion of decentralised energy e.g. district heating is one example referred to under the Investment section above.
- 4.6.28. Flood risk and watercourses**
- 4.6.29. Existing policy on flood risk will be updated including on-site drainage (sustainable urban drainage) as this is still a significant issue in the town. The impact of all new development on

watercourses should be assessed in terms of impact on and contribution to ecology landscape, and environmental amenity.

4.6.30. Ecology and biodiversity

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

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5. SECTION D: Spatial Options

- 5.1.1. Having established what the strategic issues are for the Local Plan and developed a possible policy response it is necessary to consider what the implications are for the future distribution of development around the Borough.
- 5.1.2. As a result we have produced a number of strategic Spatial Options as part of this Issues and Options consultation. Whilst these have not been fully worked up at this stage it is considered that they are realistic and meaningful possibilities which would benefit from public consultation
- 5.1.3. There are 11 Options (Referenced A-K) that have been set out in a logical order but this does not necessarily imply that there is a preference for any one of them at this stage. It should also be noted that it may not be possible to carry all of them out because they may not be compatible and there may be cumulative impacts which would have to be addressed. Some Options are outside of Slough and so are outside the control of this Council
- 5.1.4. The Spatial Options being put forward for public consultation are as follows:
- A. Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
 - B. Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
 - C. Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
 - D. Regeneration of the selected areas:
 - D1 - Canal basin
 - D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road
 - D3 – Chalvey regeneration
 - E. Estate Renewal
 - F. Intensification of the suburbs
 - G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
 - H. Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
 - I. Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
 - J. Expansion of Slough
 - J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb)
 - J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
 - K. Build in other areas outside of Slough
- 5.1.5. Details of these options and sub options are set out below. The generic options E. Estate Renewal, F.Intensification of the suburbs, G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing and K. Build in other areas outside Slough do not contain specific sites or areas of search because these are not identifiable at this stage.
- 5.1.6. All of the other options have been worked up in order to illustrate how they could be implemented. This includes identifying some of the key sites that could come forward for development as part of the option.
- 5.1.7. Where possible, a broad indication as to how much housing each option could produce has been provided. These figures are provided to help the public consultation exercise and should not be taken as a definitive assessment at this stage.
- 5.1.8. The reference numbers in the text, particularly in the Key Sites and Key Links sections, refer to sites included in the Adopted Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2010 (prefixed with

SSA or SKL) and the Call for Sites Consultation Document June 2016 (prefixed with CFS, OTH or INF). Both documents are available on line at www.slough.gov.uk.

5.1.9. The NPPF states that Local Plans should be based upon co-operation with neighbouring authorities. Joint working should enable development requirements which cannot wholly be met within one area being met in another. Whilst the priority is for Slough to meet as much of its need as possible within the Borough the housing capacity study shows that the Borough has a lack of physical capacity to accommodate the scale of housing that is needed. As a result the options of building outside of Slough have to be considered and put forward for public consultation. This is why Options J and K have been included in this document. Publishing these will also help inform discussions with the relevant authorities under the Duty to Cooperate

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<p>5.2. OPTION A</p>	<p>EXPANSION OF SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE</p>
<p>Background</p>	
<p>The Spatial Strategy for the Core Strategy (2008) is one of “concentrating development” within a tightly defined “town centre area” which just consists of the shopping centre and the commercial core area around it.</p> <p>This has resulted in all major office and retail developments being directed to locate in this area. Whilst the bulk of new residential permissions have also been within the tight boundary there have also recently been major permissions on the edge of the town centre.</p> <p>The NPPF requires Local Plans to assess whether the predicted need for “main town centre uses” such as retail, offices, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism facilities can be accommodated in the town centre.</p> <p>Although detailed studies have not been carried out it is considered that there is sufficient land available to meet these needs within the core area.</p> <p>There are, however, a number of advantages in enlarging the scope of the centre in order to allow more higher density development in its immediate catchment area to enable more people to benefit from its facilities and transport links.</p> <p>The Council’s Centre of Slough “Changing Views” Strategy (2015) assumed that the regeneration of the centre would have to be “residential led” because this is what the market was providing.</p> <p>Since the strategy was produced there has been major investment in new offices, proposals for the regeneration of the Queensmere shopping centre have been agreed and it appears that former Thames Valley University (‘TVU’) site will become available for development.</p> <p>The Council opened its new cultural centre ‘The Curve’ in September 2016 and there has been a general upturn in investment partly in anticipation of the new Crossrail service in 2019.</p> <p>As a result there is now the opportunity to build on this by expanding the area defined as the town centre.</p>	
<p>Proposed Option</p>	
<p>This proposed option would involve increasing the amount of development that can take place in and around the town centre on the basis that it is a sustainable location with good transport links and a high provision of existing facilities. It is also an area which can potentially absorb higher density development better than others.</p> <p>Refurbishment and redevelopment of the public realm and higher quality building design would also help to improve the environment, appearance and image of the town centre.</p> <p>This option would therefore take the opportunity to transform the town centre so that it can become a major commercial and retail and leisure centre. It would also involve having more tall buildings in appropriate locations.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the existing shopping area would continue to be the location for major retail and leisure uses. The Site Allocations Plan (2010) identified the Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres (SSA14) as the location for new retail and leisure uses including restaurants and bars. It is also the proposed location for new residential development in the form of high-rise flats. It is considered that if the proposed investment takes place the Queensmere shopping centre could become the “centrepiece” which will be redeveloped/ refurbished in order to be the prime retail and leisure area for the town centre.</p> <p>The area south of the railway station which contains the new bus station was identified in the Heart of Slough Master Plan for major office development. Two large HQ buildings are currently under construction and it is considered that this area should be promoted as the “Central Business District” (CBD) for commercial offices. This</p>	

<p>5.2. OPTION A</p>	<p>EXPANSION OF SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE</p>
<p>will help to consolidate the role of the town centre and complement the reputation of the Trading Estate for international businesses.</p> <p>There have been proposals to include some residential development in this area (CFS 7) but there would be a number of site specific problems with having flats here and it is considered that these sites should be reserved for new HQ offices in order to provide certainty for existing and new international businesses, and deliver a high quality public realm for the business community and its employees. .</p> <p>The other key site within the town centre is the former Thames Valley University or ‘TVU’ site which forms part of the Heart of Slough comprehensive regeneration scheme (SSA13) This proposed major residential development of up to 1,500 units on the site along with other uses including some retail, leisure, offices and a partial replacement of the university. The University of West London (which is the new name for TVU) has decided not to replace any educational facilities on the site and is selling it for development. This provides the opportunity to provide a new mix of uses that can create vitality in this area. This could involve having major office development and some ancillary retail and leisure uses that complement those in the d Town Centre.</p> <p>If the Tesco superstore comes up for redevelopment during the plan period it is considered that this would be a good location for any additional town centre uses that are needed along with some residential above.</p> <p>The Council carried out a major refurbishment of the High Street through the Art @ The Centre environmental scheme. With large scale high-rise development taking place in the town centre it is important that the High Street retains its current pedestrian friendly scale. There is, however, the opportunity to redevelop sites on the south side of the High Street in a comprehensive way which could provide more residential and commercial uses. This would have to be designed so that any high rise development is set back from the High Street frontage.</p> <p>In addition to building more intensively in core area of the town centre there is the opportunity to develop sites around it predominantly for residential use. The Post Office Sorting Office is included in the Site Allocations Plan (SSA16) for residential or mixed business use as part of proposals to improve the Wellington Street frontage. The redevelopment of part of the Upton Hospital site and reuse of the Listed Buildings for residential was promoted as SSA15 in the Site Allocations Plan. This could help to enhance the “Herschel Village” and Herschel Park area. The site for a potential conference centre has also been identified west of Upton Court Park.</p> <p>There is also the potential for residential development north of the town centre on the Horlicks Playing Field (OTH137), Stoke gardens (OTH138), Mill street north, Mill Street south, Albion Close and Petersfield Avenue. All of these developments would have to be comprehensively planned with improved links to the town centre.</p> <p>Under the existing strategy we have already allowed some very tall buildings with the flats on the Queensmere shopping centre rising to 21 stories and similar sized development being envisaged upon the former TVU site. Tall buildings should only be allowed if they are of the highest standard of design, improve the urban realm and they do not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring uses. It is also important that they provide high quality living standards for their residents.</p> <p>The opportunity should also be taken to exploit the great views of Windsor Castle and the surrounding countryside that can be obtained from Slough town centre not just for residents but also for visitors. This can involve providing penthouse flats and facilities with public access in high-rise buildings.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>There are a number of constraints to development in the town centre. It is currently congested at peak times and so some additional capacity for the transport system and the public transport system in particular will be required.</p> <p>Parts of the town centre suffer from significant air quality problems. This means that new development will have to</p>	

5.2. OPTION A	EXPANSION OF SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE
<p>be designed to mitigate for the impact upon residents.</p> <p>Developments will also have to be designed to reduce the impact of noise.</p> <p>The compact nature of the centre of Slough also means that any new development will have to take account of the setting of and impact upon existing buildings.</p> <p>There is also a shortage of open space in the town which means that new development will have to take the opportunity to create new public spaces where appropriate.</p> <p>Landownership can also be a constraint in the town centre where owners are not willing to develop their sites in a comprehensive manner with adjoining ones.</p>	
Key Links	
<p>Slough Mass Rapid Transit</p> <p>Windsor Road widening</p> <p>Western Rail Link to Heathrow</p> <p>Lansdowne Avenue to former TVU site (INF 155)</p> <p>Bridge over railway at Slough Station (east side) (INF 157)</p> <p>Improved pedestrian route to Herschel Park</p>	
Issues	
<p>One of the key issues for the review of the Local Plan to deal with is to decide what the future role of the town centre should be. This is important because it is the focal point of the town provides facilities for all residents and contributes to the overall image of Slough.</p> <p>A major concern is the apparent decline of the shopping centre. Slough was previously classified as a “sub regional” shopping centre which reflected the recent household survey showed that the town centre’s catchment area had reduced to around 60,000 people which means that it is no longer serving the whole of Slough.</p> <p>As a result there is a need to find a way of revitalising the shopping centre and increasing its role as a leisure attraction.</p> <p>Slough town centre used to contain a number of major HQ type offices. Whilst the out of centre office market has continued to thrive, most of the major offices have moved out of the town centre and a lot of the office stock has been converted to residential. This means that it is not the commercial centre that it was.</p> <p>At the same time the loss of cheaper Grade C office floorspace to residential means that there is only limited opportunity for “start-ups” and incubator space.</p> <p>One of the problems facing the town centre is poor image which comes at least partly from the perception of its poor environmental quality. In order to transform the centre it will be essential that we insist upon the highest standard of architectural design and obtain good quality environmental standards. This high standard will be extended to the public spaces, increasing the offer and attractiveness of pavements, squares and parks.</p> <p>The Centre of Slough Strategy also promotes the use of the “Slough Pound” concept which means making decisions</p>	

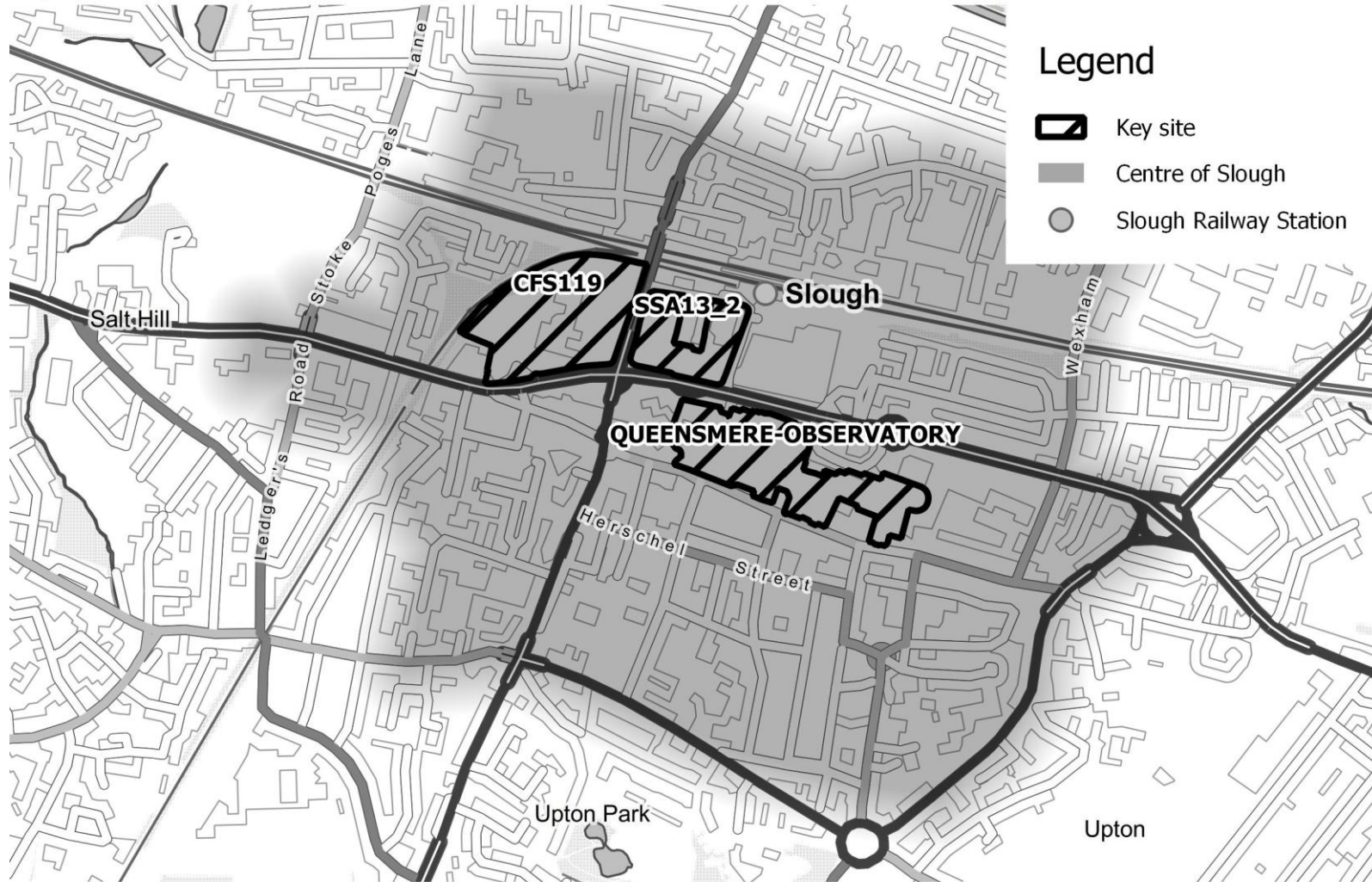
5.2. OPTION A	EXPANSION OF SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE
<p>based upon what produces the best overall regeneration benefits.</p> <p>The design of Curve has enhanced the local street scene and way in which St Ethelbert’s Church can now be appreciated by the public. There are a number of other existing heritage assets within areas such the ‘Herschel Village’ where a distinct sense of place can be created. The expansion of the area of search where major development could take place does not mean that it will be appropriate in all locations close to the centre. This will require a more fine grained approach when assessing development proposals.</p> <p>Traffic congestion is a problem that will need addressed. This may require measures to deter the unnecessary use of the private car travelling to or through the centre.</p> <p>The Centre of Slough Strategy also recognised the importance of promoting major development in locations outside of the currently narrowly defined town centre in a way which encouraged new residents to make use of all of the facilities and transport links that are available. This would mean ensuring that sites such as the canal basin on Stoke Road or the Akzo Nobel site east of Wexham Road are linked as well as possible to the centre along new or improved pedestrian/cycle corridors.</p>	
Capacity	
<p>Key Sites 2175 homes</p> <p>Other related sites 1000 plus homes</p>	
Key Sites	
<p>Queensmere/Observatory shopping centre (SSA14)</p> <p>Former TVU site (CFS 119)</p>	
Related Sites/Areas	
<p>Heart of Slough (Area south of the railway station) (SSA13)</p> <p>Post Office Sorting Office (SSA16)</p> <p>Upton Hospital (SSA15)</p> <p>Mill Street north side (OTH 140)</p> <p>Mill Street south side (OTH 141)</p> <p>South side of High Street (OTH 146 & 147)</p> <p>Slough Station North forecourt (INF 156)</p> <p>Slough Station east car park (INF 156)</p> <p>Railway Triangle Stranraer Gardens (OTH 145)</p> <p>Albion Close (OTH 143)</p> <p>Horlicks Playing Field, Plough Lees lane (OTH 137)</p> <p>Stoke Gardens (OTH 138)</p>	

5.2. OPTION A	EXPANSION OF SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE
Aspire Site (Herschel St)	

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Figure 8: Option A

Option A - Town Centre Expansion



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<p>5.3. OPTION B</p>	<p>EXPAND THE CENTRE OF LANGLEY</p>
<p>Background</p>	
<p>It is considered that there is an opportunity to develop the area around Langley station in a way which will create new homes in an accessible location and provide new facilities as an expansion of the existing centre.</p> <p>The Core Strategy recognised that there was limited scope for expanding the Harrow Market District Centre at Langley but stated that in the longer term there might be the possibility of expanding into the Langley Business Centre to the north.</p> <p>The Site Allocations Plan subsequently identified part of the Langley Business Centre for a supermarket. It also recognised that the site could incorporate an element of residential, financial and professional services, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments or takeaways.</p> <p>The Site Allocations Plan also included the former Langley Oil Terminal and car park to the north of the station as a “Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration” which would predominantly consist of family housing.</p> <p>Neither of these proposals has been implemented. Although the landowner brought forward a proposal for 200 houses on the former terminal site this could not be pursued because this land is now going to be used as a new depot for the Heathrow Express depot which has to move from Old Oak Common in order to facilitate the construction of HS2.</p> <p>A proposal for a Morrison’s supermarket on the Business Centre site was not considered to be acceptable for design and layout reasons and has not been subsequently pursued.</p> <p>A new bridge with lifts will be constructed as part of the Crossrail scheme and the Council is proposing to improve pedestrian access from the south.</p>	
<p>Proposed Option</p>	
<p>This option would involve developing the area around the Langley railway station as a new high density residential area which would also contain some employment, retail and leisure uses which would complement the Harrow Market District Centre.</p> <p>The development would be concentrated upon three major development sites which would form the core of this option. These are the Langley Business Centre (CFS13), part of Waterside Drive (OTH 150) and the Canal Warf industrial area (OTH 151).</p> <p>The Langley Business Centre would contain the proposed new ancillary retail and leisure uses with flats above. This would be linked by an improved pedestrian link to the Harrow Market Centre to the south. It would also retain or re-provide some business uses. The Canal Warf site would have to be developed comprehensively with high density flats and family units. The design of this would have to enhance the canal. It is not proposed that Waterside Drive should be the subject of wholesale redevelopment but there is the opportunity to convert or redevelop some of the business units for residential.</p> <p>There is also the potential to build on the land north of the Canal but this is Green Belt land which is not within Slough Borough and so could only be brought forward as a result of Duty to Cooperate discussions with South Bucks District Council.</p> <p>The Government is encouraging Councils to increase the density of development around Commuter Hubs such as Langley and so, if appropriate opportunities arise, this will be encouraged on sites outside of the identified sites. Such development will not, however, be allowed on a piecemeal basis.</p>	

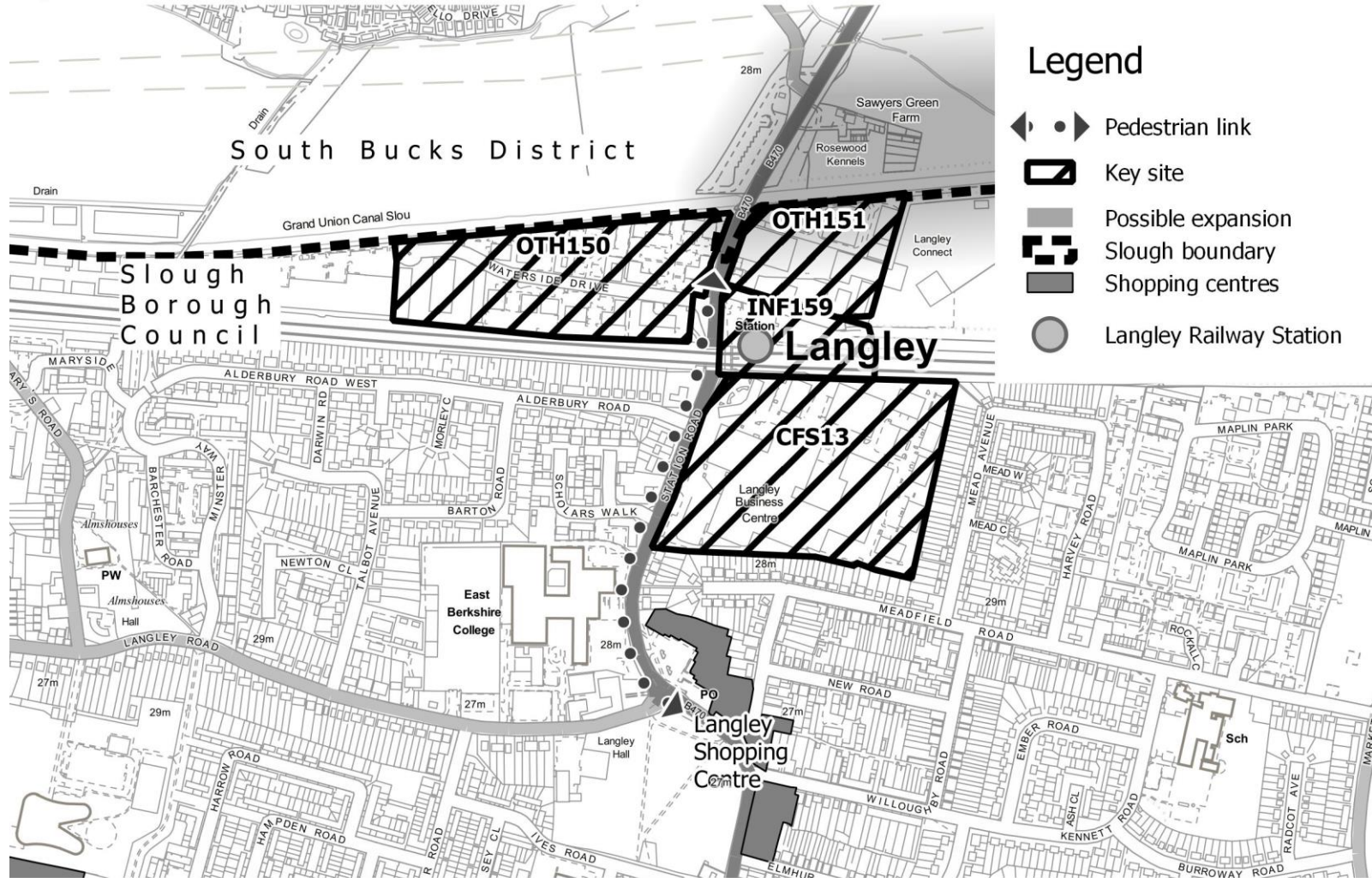
5.3. OPTION B	EXPAND THE CENTRE OF LANGLEY
Constraints	
<p>It is recognised that this part of Langley can suffer from traffic congestion. It is, however, a highly sustainable location because of its proximity to the railway station and existing facilities. As a result any development in this area is likely to be less reliant upon the use of the private car than elsewhere. Nevertheless measures may have to be introduced which can seek to deal with the problems of local traffic problems.</p> <p>The railway bridge over Station Road is not high enough for high sided vehicles and so only a limited number of HGVs are able to use the road.</p>	
Key Links	
<p>New pedestrian bridge at Railway Station</p> <p>Improved footway link with Harrow Market</p> <p>Improved Pedestrian access to Railway Station</p> <p>Canal footpath/cycleway</p>	
Issues	
<p>It is important that the proposal doesn't undermine the viability of the Harrow Market District Shopping Centre. The Site Allocations Plan (2010) proposed a supermarket with a sales floor of up to 2,500 m² which was found to be acceptable by the Inspector. Although this option would include retail and leisure uses it is not envisaged that there would be a single unit as large as the supermarket that was previously proposed. As a result it is envisaged that the new facilities will complement the existing centre and increase the choice for local residents which will reduce the need to travel.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the local area can suffer from traffic congestion. It is envisaged that many of the new residents will live there because of the proximity to the railway station and that the new retail and leisure facilities would be orientated towards meeting local needs. Nevertheless there is likely to be an increase in trip generation which will require appropriate mitigation measures.</p> <p>There will be a loss of employment land. Parts of the Langley Business Centre have been vacant for some time and it is proposed that there should be some employment generating uses retained or replaced in the development. The introduction of prior approvals for the conversion of offices to residential means that this can happen without needing permission from the Council.</p>	
Capacity	
Approximately 600 additional homes	
Key Sites	
<p>Langley Business Centre (CFS13)</p> <p>Part of Waterside Drive (OTH 150)</p> <p>Canal Warf Industrial Area (OTH 151)</p> <p>Langley Railway Station (INF 159)</p>	

5.3. OPTION B	EXPAND THE CENTRE OF LANGLEY
Related Sites/Areas	
Langley District Shopping Centre Heathrow Express Depot	

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Figure 9: Option B

Option B - Expanded Langley Centre



Legend

- Pedestrian link
- Key site
- Possible expansion
- Slough boundary
- Shopping centres
- Langley Railway Station

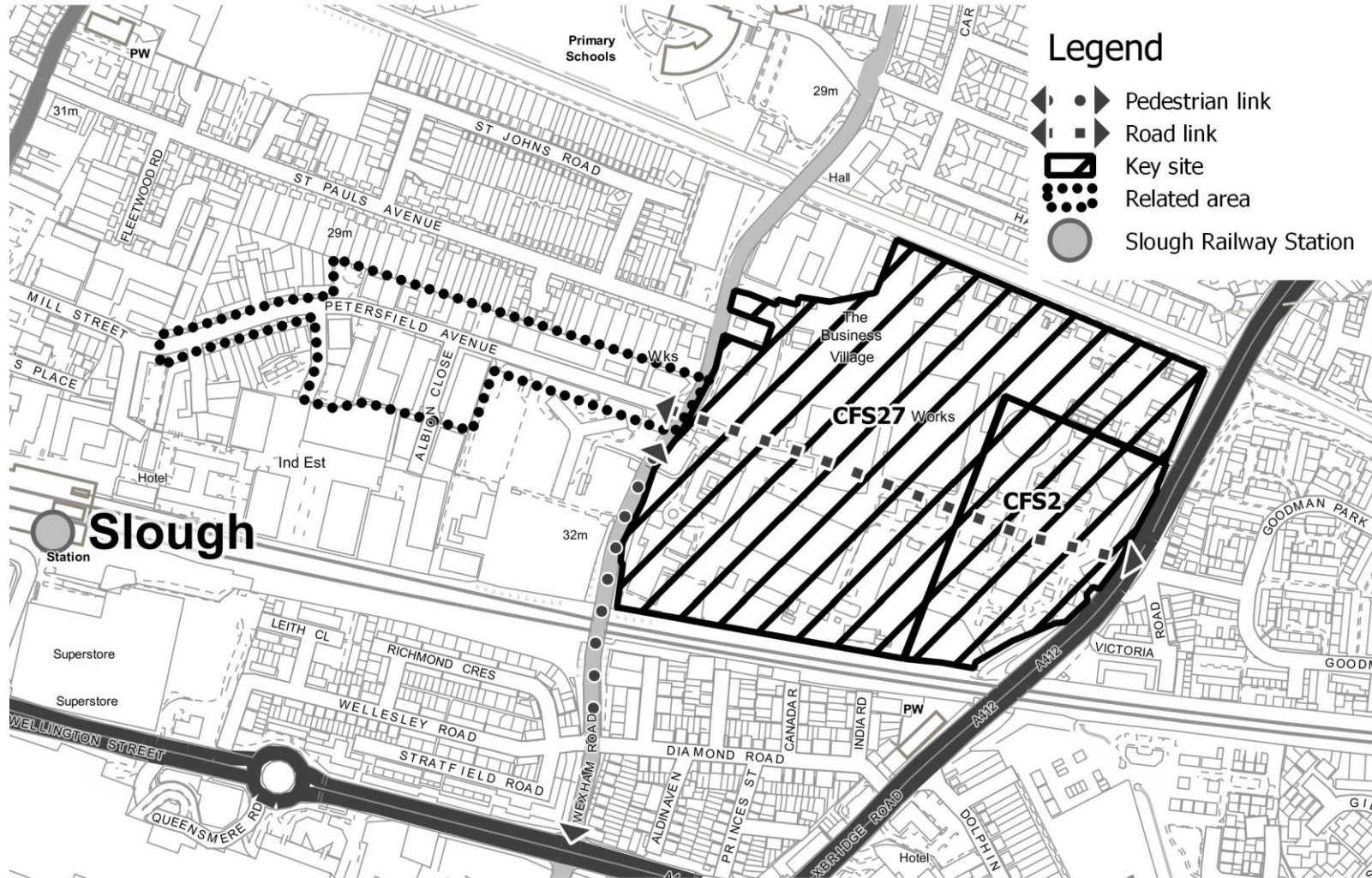
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5.4. OPTION C	NEW NIEGHBOURHOOD ON AKZO NOBEL/NATIONAL GRID SITE
Background	
<p>The Akzo Nobel site comprises the former ICI paint manufacturing plant and associated research and development buildings on the eastern side of Wexham Road. Manufacturing is due to move to the north of England. Research and development may stay on the site or move to the adjoining site which will retain the offices and laboratories. The site abuts the canal to the north and the railway line to the south. The owners indicate that development could take place within 5 years.</p> <p>The National Grid site is the former gas works. It now comprises a gas company depot accommodating a mixed range of office and storage buildings, open storage and parking areas with a gas holder in the north-west corner of the site. The site is currently operational but the owners say it may become available for redevelopment in the long term (more than 10 years).</p> <p>The landowners have put the two sites forward as part of the recent 'Call for Sites' exercise. The combined sites provide a rare opportunity for a substantial new neighbourhood to be created near the town centre. The fact that only two land owners are involved should simplify the process of getting comprehensive development.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>The proposed option is to comprehensively redevelop the two sites primarily for residential plus supporting uses (local retail, education, open space, community facilities) and some employment use. A mixture of family homes, small homes and flats including affordable housing. The canal-side north end is expected to be houses with flats near the railway end. Whilst street based housing and flat development is wanted there may be scope for some taller flats (over 5 storeys) on the southern part of the site. This could optimise the use of the site to help meet housing demand but control of the quality and mix of house types and tenures will be crucial if this type of development is chosen. The site is large enough and sufficiently separated from other neighbourhoods for the new development to have its own character.</p> <p>Wexham Road and Uxbridge Road can be used for access. The existing Uxbridge Road site access may not be suitable as it is or it may need to be relocated away from the railway bridge to improve safety. To assist town wide travel it will be important to have a link through the site from Wexham Road to Uxbridge Road for cyclists, buses and local traffic.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>In the unlikely event that the gas holder is not removed the associated safety zone will significantly limit the area available for new residential development on both sites. Employment uses could take the place of the area of residential use lost.</p>	
Key Links	
<p>Pedestrian and cycle route to railway station via Petersfield Avenue and to the town centre via either the latter or Wexham Road bridge.</p> <p>Access to the canal to access local recreation spaces and the tow path out to the Colne Valley Regional Park.</p> <p>A link through the site from Wexham Rd to Uxbridge Road for cyclists and buses. Possibly for traffic also if this can relieve congestion elsewhere without significant consequences on other roads.</p>	
Issues	
<p>Dealing with soil contamination. Contamination is linked to predecessors of the current owners and it is expected</p>	

5.4. OPTION C	NEW NIEGHBOURHOOD ON AKZO NOBEL/NATIONAL GRID SITE
<p>that they will deal with any contamination before selling the sites. Bearing in mind the past uses over a long period of time remediation may take some time.</p>	
<p>Loss of employment land. The sites are 'Existing Business area' on the Slough Local Development Framework Proposals Map 2010.</p>	
<p>Consequences of extra traffic flow over and above existing levels. The combined sites are in a reasonably sustainable location because of their proximity to the railway station and town centre. Consequently residents in any new development are likely to be less reliant upon the use of the private car than elsewhere.</p>	
<p>Encouraging walking and cycling in particular creating a convenient and attractive route to Slough railway station and the town centre and ensuring adequate retail and community uses are accessible in or near the development. Improvements to Petersfield Avenue and Wexham Road will be crucial so that new residents feel they are connected to the town centre. This applies to the western part of the Akzo Nobel site in particular as the edge of this site is only an 800 metre walk to the station.</p>	
<p>Ensuring comprehensive development i.e. both sites considered together but also ensuring each site can be developed individually in case redevelopment of one site is delayed.</p>	
<p>Provide education, retail and community uses on the site.</p>	
<p>Ensuring a wide mix of house types and high quality design to make it attractive to a wide range of people.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p>1,000 to 1,400 homes dependent upon the number of flats included. These figures will be lower if substantial areas are retained for employment use. Substantially less if the gas holder is not removed.</p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>CFS 27 Akzo Nobel, Wexham Road 12.73 ha</p>	
<p>CFS 2 National Grid; Uxbridge Road 3.88 ha</p>	
<p>Related Sites/Areas</p>	
<p>OTH 144 Petersfield Ave (north side) existing commercial buildings.</p>	
<p>Residential led redevelopment and street-scene enhancement</p>	
<p>OTH 143 Petersfield Ave (south side) review potential for comprehensive redevelopment for business and residential development plus street-scene enhancement.</p>	

Figure 10: Option C

Option C - New Neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/National Grid Site



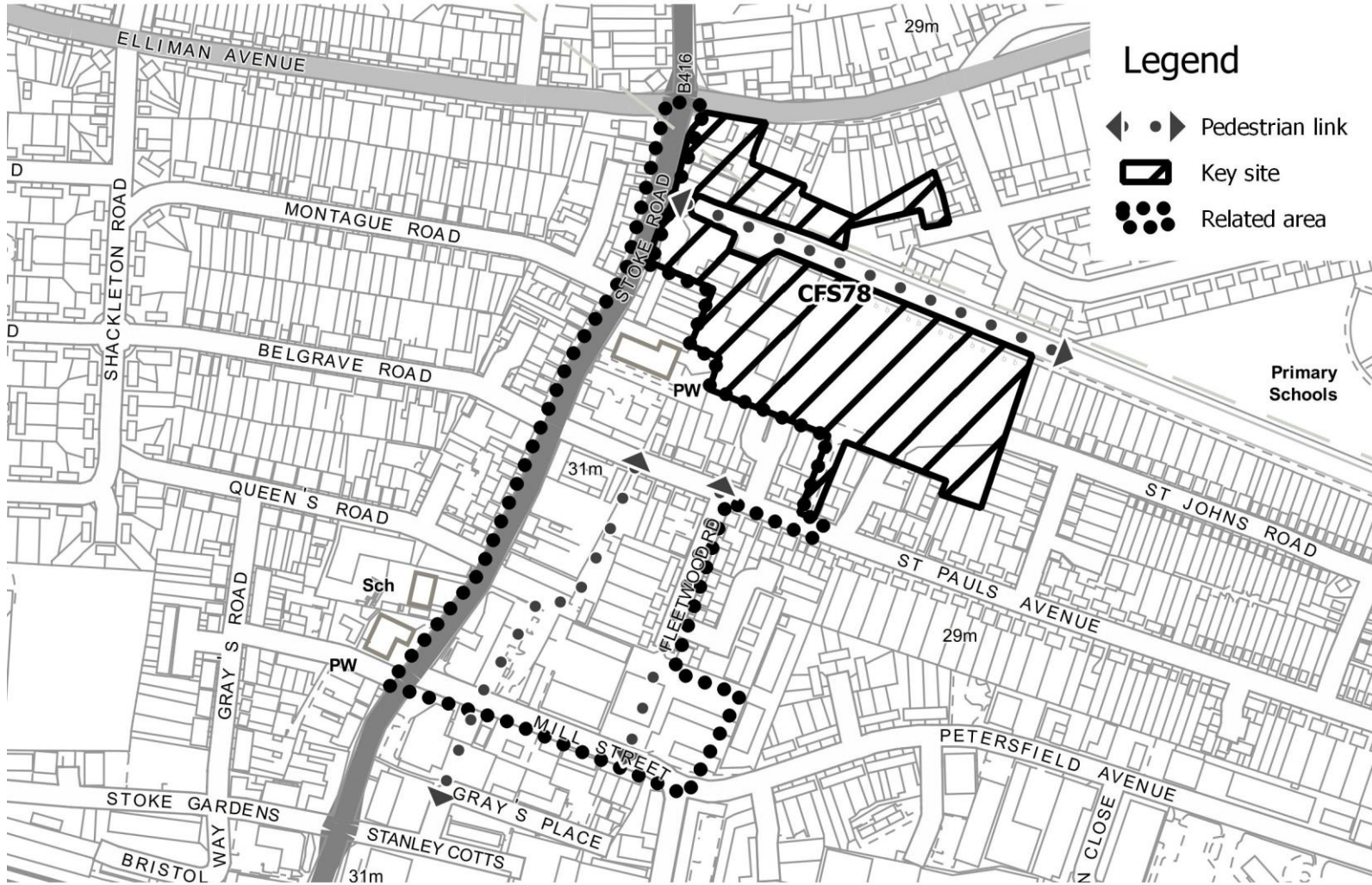
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5.5. OPTION D1	CANAL BASIN
Background	
<p>There has been a long standing proposal to redevelop the canal basin in Stoke Road.</p> <p>The main reasons for promoting development in this area is the desire to promote the basin as a visitor centre and focal point for users of the towpath and canal. Redevelopment of the existing unattractive commercial buildings would also greatly improve the appearance of the site and act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area.</p> <p>The Site Allocations Plan (2010) identified the site (SSA17) for redevelopment primarily for residential development including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide facilities that will attract visitors and form a focal point • for users of the towpath and canal • Open up views from Stoke Road to the Canal Basin • Retain and enhance the winding hole and pedestrian and cycle • access to the basin • Retain and take opportunities to enhance the nature • conservation value of the canal • Consider the provision of visitor moorings and the north side of • the canal • Provide residential development • Enhance recreational facilities within the Bowyer Playing Fields <p>Development has not come forward so far because of land assembly problems. These have now been resolved so that all of the land is under the control of a consortium of potential developers including the Council.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>The proposed option is to redevelop the area around the canal basin with a residential scheme and ancillary retail/leisure uses. This would have a high quality public realm which would create a focal point which would attract canal boats and local residents to use this part of the canal.</p> <p>The proposal includes having residential blocks along the northern part of the Bowyer Playing Fields fronting onto the canal. The remaining parts of the public open space will be landscaped and improved so that there is an overall increase in the recreational value of the land.</p> <p>Although the site will be predominantly developed with flats some family housing should be provided along with affordable housing.</p> <p>Access will be from the Stoke Road which will open up views of the canal basin.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>The impact of extra traffic on Stoke Road will have to be addressed.</p> <p>Limitations on layout options if overhead power cables are not removed.</p> <p>The main physical constraint to the development of the site is the electricity pylon and cables which cross the northern part of the site which limits what can take place upon this area. Investigations have taken place as to whether the cables could be put underground but this would be very expensive. As a result development may have</p>	

5.5. OPTION D1	CANAL BASIN
to take place on a phased basis.	
Key Links	
To canal for recreation and access to the countryside. Stoke Road to the town centre and alternative pedestrian and cycle access to the railway station and town centre.	
Issues	
<p>The principle of the loss of part of the Bowyer Playing field has been established through the Site Allocations Plan (2010). This would be subject to development being carried out in a sensitive way which would enhance the overall recreational value of the area which would be available to residents in the wider area.</p> <p>It is important that the development encourages walking and cycling in particular creating a convenient and attractive route to the station and town centre. The site is an 800 metre walk from the station. Improvements to Stoke Road or an alternative route will be crucial so that new residents feel they are close to the town centre.</p> <p>Gaining Local Economic Partnership funding to place overhead power cables underground.</p> <p>The scheme will also have to encourage the use of the towpath for walking and cycling.</p> <p>The Site Allocations Plan has accepted that the site will predominantly be developed for flats but a residential units will be requires which will be built to a high standard of design.</p> <p>Attracting canalside uses to make the basin an attractive and distinctive focal point.</p>	
Capacity	
Around 250 new dwellings could be built as part of the main proposal. It may be possible to build more in future if the pylon and overhead cables were removed.	
Key Sites	
Related Sites/Areas	
<p>OTH 139 Stoke Road east side (south of Canal Basin and North of Mill Street). Residential led comprehensive redevelopment including pedestrian/cycle link north south from Canal basin redevelopment site towards Slough Station.</p> <p>Land east of Stoke Road and Fleetwood Road – an alternative pedestrian/cycle link could go via Fleetwood Road if a link to Mill Street is achieved. See site OTH 140 Mill Street (north side) and site INF 157 Slough Station (east side) bridge over railway (pedestrian/cycle access from Mill Street to town centre).</p> <p>The nearby emerging new Community Sports Stadium and Lynch Hill Enterprise Academy; are 300 metre walk to the north along Stoke Road.</p>	

Figure 11: Option D1

Option D1 - Canal Basin



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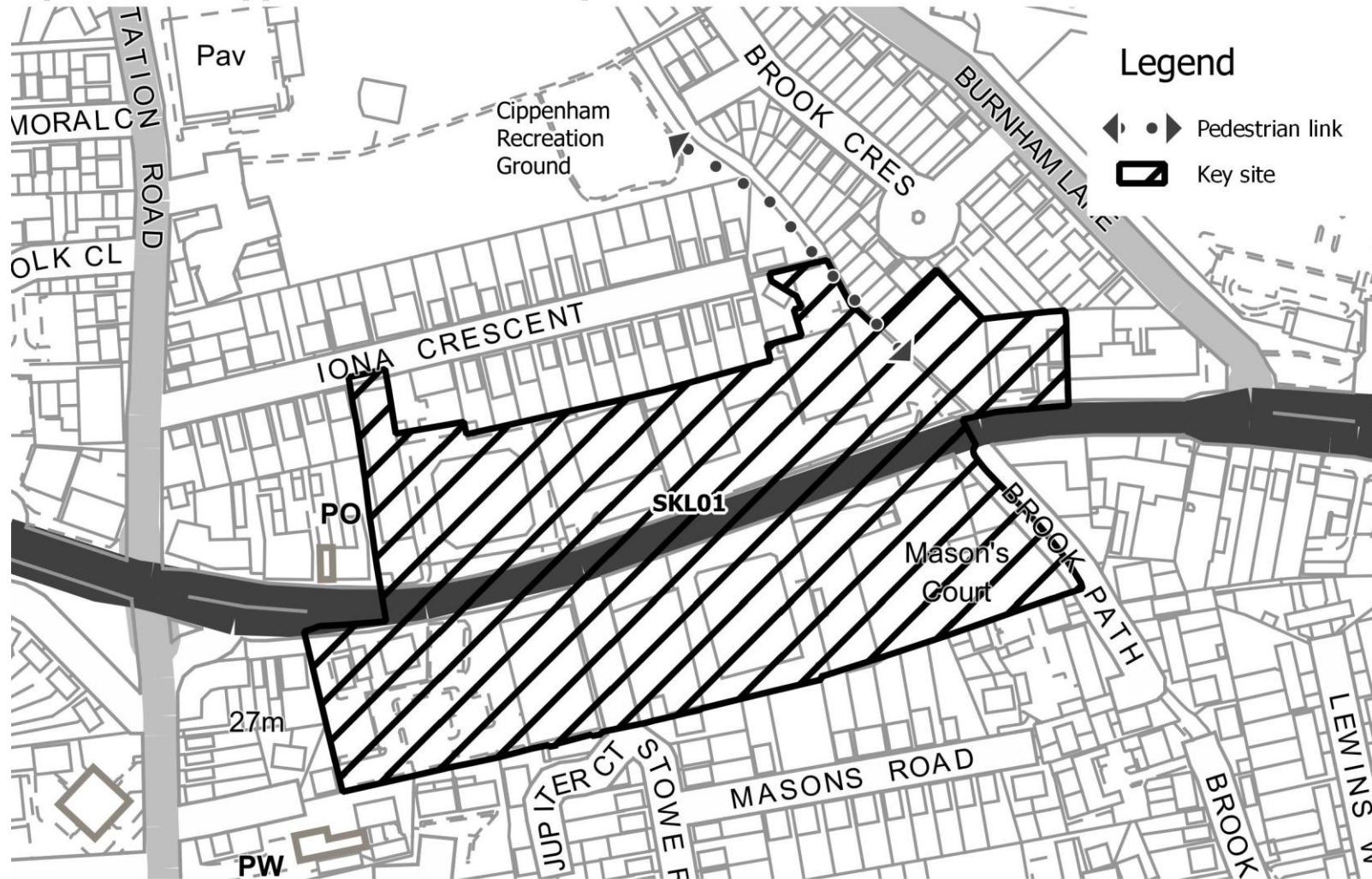
<p>5.6. OPTION D2</p>	<p>NEW CENTRAL CIPPENHAM STRIP</p>
<p>Background</p>	
<p>The section of the A4 Bath Road west of the Slough Trading Estate, which contains amongst other things the former Trade Sales site, is characterised by a mix of commercial uses and housing. This part of the Bath Road also doesn't have the tree lined avenue that runs through the Estate. As a result it is one of the least attractive main road corridors in Slough.</p> <p>Apart from having good access to the M4 junction 7, this part of the Bath Road is close to Burnham station (650m walking distance) which will have the Crossrail service from 2019. There is also potential for the Rapid Mass Transit service to be extended which would provide an improved bus service to the town centre.</p> <p>Although the area currently contains a number of employment uses such as retail warehouses, car show rooms and car/van sales, it is not considered that it is essential for these to be in this location.</p> <p>The area was identified in the Site Allocations Plan (2010) as a "Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration" where major residential or mixed use development could take place. This has not been implemented so far. A new car showroom has recently been constructed on 392 Bath Road.</p>	
<p>Proposed Option</p>	
<p>The proposed option would be to comprehensively regenerate this area in order to provide new housing and an improved environment of this part of the A4 corridor.</p> <p>It is considered that new residential development could take place upon the sites which would consist of flats along the road frontage. Family housing could be included at the rear of the sites on the southern side of the Bath Road. Development should be comprehensively planned in a way which improves the appearance of this important main road frontage.</p> <p>The opportunity should be taken to introduce some major landscaping along the frontage.</p> <p>There may be the opportunity to include other adjoining sites along the Bath Road within comprehensive redevelopment proposals.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>Part of the site is liable to flood and so the design and layout of any development would have to take account of this and drainage issues.</p> <p>It would also have to take account of the juxtaposition of adjoining residential properties.</p> <p>Development along the road frontage would have to take account of noise and disturbance from traffic along the A4.</p> <p>There are road widening proposals within the vicinity of this area.</p>	
<p>Key Links</p>	
<p>The Mass Rapid Transit scheme could potentially be extended along this part of the A4.</p> <p>Improved pedestrian links to Burnham Station and Cippenham Recreation Ground would also make the site more sustainable.</p>	

<p>5.6. OPTION D2</p>	<p>NEW CENTRAL CIPPENHAM STRIP</p>
<p>Issues</p>	
<p>There has not been any indication of redevelopment taking place since the area was identified in the 2010 Site Allocations Plan. Although much of the area is understood to be in a single ownership it is not clear how the site could be brought forward on a comprehensive basis.</p> <p>The proposal would involve the loss of employment land but much of this is quite low key or consists of retail type jobs which could be accommodated elsewhere.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p>Approximately 200 additional homes</p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>Bath Road Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration (SKL1)</p>	
<p>Related Sites/Areas</p>	
<p>Burnham Station (INF 152)</p>	

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Figure 12: Option D2

Option D2 - Cippenham Central Strip



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<p>5.7. OPTION D3</p>	<p>CHALVEY REGENERATION AREA</p>
<p>Background</p>	
<p>The Chalvey area is going through a period of change. Planning permission has already been granted for a number of developments which together with a group of identified sites will help improve the appearance of the area, provide more housing for local needs and key community facilities including a new school. An enhanced Salt Hill stream and associated land that runs through the area can be a linking feature - a walking/cycling route and a green corridor. All these changes need to be supported with public realm enhancements and continued support from local public authorities to tackle crime and to assist community support networks. The aim of these improvements, beyond providing new homes and facilities, is to encourage existing owners to invest in their properties thus improve the overall image of the area, create a sense of confidence and hopefully encourage existing residents to stay in the area.</p>	
<p>Proposed Option</p>	
<p>The Montem Leisure Centre site will become a new residential neighbourhood with family homes and some smaller properties alongside an enhanced streamside green corridor with a foot and cycle link connecting it to Salt Hill Park to the north and south to Chalvey Centre. Plus improved link to Seymour Road with links to the recreation ground beyond.</p> <p>For the area around the Thames Valley Community Centre site a new primary and secondary school including retained or replacement community facilities will provide a new focal point for this part of the neighbourhood. As part of this scheme there is an opportunity to include and remove the unsightly old shopping centre and office building on Chalvey High Street. This provides the scope to create a new built frontage along the prominent north side of the High Street.</p> <p>The provision of a Chalvey railway halt in the future will enhance accessibility for the local community and reduce reliance on the car at peak times.</p> <p>Where Salt Hill stream runs under Chalvey there are opportunities to open it up as a local feature.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>A key constraint to new building is the need to avoid flood risk. Areas close to the M4 motorway and main roads are subject to significant air quality and noise problems.</p> <p>There is also traffic congestion within the area.</p> <p>There have also in the past been viability and ownership problems which have prevented development coming forward.</p>	
<p>Key Links</p>	
<p>Possible new Chalvey Halt on the Windsor Branch Line</p> <p>New bus link</p> <p>Salt Hill Stream corridor</p> <p>Footpath Cycleway link to the Jubilee River</p>	
<p>Issues</p>	
<p>The key issue is how the development of a number of individual sites in the Chalvey area can take place in a way</p>	

5.7. OPTION D3	CHALVEY REGENERATION AREA
<p>which maximises the overall regeneration benefits for the area as a whole.</p> <p>There is a need to improve the environment of some parts of the area including the public realm.</p> <p>The shortage of green spaces in Chalvey means that there is a need to improve access to the Jubilee River to the south and along the Salt Hill corridor to the north.</p> <p>Traffic congestion is also a problem within the area as a result it may be necessary to control the amount of car parking to be provided and encourage non car modes of travel. It will also be necessary to limit exposure to main road air quality problems.</p> <p>It may be necessary to consider using Compulsory Purchase powers to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment.</p>	
Capacity	
220 new dwellings.	
Key Sites	
<p>CFS 68 Montem Leisure Centre – redevelopment for housing</p> <p>CFS 26 Chalvey Community and shopping Centre plus recreation ground – redevelopment for a secondary school including community centre space.</p> <p>CFS 23 Fire Station/Land east of Tun's Lane – new fire station and flats.</p> <p>CFS 57 Darvill’s Lane (community and day centre) – residential development</p> <p>CFS 44 Garage Compound Turton Way – new flats</p>	
Related Sites/Areas	
<p>INF 162 Chalvey Halt proposal (new station on Windsor branch line)</p> <p>CFS 56 Former Cross Keys pub – residential development (planning permission granted)</p> <p>CFS 1 Salt Hill Stream and tributaries – green corridor and water quality improvement.</p> <p>Primary Road/Greenwatt Way – propose health centre and extra care housing (planning permission granted).</p>	

Figure 13: Option D3

Option D3 - Chalvey Regeneration Area



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<p>5.8. OPTION E</p>	<p>ESTATE RENEWAL</p>
<p>Background</p>	
<p>There are over 6,000 Council Houses in Slough located in a number of Estates throughout the Borough. The Council has an on-going programme of improvements to make sure that they meet the “decent homes” standard and continue to improve the public realm in these areas.</p> <p>As part of this the Council has carried out some major Estate Renewal projects. These have included demolishing two of the blocks of flats at Common Road Langley and replacing them with family housing. The Britwell regeneration scheme has involved demolishing the flats and shopping centre and replacing them with new facilities and family housing. It is proposed to demolish the Tower and Ashbourne flats in Chalvey.</p> <p>In addition the Council has carried out a programme of redeveloping unused garage courts for housing which makes better use of unsightly areas. Further phases of this are planned along with proposals to redevelop some old peoples units which do not meet modern needs.</p> <p>Most of the Council Estates in Slough such as Wexham Court, Trelawney Avenue in Langley and the Britwell have been built to a high standard. The Council will, however, be carrying out a stock condition survey to see whether there are areas which will need major investment or could benefit from being partially redeveloped during the plan period.</p>	
<p>Proposed Option</p>	
<p>This option would involve selectively redeveloping parts some of the housing Estates in Slough in order to improve the appearance and environment of the areas and increase the number of units as well as the quality of housing that is available to meet local needs.</p> <p>This would be carried out through a combination of schemes across the Borough which would range from the infilling of available small sites, to the demolition and redevelopment of large tower blocks.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>There may be physical constraints to the development or redevelopment of sites as a result of flooding, drainage, noise, air quality or other environmental problems.</p> <p>There may also be a number of practical constraints to development.</p> <p>The main constraint is the shortage of available land.</p>	
<p>Key Links</p>	
<p></p>	
<p>Issues</p>	
<p>There are a number of issues associated with this option.</p> <p>Any refurbishment or redevelopment would inconvenience residents in the short term.</p> <p>New development would also have to be at a higher density than at present and so it would have to be carefully designed to make sure that it fitted into the existing neighbourhood. The type of new accommodation may also change with more apartments being provided.</p> <p>There is also a potential problem in carrying out comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment schemes where</p>	

5.8. OPTION E	ESTATE RENEWAL
<p>some properties have been sold or leased to the occupiers. If it is not possible to buy properties back it may be necessary to use Compulsory Purchase powers on a selective basis.</p> <p>The critical issue is whether schemes will be economically viable taking account of the constraints to what the Council can do with its housing stock.</p>	
Capacity	
<p>It is not possible to assess what the capacity is of this option at this stage.</p>	
Key Sites	
<p>Whilst some key sites for redevelopment in the short term can be identified, such as Tower House and Ashbourne House, this option will be made up of multiple sites over the course of the plan period.</p>	
Related Sites/Areas	
Empty content for Related Sites/Areas	

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5.1. OPTION F	INTENSIFICATION OF THE SUBURBS
Background	
<p>Much of Slough’s existing housing is found in suburban streets. This option explores the potential for creating more housing within these areas.</p> <p>National planning policy includes a strong preference for the reuse of previously developed land before greenfield sites are considered. Therefore an option to intensify the development of housing within existing suburban areas would meet this requirement. However policy also warns against the loss of garden spaces to new housing and includes strong policies to ensure high quality of development which respects and reflects local context and ensures that the existing character of an area is adequately considered.</p> <p>Slough is already quite densely developed with parallel streets of houses separated by gardens. The gardens are for the most part narrow and over most of the Borough, the gap between rows of houses is less than 60m. This pattern provides little scope for significant traditional “backland” development by inserting new developments between rows of houses., But there may be some limited opportunities for a single row of mews houses in isolated instances. Household occupation is generally high and the use of garden space to accommodate extensions and ancillary buildings is already quite intensive. There are observable impacts from this optimisation in terms of loss of trees. There are relatively few gap site opportunities left to infill between houses or to develop on underused land or corner plots, as these have been taken up already in recent years.</p> <p>These suburban areas have already absorbed a lot of the population growth that has been taking place. This can be seen from the large number of extensions that have taken place and the existence of a large numbers of outbuildings which are accommodating what are known as “beds in sheds.”</p> <p>The call for sites in January 2016 did lead to some sites being identified as potential housing development sites. Some of larger sites have been considered and included in other options proposed for specific key site development. The small sites that came forward had limited capacity to accommodate significant amounts of housing.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>In the context of Slough, there are three main options for intensifying development within the existing suburbs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by permitting comprehensive redevelopment of several plots to create a whole new development at a more intensive density and a design that does not necessarily follow the traditional street pattern, or • by amalgamating land from several plots to insert a new row of mews type houses whilst keeping the existing houses. • by allowing piecemeal infill of new houses between existing houses or through small scale redevelopment on gardens. <p>Comprehensive development would be based on the need to assemble several properties into a viable redevelopment block by demolishing the existing houses and replacing them. This could offer potential for a new type of higher density development to be inserted within the suburban context without altering the character of the area overall, provided the resulting development was sympathetic in scale. This could make a significant contribution to providing additional housing and could also allow for a range of house types and extend the availability of non-family sized accommodation within existing communities.</p> <p>The “insert” development option is dependent upon the availability of land where the gardens between existing homes are sufficiently long that a new access drive and manoeuvring area and houses can be satisfactorily accommodated between rows of housing without undue loss of amenity for either the existing or proposed homes. As stated above the opportunities for this are very limited given the development pattern in Slough where rows of</p>	

5.1. OPTION F	INTENSIFICATION OF THE SUBURBS
<p>houses are mostly parallel and less than 60 m apart.</p> <p>Studies looking at the availability of land suitable for infill between existing buildings also show that there are relatively few sites that can be identified. The trend for optimising the living space of family homes through extensions or ancillary buildings have reduced the number of sites where a new residential unit could be infilled. Where they do exist, the capacity of individual site is also limited both by the size of these sites and the need to respect the character of the existing neighbourhood.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>Both the “comprehensive” and the “insert” options rely on site assembly. Given that houses are in separate ownership, the difficulties involved in site assembly are a practical constraint on whether such development is likely to come forward.</p> <p>A consequence of site assembly issues is that the land costs will be inflated by the need to achieve willing sellers. Even assuming willing sellers, the existing value of family homes is such that the viability of a development at an acceptable density is questionable.</p> <p>For developments where the number of additional units is greater than 15, we would be looking for affordable housing to be provided. Most “infill” developments will produce fewer than 15 additional units as will the “insert” option and therefore will not be required under government policy to contribute towards either affordable housing or to other community infrastructure. For larger comprehensive developments, affordable housing and other policy requirements would be sought, but this will depend upon viability.</p> <p>Intensification of development in suburban areas will place greater demands on the housebuilders. Careful planning and design and attention to the local context are needed to ensure an increase in density can be successfully accommodated in a form that will make the changes acceptable to the communities in which they are located</p> <p>An objective of the plan will be to preserve and enhance the amount of green space within Slough’s suburbs. New developments at an increased density would have to provide green landscaped areas including trees for the use and enjoyment of residents, as a contribution to the environment and as a buffer to the existing neighbourhood.</p> <p>Such developments could potentially add to the overall number of dwellings, but would more likely be in flats/maisonettes rather than traditional family homes with private gardens.</p>	
<p>Key Links</p>	
<p>Developing new homes near existing facilities and infrastructure would minimise the need for or cost of providing additional facilities to serve new development. Most new homes would be in places where there is reasonably good access to jobs, transport, services and facilities. This proximity to local services such as schools and shops would reduce the travel distances and also foster a modal shift away car usage.</p>	
<p>Issues</p>	
<p>This option needs to balance the positive aspects of the contribution that it could make to the provision of additional homes in a sustainable location to meet the needs of a growing population against the on the character of the existing suburbs, the impact on the quality of life for existing residents and the impact on trees and green space. To be a viable option, it also needs to be demonstrated that schemes for new housing are likely to come forward.</p> <p>The objectives of the Plan include ensuring that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place. The council has a history of successfully defending appeals in respect of proposals for infill housing where the proposal</p>	

5.1. OPTION F	INTENSIFICATION OF THE SUBURBS
<p>would adversely impact on the character of the area, including green space, or the amenities of the neighbouring properties. In the context of neighbourhood planning, the plan will also support the potential for distinct neighbourhoods to define the character of their area and what kind of place they want to see in the future, although this should also acknowledge the need to plan positively for growth. New developments, whether comprehensive redevelopment, insertions into the existing suburban fabric or infills, will have to be designed to fit into the character of the area without negative impact on character or amenity and enhancing the provision of trees and greenspace. This is quite a challenge for developers, but has been successfully done in schemes around the country.</p> <p>Intensification of the suburbs can have a positive impact on provision of community facilities if and support for existing facilities, as with support for local shops etc. This can be part of the living locally policies. Ideally it would also be that larger comprehensive schemes could contribute directly to the provision of new facilities that the existing community can also use.</p> <p>Overall however, the scarcity of sites that are suitable for either infill or insert developments and the limited capacity for each to add substantially to the number of homes mean that these options will not make a significant contribution to the total number of homes needed to meet the OAHN target. Neither will they contribute to the provision of affordable housing.</p> <p>Comprehensive redevelopment proposals could potentially provide a greater number of additional residential units. There is also a chance to provide specialist housing for a wider groups of people, such as the elderly or disabled people within their communities. However these sites still need to be carefully considered in order to ensure that the resultant proposal respects the context of its suburban location and especially, retains sufficient open area for the use of residents, to contribute to greening and environmental objectives and to provide a buffer to its neighbours.</p> <p>The Slough Housing Strategy includes proposals for delivery of up to 200 new homes per year through estates renewal and will also use this programme to deliver additional affordable housing.</p> <p>The major question is whether such development would be deliverable from the private sector. The attractiveness of such schemes to developers is particularly uncertain given the costs and difficulty of assembling a parcel of land for development. It is also questionable whether even at this scale viability would permit affordable housing to be provided and for community facilities to be funded through developer contributions.</p> <p>The conclusion is that while intensification could be achieved on suitable sites if good design principles are applied. The scarcity of sites, questionable viability due to site assembly costs makes this option unlikely to contribute significantly to satisfying housing need.</p>	
Capacity	
<p>Although there may be the potential to significantly increase the density of homes on a given site, this will not necessarily cumulatively significantly increase the net number of units.</p> <p>Infill housing opportunities are limited and therefore the capacity to provide a significant contribution to meeting housing need may be no more than that provided by windfall sites. The Housing Trajectory assumes that 60 dwellings a year will come forward upon small sites most of which will be within the suburban areas. It is not possible at this stage to estimate how much this option would increase this figure.</p>	
Key Sites	
N/A	
Related Sites/Areas	

5.1. OPTION F	INTENSIFICATION OF THE SUBURBS
N/A	

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5.2. OPTION G**REDEVELOP EXISTING BUSINESS AREAS FOR HOUSING****Background**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2. OPTION G	REDEVELOP EXISTING BUSINESS AREAS FOR HOUSING
Proposed Option	
<p>This option explores the potential for meeting housing need by allowing redevelopment for housing on existing business areas over and above the land affected by options B,C and D above.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>There are a number of constraints which will affect the ability of more employment land being redeveloped for housing.</p> <p>Other Options have already proposed the use of some employment land for housing and there is only a limited supply of land.</p> <p>It may not be viable for employment land to be converted to residential either because of the high value of existing uses or the cost of demolition, remediation and construction.</p> <p>Finally some employment areas may not be suitable for residential use either because of environmental constraints or a lack of amenity.</p>	
Issues	
<p>The main issue in relation to this option is finding the balance between competing Objectives. On the one hand we are aiming to meet our Objectively Assessed Housing Needs. At the same time we have the Objectives of creating 15,000 new jobs and ensuring that Slough’s economy creates wealth and retains its role as an economic powerhouse.</p> <p>The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (published in November 2016) has projected there will be a demand for 83-180 hectares of new employment land over the plan period in order to accommodate some of the additional 15,000 jobs that it envisages being created during the plan period (Table 4.2 EDNA).</p> <p>The only area where new employment land could be created is at Colnbrook and Poyle. This is considered as Option I. At the same time Options B,C, D1, and D2, which between them could deliver around 2,000 houses, would involve the loss of about 35 hectares of employment land.</p> <p>There has also been a significant loss of employment land as a result of recent changes in government policy that allow changes from offices and other Class B uses to residential through the Prior Approval process. Although this has played a positive part in re-using some redundant offices there is a risk that the further loss of offices through this process will have a negative impact on the supply of lower grade offices needed by smaller or ‘back-office’ businesses.</p> <p>In order to support the diverse and buoyant economy of Slough it is still important to foster opportunities for a wide range of businesses to stay and grow and for other businesses to be attracted into the Borough. The various economic strategies have identified the key to success is access to a suitable workforce and to suitable premises (from grade A office accommodation through warehouses, technical premises to small business workshops and shop fronts).</p> <p>Existing business areas outside the main concentrations in the trading estates and the town centre provide a valuable source to satisfy requirements for the full range of business needs.</p> <p>For example Information Technology and Commerce (‘ITC’) is identified as a leading sector of the Slough economy (five times the national average). The Slough Business Focus Study (Regeneris May 2015) shows a very wide distribution with businesses dotted throughout the Borough in addition to the areas of concentration. This sector</p>	

<p>5.2. OPTION G</p>	<p>REDEVELOP EXISTING BUSINESS AREAS FOR HOUSING</p>
<p>also has a high number of small and medium sized enterprises with a similarly high number of people who are self employed. This type of business clearly draws from the resident population. It is a good example of the way in which premises within residential and district locations can help to both support the economy and help people to live and work locally.</p> <p>The retention of a supply of employment premises within suburban and district centres also enables residents to access the services that they need more easily and without the need for a car journey. Having employment premises helps specialist businesses, such as those associated with the various ethnic communities in Slough, to be close to their markets will help them to establish and grow.</p> <p>There may be some employment premises that are suitable to be converted to or redeveloped for residential use and will become available during the plan period. Where such sites are brought forward for mixed use redevelopment including both residential and employment, a flexible approach that takes account of circumstances could be explored provided issues such as residential quality, transport and contamination could be satisfied.</p> <p>However, the option of encouraging a more comprehensive change from employment to residential would be unlikely to actually deliver a substantial contribution to residential need because of the disparate nature of the sites. Most of the sites are in separate ownership and where occupied by thriving businesses are unlikely to be brought forward for development. Future development for housing would be piecemeal. The high existing use values will make the land expensive for redevelopment and possible contamination problems will further reduce the development viability of such sites. In practice many of the employment sites have high existing use values by virtue of the buoyant business environment of Slough and this would mean that most of the employment land would probably remain in employment use.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p>Because this Option is so wide ranging it is not possible to assess how many new houses it could produce.</p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>No specific sites have been identified at this stage.</p>	

5.3. OPTION H**RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR HOUSING****Background**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposed Option

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

- St Antony's Field, Farnham Lane (CFS 54)
- Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street (CFS 30)
- Land to rear of Opal Court, Wexham Street (CFS 29)
- Land east of Wexham Park Hospital
- North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane
- Land east of Rochford Gardens

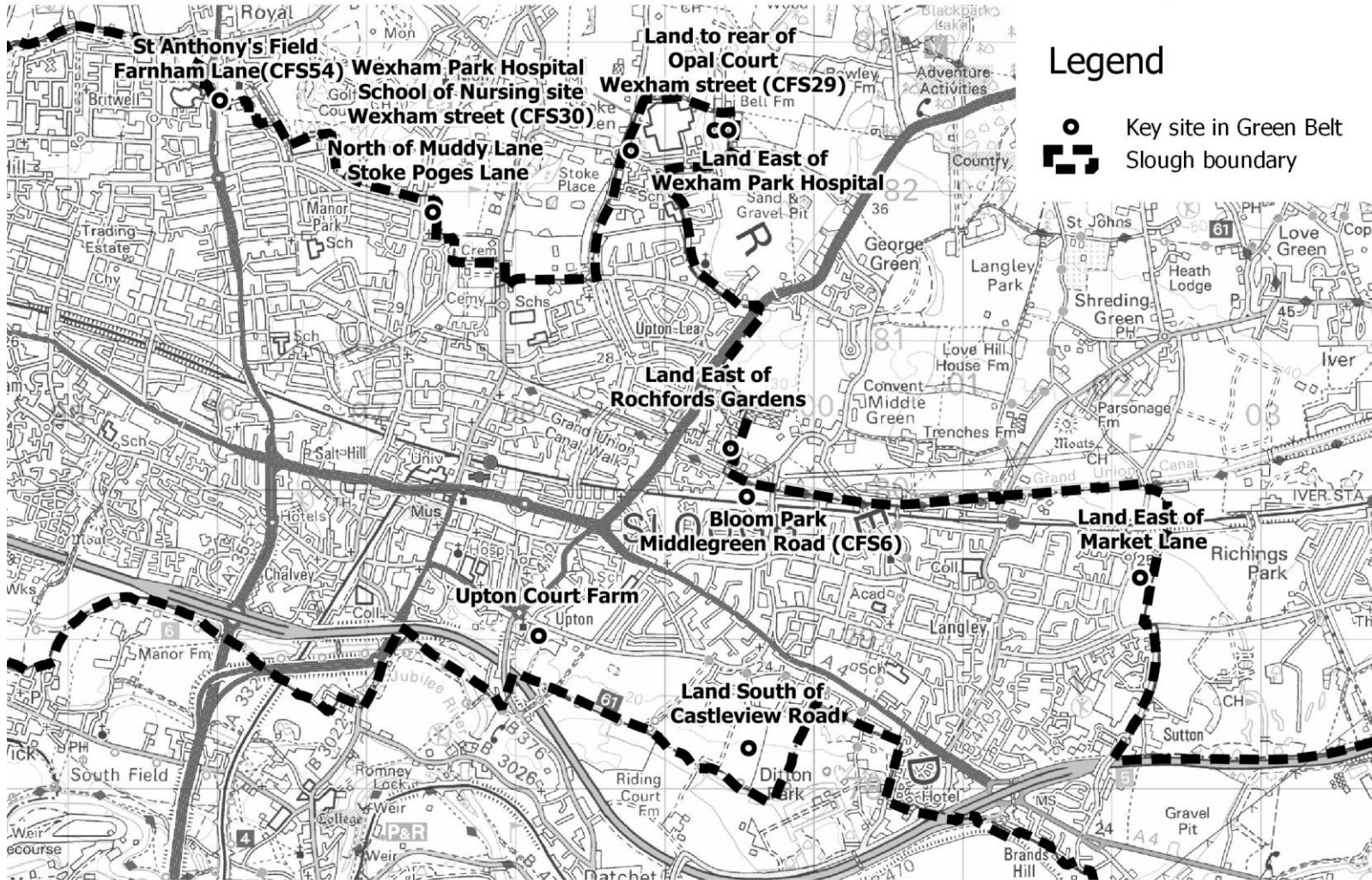
5.3. OPTION H	RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR HOUSING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloom Park, Middlegreen Road (CFS 6) • Land east of Market Lane • Land south of Castlevie Road • Upton Court Farm <p>It is considered that all of the sites should be predominantly developed for family housing and that a full quota of affordable housing and all of the necessary infrastructure contributions will be provided.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>At this issues and options stage, it has not been possible to undertake studies that would identify all of the possible constraints to the development of every site. There may be flooding, drainage, access, ecological, contamination or other environmental problems which could affect the design and the capacity of the sites. These will be considered in due course.</p> <p>Some of the sites are subject to policy constraints. Bloom Park is for instance public open space and the land south of Castlevie Road is within the Ditton Park Historic Park and Garden. The land east of Market Lane is within the Colne Valley Regional Park and the Strategic Gap identified in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>St Antony’s Field, Farnham Lane, could be considered to have a particular role in preventing the coalescence of settlements.</p>	
Key Links	
Issues	
<p>The biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.</p> <p>The NPPF states that once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan (para.83). It is recognised that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts (para.79) and there have to be very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt (para.88).</p> <p>It will therefore be necessary to demonstrate that the overall need for housing, the need for family housing and the need for more affordable housing constitutes the very special circumstances that are needed to overcome the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p> <p>It will also be necessary to consider whether there are physical or policy constraints as to why individual sites should not be developed.</p>	
Capacity	
<p>It is estimated that all of these sites could produce around 650 dwellings but this would have to be subject to detailed testing.</p>	
Key Sites	
<p>The Key Sites which make up this option are listed above.</p>	

5.3. OPTION H	RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR HOUSING
Related Sites/Areas	
Many of these sites could be affected by Option J which proposes meeting some of Slough's housing need in a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks.	

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Figure 14: Option H

Option H - Green Belt Release for Housing

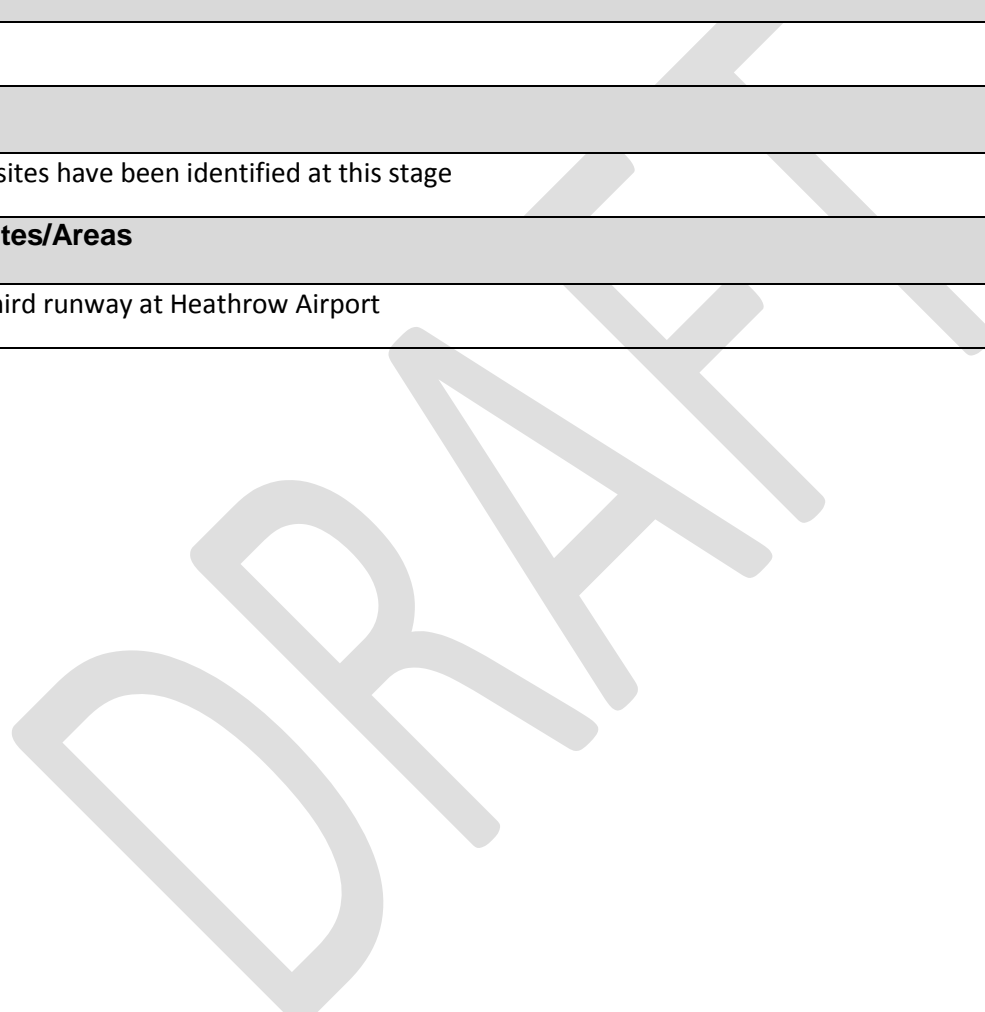


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5.4. OPTION I	RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT (IN THE COLNBROOK AND POYLE AREA)
Background	
<p>One of the Objectives of the Plan is to create 15,000 jobs in Slough. Another is to deliver the benefits that growth at Heathrow can bring.</p> <p>The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (published in November 2016) has calculated that there will be a demand for 83-180 hectares of new employment land in Slough in order to accommodate the projected growth in jobs.</p> <p>Slough has twin pressures of a very limited supply of unbuilt on land in Borough and the need to accommodate high housing growth at levels. Other options set above propose the change of use of sites currently or recently in employment use to residential (options B,C,D and G). but the proposals for the town centre would increase the amount of employment floorspace for office development. In this context, the only significant option for providing additional employment land is to release land from the Green Belt.</p> <p>The Government attaches great importance to Green Belt land but it is appropriate to carry out a review of the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan Process in order to determine whether there are very special circumstances sufficient to justify its release.</p> <p>Changes to the Green Belt in Slough in the 2004 Local Plan and 2008 Core Strategy were justified on the basis of housing need. Option H has looked at the potential for release of sites within the Green Belt around Slough for residential development in order to meet the objectively assessed need for housing close to where that need arises. The sites proposed in that option are considered to be more suitable for housing rather than employment use.</p> <p>There are two “Major Developed Sites” in Green Belt which are currently in employment use. These are at Slough Sewage Works and Wexham Park Hospital. The only other Green Belt land with any potential for employment use is within Colnbrook and Poyle in the east of the Borough. This area contains the Poyle Trading Estate and a number of other industrial and commercial areas. It also contains the Grundon’s Energy from Waste plant and a number other large infrastructure uses.</p> <p>Although it is not very accessible by public transport commercial uses have been attracted to the area because of its proximity to Heathrow airport and accessibility to the motorway network.</p> <p>The Government has announced its support for the proposal third runway at Heathrow which would be built on Green Belt land in Colnbrook north of the A4 Colnbrook bypass. The Grundon’s plant and part of the Lakeside Road industrial area would have to be demolished to facilitate the proposed plans for Heathrow. There would also need to be extensive changes to the road network and requirements for land for associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Taking into account the analysis of the Economic Development Needs Assessment that substantial additional land should be made available for employment plus the need to support the growth of Heathrow, it is considered that the Local Plan review should consider options to identify additional employment land in the Colnbrook and Poyle area with the intention that this land would be used for more airport related employment development.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>This option would involve releasing land from the Green Belt in the Colnbrook and Poyle area for airport related employment development.</p> <p>In order to safeguard land that may be needed for the proposed third runway and its associated development there will be an embargo on any development taking place in the short term unless it meets the “essential to be in this location” test set out in the Core Strategy. This will be reviewed once a detailed planning consent has been granted</p>	

5.4. OPTION I	RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT (IN THE COLNBROOK AND POYLE AREA)
<p>for the proposed third runway and the need for associated infrastructure, including the relocation of existing uses, has been established. Proposals for the release of additional land for airport related development would then be considered at this stage.</p> <p>If the third runway at Heathrow does not go ahead consideration will still be given to whether any additional airport related development is needed in the Poyle area to support the planned growth at Heathrow with the existing two runways. This would have to be justified by the results of the Employment Needs Assessment and be limited to meeting airport needs only.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>As well as being in the Green Belt, the area is currently protected from development because of its location in the Strategic Gap and Colne Valley Park; a policy in the Core Strategy. A proposal for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange north of the A4 Colnbrook bypass has recently been refused by the Secretary of State who gave great weight to the Strategic gap policy.</p> <p>The Colnbrook and Poyle area has a number of possible constraints to development. A large part of it is in an area liable to flood. Much of the remaining open land has been landfilled.</p> <p>The area suffers from significant noise and air quality problems. There is a Public Safety Zone west of the northern Heathrow runway and there will be another one for the proposed third runway if this goes ahead. Public Safety Zones restrict what type of development can go within them.</p> <p>The Colne Valley Park runs north to south in the Green Belt, the centre of Colnbrook village is a Conservation Area and there is a need to protect the amenities of residents and the need to protect the environment from the impact of any future development..</p> <p>Parts of the area also suffer from traffic congestion and there is a need to keep HGV traffic out of residential areas.</p>	
Key Links	
Issues	
<p>One of the key issues is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to Green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.</p> <p>The Colnbrook and Poyle area is currently highly protected from development because of the pressures it faces. The Core Strategy currently makes a distinction between different parts of the Green Belt within the Borough by identifying the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London and the Colne Valley Park as an area where development will only be allowed if it is “essential to be in that location”. This has been accepted by the courts and the Secretary of State as a “higher bar” than the “very special circumstances” test for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p> <p>The development of the proposed third runway at Heathrow would have a major impact upon the Strategic Gap and so the continuation of this policy will have to be considered in due course.</p> <p>The key issue is whether or not additional development will be needed to provide more jobs and support the growth of Heathrow. The Council has supported the expansion of the airport on the grounds that this is in the national as</p>	

<p>5.4. OPTION I</p>	<p>RELEASE OF GREEN BELT LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT (IN THE COLNBROOK AND POYLE AREA)</p>
<p>well as local interest. Even if the proposed third runway doesn't go ahead there will still be growth at Heathrow and so there may be a need for some development in the Poyle area to facilitate this.</p> <p>The impact of the proposed development upon the environment and upon congestion will also have to be considered.</p> <p>If the third runway does go ahead there will be a need for a comprehensive Master Plan for the whole area.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p></p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>No specific sites have been identified at this stage</p>	
<p>Related Sites/Areas</p>	
<p>Proposed third runway at Heathrow Airport</p>	



5.5. OPTION J1

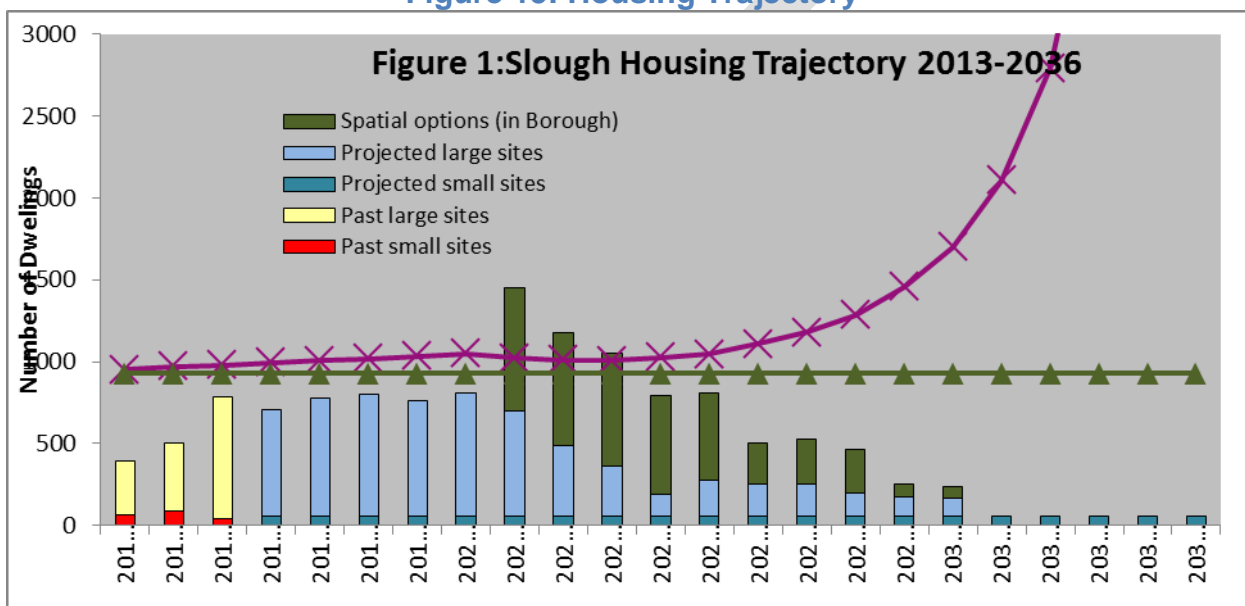
NORTHERN EXPANSION OF SLOUGH (INTO SOUTH BUCKS)

Background

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

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

Figure 15: Housing Trajectory



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

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

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

Proposed Option

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

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

5.5. OPTION J1	NORTHERN EXPANSION OF SLOUGH (INTO SOUTH BUCKS)
<p>It will be important that the proposed development takes place in a sustainable way which means that it has the critical mass that will be necessary to provide facilities and public transport services. The location of Wexham Park hospital within the area is important because this is already a major destination for visitors and employees.</p> <p>Part of the area of search is also close to Langley Railway station which will have the Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) service and could be developed in conjunction with the Option to expand the centre of Langley around the station.</p> <p>The location of any new development will also have to take account of the availability of transport links from Slough. One option would be to develop along the B416 Stoke Road corridor another would be to develop along the A412 Uxbridge Road corridor. Use of Wexham Road would be another option.</p>	
<p>Constraints</p>	
<p>There are a number of major constraints to the development of this Option. These include the normal issues about flooding and drainage, landscape, conservation, ecology and other environmental considerations. It is recognised that some areas have been and are being worked for minerals and some have been subject to landfill operations.</p> <p>There is need to take account of the impact of development upon Burnham Beeches, Stoke Park, Conservation Areas and the high quality landscape and ecological value of the area. The capacity of the road network both within Buckinghamshire and Slough is also a possible constraint to development. This could require the promotion of non-car modes of transport.</p>	
<p>Key Links</p>	
<p>A412 Uxbridge Road</p> <p>B416 Stoke Road</p> <p>Wexham Road</p> <p>Road Network in southern Buckinghamshire</p> <p>Langley Railway station</p> <p>Canal footpath</p>	
<p>Issues</p>	
<p>Clearly the biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.</p> <p>The other major issue is how this Option can be progressed given that it is on land is outside of Slough Borough Council's control. The Council has already made representations to the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan that this area should be considered for development in the form of a "garden suburb" in order to meet local housing needs. It has also made representations under the Duty to Cooperate. These have not yet been considered by the Joint Chiltern South Bucks and Committee. Despite this it has agreed where sites could be released for the Green Belt in its Preferred Options which were the subject of public consultation in October/November 2016. These options did not contain any sites within the area of search for the proposed northern expansion of Slough.</p> <p>Sites within the area of search for the northern expansion have been considered in the Chiltern & South Bucks Part 2 Green Belt Assessment. (http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/planning/greenbeltpart2). This concluded that all of the</p>	

<p>5.5. OPTION J1</p>	<p>NORTHERN EXPANSION OF SLOUGH (INTO SOUTH BUCKS)</p>
<p>sites in this area should remain in the Green Belt.</p> <p>We will continue to promote the option of the northern expansion of Slough through the on-going Duty to Cooperate process and by making representations to the Local Plan. The position is complicated by the fact that the two Local Plans are on different timescales. As a result, if the issue cannot be resolved through the current review of the South Buck/Chiltern Plan, it may be necessary to have a immediate partial review of the South Bucks/Chiltern Local Plan just to consider the proposed “Garden Suburb” which, depending upon timing, could be conjoined with the Inquiry into the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p>The Northern Expansion could contain around 5,000 houses</p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>The area of search is set out in the Map</p>	
<p>Related Sites/Areas</p>	
<p>Any development would have to take account of any proposed development sites in the South Bucks/Chiltern Local Plan. It would also have to take particular account of any development which took place as a result of Options C and H.</p>	

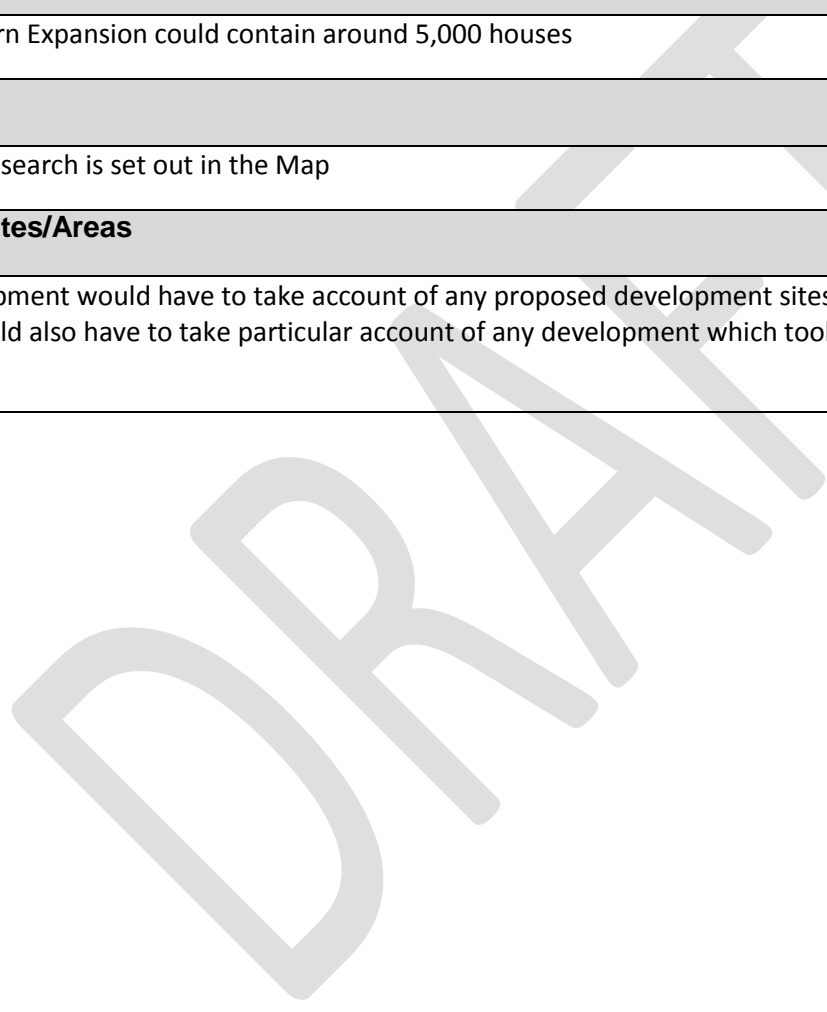
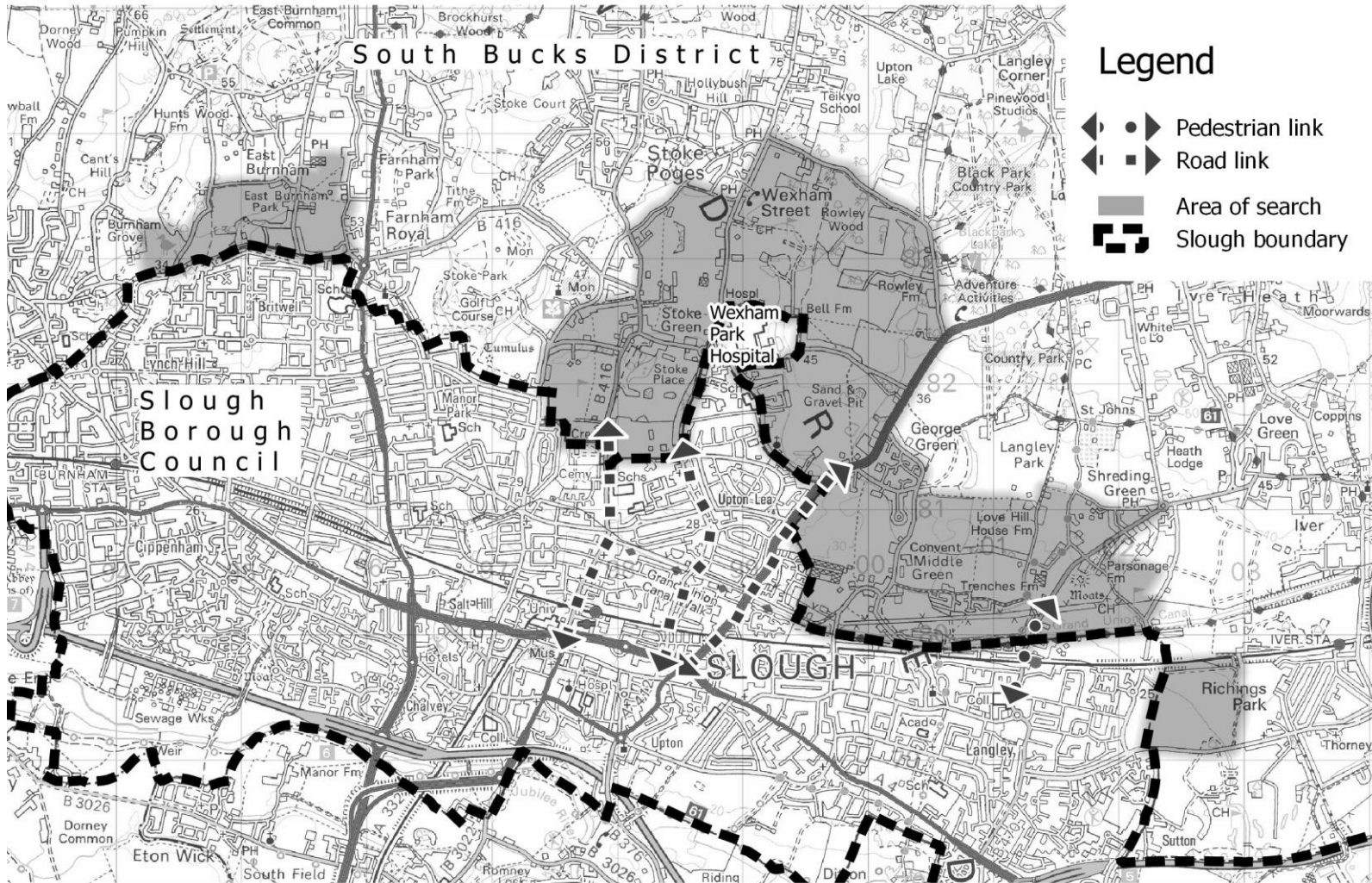


Figure 16: Option J1

Option J1 - Slough Northern Expansion



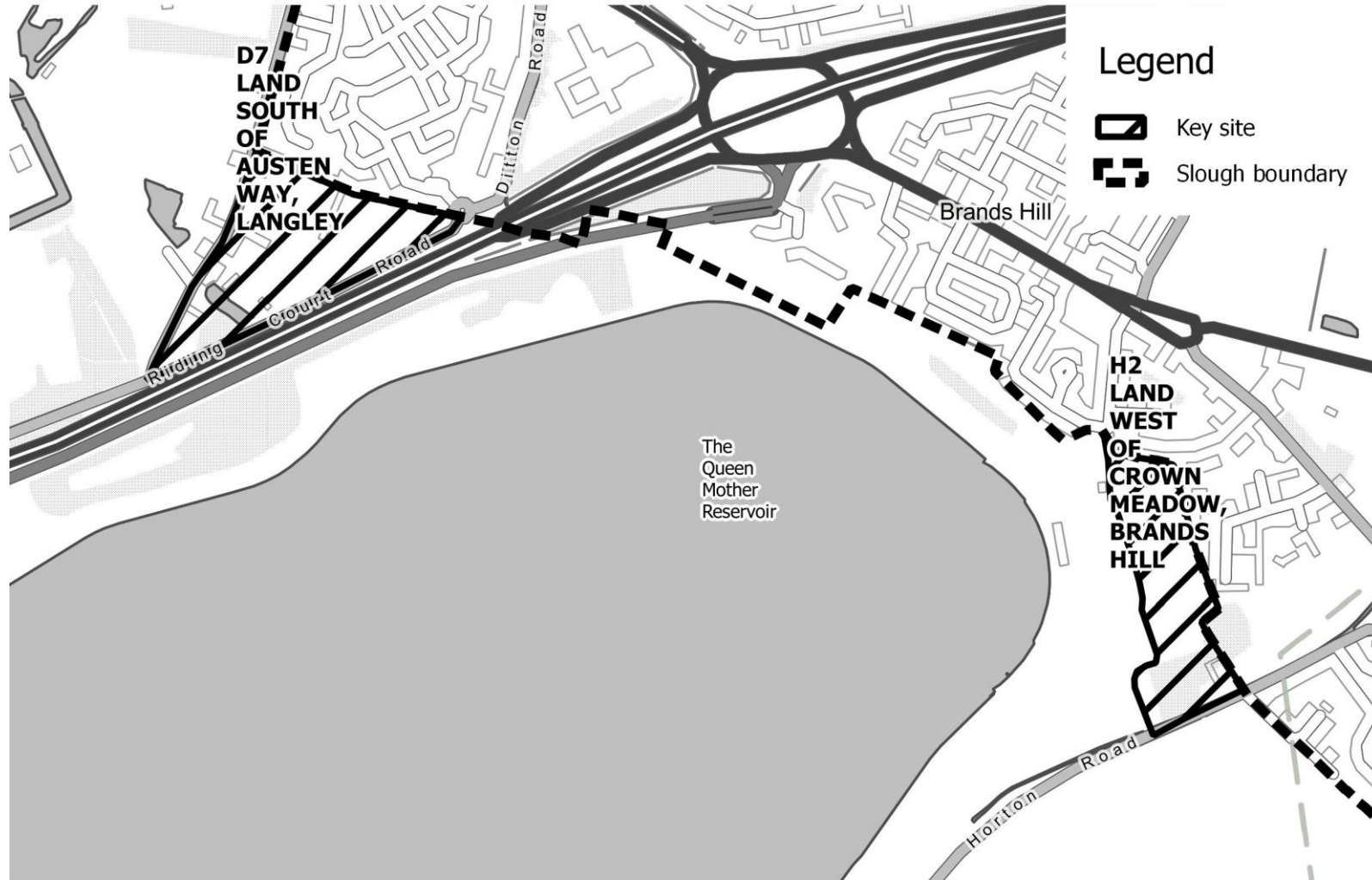
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5.1. OPTION J2	SOUTHERN EXPANSION OF SLOUGH (INTO WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD)
Background	
<p>In addition to considering the northern expansion of Slough in Option J1 above it is necessary to consider whether it is possible to expand the town to the south. The M4 motorway prevents the southern expansion of western half of Slough and the only unconstrained areas of open land that abut the urban area are at Ditton Park in Langley and Brands Hill.</p> <p>Land at Riding Court Farm is currently being worked for gravel extraction. Most of the land at Ditton Park forms part of a Historic Park and Garden and so is not appropriate for development.</p> <p>To the east of this is a parcel of land south of Austen Way which is in the Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This was considered in Part 1 of the Windsor & Maidenhead of the Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014). This concluded that the parcel made a “lower” contribution to meeting the purposes of Green Belt policy. As a result it was brought forward as Site D7 – Land south of Austen Way - for further consideration in the Part 2 Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment (July 2016).</p> <p>Whilst it is recognised that there are some constraints to the development of the site, including noise and air pollution from the M4, it is considered that it should be considered as an area of search for residential development as part of Option J2.</p> <p>Further east there is another small parcel of land in Windsor and Maidenhead Borough between the Queen Mother Reservoir and Brands Hill. This was also considered in the Windsor & Maidenhead of the Edge of Settlement Analysis (January 2014). This concluded that the parcel made “lower” contribution to meeting the purposes of Green Belt policy. As a result it was brought forward as Site H2 – Land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill - for further consideration in the Part 2 Constraints, Opportunities and Delivery Assessment (July 2016).</p> <p>This found that that the site was the subject of some constraints which included flooding on the southern part of the site and was subject to noise and air pollution from the M4 and Heathrow.</p> <p>Nevertheless it is considered that the site should be included as an area of search in Option J2 at this stage.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>The proposed Option would involve investigating a southern expansion of the urban area of Slough by building housing on open land that is in the administrative area of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The areas of search is limited to those parcels of land which adjoin the built up area which have identified by Windsor and Maidenhead as land south of Austen Way, Langley and the land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>Part of the southern section of the land west of Crown Meadow is located within Flood Zone 3a and is at high risk of flooding. Part is also in Flood Zone 2 which has medium risk of flooding. It suffers from noise and air pollution from the M4 and Heathrow Airport.</p> <p>Land south of Austen Way suffers from noise and air pollution from the M4.</p>	
Key Links	
Slough Linear Park	
Issues	
Once again the biggest issue is whether the release of land from the Green Belt can be justified given the importance	

<p>5.1. OPTION J2</p>	<p>SOUTHERN EXPANSION OF SLOUGH (INTO WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD)</p>
<p>that the Government attaches to green Belts and the need for there to be exceptional circumstances to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries through the review of a Local Plan.</p> <p>The sites are also outside of Slough and so cannot be brought forward through the Review of the Slough Local Plan. As a result they will have to be promoted in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan which is currently being prepared. They have not been identified as a possible housing site in any versions of the plan to date and so this will have to be pursued through the Duty to Cooperate process and representations to any consultations on the Plan.</p> <p>Both sites would potentially be affected by the proposed third runway at Heathrow in that they would be directly under the flight path. As a result they may not be suitable for residential development if this goes ahead.</p>	
<p>Capacity</p>	
<p></p>	
<p>Key Sites</p>	
<p>Site H2 – Land west of Crown Meadow, Brands Hill</p> <p>Site D7 – Land south of Austen Way</p>	
<p>Related Sites/Areas</p>	
<p></p>	

Figure 17: Option J2

Option J2 - Slough Southern Expansion



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5.2. OPTION K	BUILD IN OTHER AREAS OUTSIDE OF SLOUGH
Background	
<p>Para 179 of NPPF states that Local planning authorities should work together to meet development needs which cannot wholly be met within their own areas because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of the Framework.</p> <p>The work that we have done so far shows that Slough has both physical and policy constraints which are likely to mean that it cannot meet its housing or employment needs within its boundaries.</p> <p>Option H involves removing one of the main policy constraints to building more houses by proposing to release the remaining open land on the edge of Slough from the Green Belt.</p> <p>Even if all of these sites were to be built upon there is still not enough capacity within the Borough to meet identified needs.</p> <p>Option J1 therefore involves having a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks in the form of a new “Garden Suburb” and Option J2 involves a small southern expansion of the built up area of Slough into Windsor and Maidenhead. All of this land is in the Green Belt and so would involve overcoming the clear policy objection set out in the NPPF.</p> <p>Para 47 states that Local Plans should ensure that their Local Plan meets the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the Housing Market Area as far is consistent with the policies in the Framework. As a result having considered the expansion of Slough it is necessary to look elsewhere in the Housing Market Area which, for the purposes of this exercise can be considered to be the rest of South Bucks and the rest of Windsor & Maidenhead.</p> <p>It is then necessary to see whether other nearby Authorities could accommodate any of Slough’s unmet need.</p>	
Proposed Option	
<p>This option would involve firstly asking authorities in the Eastern Berks and South Bucks Housing Market Area whether they can accommodate any un met housing need in addition to the urban expansions of Slough proposed in Options J1 and J2.</p> <p>The Option also involves asking all other authorities in the vicinity, including those in the Western Berkshire HMA, whether they could accommodate some of Slough’s unmet housing needs.</p>	
Constraints	
<p>All of the adacent authorities are likely to be constrained in physical or policy terms to some extent which will make it difficult for them to identify additional land for housing.</p> <p>Providing housing accommodation in locations which are more remote from where the need arises is also likely to be less sustainable if it results in increased travel.</p>	
Key Links	
Issues	
Clearly this Option depends upon obtaining the cooperation and agreement of an adjacent authority or authorities	

5.2. OPTION K	BUILD IN OTHER AREAS OUTSIDE OF SLOUGH
<p>that they are prepared to build additional houses to meet some of Slough’s unmet need..</p> <p>Aylesbury Vale’s agreement to take some of the unmet housing needs from Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe show that it is possible to redistribute housing between areas using the Duty to Cooperate.</p> <p>Obtaining agreement that some of Slough’s unmet need could be met elsewhere within the Housing Market Area is complicated by the fact that Chiltern and South Bucks Councils do not agree that South Bucks District is within the same Housing Market Area as Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead. This is because the latest study by ORS Atkins concluded that, as a result of the decision to prepare a joint plan for Chiltern and South Bucks which were previously in separate HMAs, the new “best fit” is to include them in the Central Buckinghamshire HMA with Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe. The report made it clear however that these “best fit” groupings do not change the actual geography of the functional housing market areas that have been identified – they simply provide a pragmatic arrangement for the purposes of establishing the evidence required ...”</p> <p>As a result this should not preclude considering this Option of meeting some of Slough’s unmet needs within South Bucks. The Council made representations to the consultation on the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan that it should develop a strategic planning option which included selective growth around Taplow and Iver stations. The Green Belt Preferred Options consultation document includes sites at Iver and so further development around these stations could be considered.</p> <p>The situation with London is also complicated by the fact that it has been decided that for plan making purposes the whole of London is a single Housing Market Area. Once again this should not prevent cross boundary discussions taking place.</p> <p>Studies have shown that there is a significant link between the various Berkshire authorities. In the past central Berkshire has been the growth area for the County because of Green Belt constraints in the east and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west.</p> <p>The four Councils which form the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area are currently working together to agree a strategy for the area which will feed into their individual Local Plans. It will be necessary to engage with these authorities through the Duty to Cooperate to see if they have the capacity to accommodate some of Slough’s unmet housing need.</p> <p>We will also have to talk to any other Council in the vicinity to see if it has any additional housing capacity.</p>	
Capacity	
Key Sites	
No sites or locations have been identified at this stage.	
Related Sites/Areas	

6. Section E: Questions

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

If not, where should new housing go?

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

If not, what type of housing would you want?

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

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

4. Do you agree that Slough Town Centre should be revitalised as a Commercial, leisure and Retail Centre?

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

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

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

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

If not, what should our approach to Heathrow be?

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

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

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

If not, how do you think we could improve the image of Slough?

9. Which Spatial Options do you support?

10. Which Spatial Options do you object to and why?

11. Any other comments?

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Amir Salarkia. Interim Housing Regulation Team Manager
Tel No: (01753) 875540

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Zaffar Ajaib, Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal

PART I
NON-KEY DECISION

TACKLING EMPTY PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Cabinet's approval to take proactive and effective enforcement actions to deal with the long term empty/ derelict properties This is to improve conditions in the private rented sector and thereby improving residential neighbourhoods in Slough.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the Council's Housing Regulation Team will use all available powers including, but not limited to, Compulsory Purchase Powers, Part 4 of the Housing Act 2004 and the Relevant Town & Planning Act 1990 to bring long term empty derelict properties back into use .
- (b) That The CPO report in Part II of this agenda, which is seeking approval to use Compulsory Purchase Power to deal with seven long term empty properties, be noted.

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

- 3.1 The importance of an increase in supply of Decent Homes is linked to improved communities, reducing crime, improving employment opportunities and educational achievement¹.
- 3.2 The Public Health Outcome Framework has established a wider deterrent of health under 4 domains. Three out the four domains are linked to housing and the impact of poor housing on the society considering its effect on the occupiers. Any steps that improve housing conditions would directly benefit the health and wellbeing of individuals, thus society as a whole. By bringing these long term empty properties back into residential use, not only will we increase the supply of good quality housing, through regeneration of derelict / abandoned sites, but we will remove the blight, deprivation and, neglect from the effected neighbourhoods. This will in turn help to

¹ Department of Health : Improving outcomes and supporting transparency. Part1A: A public health outcomes frame for England , 2013- 2016

improve community cohesion, bring a feel good factor and overall will create healthier community.

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

3a.1 Increasingly, housing and physical environment have been recognised as the key determinant of health and wellbeing, educational attainment and social mobility. The British Research Establishment (BRE) had developed a costs calculator^[1] which clearly and accurately calculates financial savings to health by improving housing conditions. This is in addition to the overall benefits to social care, community cohesion through social mobility and environmental improvements.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

3b.1 This approach is in line with the objectives set out in the Slough Borough's 5 Year Plan which sets out a clear direction and action plan to improve Slough as a place to work and live, these include:.

- Changing, retaining and growing
- Enabling and preventing
- Using resources wisely

By tackling long term empty properties we will:

- improve the local environment and neighbourhood
- maximise existing housing resources
- improve the existing built environment
- reduce vandalism and associated anti-social behaviour
- tackle growing housing need by increasing housing provision and expanding the housing options available
- regenerate affected areas and reduce the detrimental effect these properties have on the housing market and neighboring properties..
- deal with residents' concerns and the impact of an empty property on local residents

3b.2 Improving conditions of the private rented sector is in line with objective two and four of Slough's Five Year Plan

- **Outcome 2:** *There will be more homes in the Borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough*
Key Action- *Higher quality private rented sector housing will be a valued housing option and will reduce long term health problems*
Key Action- Prevent *homelessness where possible through early Intervention and using a range of housing options*
- **Outcome 4:** *Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley area*
Key Action - *Build on success in tackling anti-social behaviour*

^[1] Housing Health Cost Calculator

Quantifying and demonstrating the health-cost benefits of housing improvements

4. Other Implications

a) Financial

4a.1 The staff resource costs in relation to dealing with the current batch of CPOs and carrying out the proposed feasibility study for introducing a Registration Scheme has been secured from the Capital Transformation Fund.

5.0 Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal: There are always risks associated with any enforcement action but the benefits of sending a strong message of “zero tolerance” in respect of empty properties far out weights any potential risk	We will be using the right expertise. Knowledge and experience staff to minimise any risks.	To bring these long term properties back into occupation.
Property: Reduction in risks of damage to the neighbouring properties improving the overall quality of housing	This will be done in accordance with regulation and use of experts	As above
Human Rights: Minimum risks. We ensure compliance with Article 1 of EU see details below.	As above row 1	As above
Health and Safety: N/A	None	As above
Employment Issues; None	None	None
Equalities Issues: Minimum risks	Use of expert to ensure compliance	As above
Community Support: Communities are in full support and have been asking the Council to take these actions	Ensure the Council follow the process to completion	
Communications: We need to reassure communities we are taking action and send a message to Landlords not to keep homes empty.	To work with Customer Service or Corporate Comms to develop an effective communication strategy	To reach owners of empty properties and inform them of the Council’s initiatives.

Community Safety: Taking action will improve community safety	Ensure we follow the process until satisfactory resolution.	As above
Financial		
Timetable for delivery: This is a complex and protracted process and depends on a number of factors	Use of experts and dedicated staff resources to ensure satisfactory and timely conclusion	
Project Capacity: N/A		
Other: None	None	

6. Legal Implications

a) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

6a The Regulations will be enforced in line with the code of guidance, Council's Enforcement Policy and the code of conduct which conforms to the Human Rights Act.

(b) Equalities Impact Assessment

6b.1 The Council has had and will have due regard to its Equalities Duties and in particular with respect to its duties arising pursuant to the Equality Act 2010, section 149. As such, the Council considers that there is no need for an Equalities Impact Assessment to be carried out and that in approving this proposal/policy the Council will be acting in compliance with its duties.

7. Supporting Information

7.1 As detailed in Slough's draft Housing Strategy; the private sector is the most important source of housing for our residents in Slough Borough. Improving the condition of Private Rented Sector is therefore one of the Council's key priorities

We aim to adopt a zero tolerance approach to empty residential properties that are left empty and abandoned in a derelict state. The negative impact of such properties is well documented as well as being a waste of valuable housing resources. According to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors an empty property will reduce the value of neighbouring properties by more than 18%. The Housing Regulation Team are currently dealing with 14 sites, seven of which are at an advanced stage of a Compulsory Purchase Order. A proposal to initiate 7 CPOs for an item on the confidential part of this agenda. This will demonstrate that the council is determined to use all available powers to improve the housing in Slough across all tenures. The draft Housing Strategy sets out a number of ways in which it is intended to do this:

- using all available powers to bring empty properties back into residential use
- undertaking a feasibility study for introducing a borough wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive out Rogue/Criminal Landlords from Slough
- undertaking rigorous and robust enforcement action against known rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.

- working pro-actively to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour using all available legislations, working with landlords, tenants and partners
- supporting responsible landlords who take their responsibility seriously and work with them to become professional and grow their business to help the Council to achieve its objective of “provision for good quality and affordable housing”.
- encouraging residents to report empty or rented properties that have a negative impact on the neighbourhood and take a timely and effective action.
- working with all partner agencies to tackle the problem of illegally-occupied outbuildings through a range of approaches.

8. Comments of Other Committees

None

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposals in this report to bring empty properties back into use are fully in line with Slough’s Five Year Plan and the new draft Housing Strategy. They will contribute to ensuring that Slough has good quality, affordable private sector housing which meets the needs of our residents, improving health, wellbeing, social mobility and makes Slough a thriving place to live and work.

10. Appendices Attached

None

11. Background Papers

None

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Roger Parkin, Acting Chief Executive
Nick Vat, Digital Transformation Manager

(For all enquiries) (01753) 87 5207

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Mohammed Sharif
Commissioner for Digital Transformation and Customer Care.

PART I
KEY DECISION**DIGITAL AND CUSTOMER TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME****1. Purpose of Report**

This report has been produced to bring together and inform Members of key elements of the work of the Digital Transformation Define Phase that was completed between January and September 2016 (the full programme aims to achieve several outcomes, many but not all of which are covered in this paper (see Section 5.15)). It represents key elements of the case for change for Slough Borough Council to truly align with customer¹ needs, move towards a more commercial model and embrace the digital age in order to maximise customer outcomes and revenue, significantly reduce costs and eliminate waste whilst continuing to meet statutory obligations. The programme is now moving into a Design Phase which will engage the whole Council and needs both support and investment.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that Officers be instructed (subject to Capital Strategy Board approval) to commence the recruitment of the Programme Team and the Design Phase of the Digital and Customer Transformation Programme at an estimated cost of £625k. This is an invest-to-save bid for pump-prime funding to support delivering the outcomes of the 5-year plan and Revenue savings in the range of 18% to 35%.

¹ In the public sector, the term 'customer' can be divisive as it is usually associated with payment in exchange for products or services. Some organisations use more neutral and inclusive terms such as patient, service user, citizen or stakeholder – none of which has proven to be universally representative and engaging of the ultimate beneficiaries of public services. The term 'customer' is gaining currency though and so we shall use this in SBC. For the purposes of this paper, 'customers' include every person and organisation that consumes the Council and the city's resources either directly or indirectly through their influence: citizens, businesses, voluntary and other organisations, visitors, commuters through, journalists, staff, suppliers and partners of SBC. They also include the customers of our customers, for example those with influential social connections.

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

3.1. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Customer and digital capabilities are enablers to the achievement of all the priorities and cross-cutting themes in the SJWS.

3.2. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The primary Five Year Plan outcome that the proposal will help to deliver is:

- The Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation.

Apart from digital advancement being an outcome in its own right, it has been identified to varying degrees as a requirement to support attainment of all of the other seven outcomes.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

The Programme Team for the Design Phase will cost an estimated £625k over the period December 2016 to June 2017. It is proposed to capitalise these costs, under recent government guidance, as this programme will result in the transformation of services and the achievement of savings. This Design Phase will define that transformation and identify the first tranche of those savings. There will be no revenue costs of this activity.

The Design Phase will also map out the next steps and investment requirements for the first tranche of Implementation Phase activities. The Design Phase will include the procurement of core digital solutions to enable service transformation and in particular channel shift. A separate bid will be made for Capital funding for those digital solutions. These will have revenue implications which will be included in the bid.

The Design Phase will produce a reasonable estimate of the financial benefits which could be delivered by the programme. Given the achievements of other Local Authorities that have embarked on similar programmes, it is conceivable that this could be in the range of 18% to 35% (£18m to £35m of the current £100m Revenue Budget). Some of these savings have already been 'banked' in current business plans – these and additional savings will be identified particularly to ensure there is no double counting. Some of these savings will be in the form of staff reductions delivered through reduction in interim and agency staff, deletion of vacant posts and natural attrition.

Anticipated Benefits

- 4.1. Activities of the programme will help the Council to deliver its strategic, operational and financial targets. The benefits of improved customer experience and outcomes, savings and income will be achieved across the Council².
- 4.2. The key **customer benefits** are improved customer outcome attainment and improved customer experience:
- i) The Council's improved understanding of customers will lead to improved commissioning and service redesign around, and alignment with, customer needs.
 - ii) The Council will draw on the data created through digital transactions to ensure customers receive more personalised and tailored services. In some cases, services may be able to intervene earlier to stop problems escalating.
 - iii) Information about Council services will be easier to access and will be better targeted at people based on an understanding of their interests, needs and situation.
 - iv) Community networks will put people in touch locally, allowing them to support each other, share information and contribute to their community.
 - v) The Council's digital offer will be fully mobile accessible, providing 24/7 access on the move.
 - vi) A new single customer portal will provide radical improvements to how customers access services. The vast majority of service users will report issues and request, book and pay for services online and receive up to the minute alerts about how their transaction is being addressed. This capability will include opportunities for customers to manage their personal

Sidebar 1

Bringing the benefits to life

Adopting the principles and approaches of this programme, the Planning Service is a live example of the benefits it will bring across the whole organisation.

Engagement with customers revealed that current performance is poor and inconsistent.

Customers

Customers often feel frustrated and angry as a result of an application process which is difficult and slow, an absence of information, a lack of communication and inadequate IT systems.

Customer experience will be consistently excellent, with no frustration and anger.

Staff

Staff members are stressed and morale is low because of excessive workloads and negative interactions with customers caused by an inability to recruit, double-keying data entry and frustration at being unable to communicate effectively.

Recruitment won't be a problem, and staff members will 'look forward to Mondays'.

Slough Borough Council and Slough

Poor customer experience is believed to be compromising development and investment in Slough. Non-value-adding activities are resulting in unnecessary Revenue expenditure. This programme will lead to efficiency savings enabling officers to refocus on fee earning activities.

² Sidebar 1 is a local example which brings the benefits to life.

information in a way that ensures they only need to provide information once (including changes in circumstances), and that they have an opportunity to contribute their experience and other relevant contextual information directly into case records.

vii) All services will build in assistance to ensure we do not create access problems that are not apparent currently.

- 4.3. These benefits will be explored further and set in context in a series of 'customer journeys' (an example is provided in Appendix C). These will be developed to provide an indication of what the customer programme could mean for customers in the future by highlighting examples of how key aspects of processes might change (for example through the introduction of online payments or appointments booking, the introduction of risk verified assessments, integration of services, or improvements to multi-agency working across complex families, localities and health).
- 4.4. The programme will also contribute to the '**Open for Business**' agenda – for example, businesses in Slough and surrounding region will benefit (through their online business account) from improved opportunities to manage their business rates or to access regulatory services (including booking inspections or applying for licenses). Our proposed approach to targeting information and supporting community self-support via a special website could also be drawn on, for example to promote peer-to-peer business support or improve the timelines and dissemination of destination marketing or events information.
- 4.5. There are numerous **benefits for the Council** (and its partners / contractors):
- i) Corporate transformation (defining, and enabling our approach to, corporate transformation).
 - ii) Cost avoidance (demand forecasting): Better linking together of data intelligence will provide opportunities to improve decision making, for example by predicting future demand for services. This, in return, will allow the organisation to prepare its response and invest, for example, in staff development or new systems and processes.
 - iii) Cost avoidance (improved customer satisfaction): Improved customer satisfaction will reduce contacts and complaints.
 - iv) Cost avoidance (service and back office process efficiency): Customer journeys will be seamless, reducing transactions, contacts, hand-offs, visits which customers make/receive and other unnecessary actions.
 - v) Cost avoidance (channel shift): Customer engagement will shift to channels that are cheaper to support and run.

- vi) Cost avoidance (reduced service demand): Customers will better understand what we provide, have more realistic expectations and more easily find other service providers.
- vii) Cost avoidance (improved staff satisfaction and productivity): Business processes will be improved, increasing the time spent on value-adding activities (reduced avoidable contacts, administration, and rework).
- viii) Cost avoidance (reduced sickness absence): Staff will be able to work in agile (mobile and flexible) ways and develop a better work-life balance.
- ix) Cost avoidance (reduced estate): Staff will be able to work efficiently and effectively from locations outside the office, thereby reducing demand for Council owned desk and parking space.
- x) Income generation (existing revenue streams): Increased customer satisfaction will result in loyalty and advocacy (which equate to demand).
- xi) Income generation (new revenue streams): Improved understanding of customers will lead to idea generation (identifying new opportunities) and innovation (creating new solutions).
- xii) Continuous improvement (ongoing benefit generation): Fundamental changes in operating model, process, culture and systems will enable the Council to relentlessly evolve and improve the customer experience and continuously derive maximum value from services. New solutions, opening up data, integrating technologies, and replacing more traditional digital communications such as the Intranet and email will make the Council's operation and culture more open and collaborative and facilitate greater self-service and control. Digital assistance will help the workforce adapt to and adopt new digital technologies, increasing the levels of confidence and skills in the Council.

4.6. Metrics will be defined by the programme and data analysis and benchmarking will be undertaken during the programme as and when required.

Anticipated Investment Needs

4.7. At its core, this programme will propose significant investment in a range of improved digital technologies, solutions and associated resource to improve people (skills), processes and policies, and to change culture and behaviours. Together, these investments create new customer and digital capabilities which lead to a series of benefits for customers and the Council.

4.8. The Design Phase requires immediate investment for the Programme Team and arvato resources required – the details are set out in section 5 (Design Phase enablement).

4.9. Detailed cost projections for the Implementation Phase of the programme will be prepared by the Programme Team. A range of variables are likely to be built into the

cost models – these will vary depending on a range of factors that will be identified in the Implementation Plan, for example:

- i) The blend of internal and external resources used.
- ii) Recognition of the demands on internal services from business as usual and other transformational projects.
- iii) The complexity, in practice, of system integrations and associated service redesigns.
- iv) The scope and phasing of the programme (which systems and services are incorporated into the new digital operating model).
- v) The quality of technical solutions acquired and of the design of user interfaces.
- vi) The opportunities within and the impact on our existing contract with arvato.

4.10. We will propose that funding provision be made for the whole Digital and Customer Programme rather than be disaggregated across different technical aspects of the work. This will aid the necessary pace of delivery and acknowledge that the benefits can only be delivered as a set. We must make provision to deliver the whole package of improvements in order to unlock the value of each independent part. In this way, the Council will invest in the delivery of key benefits for customers and staff, and it is against the timely delivery of these benefits that value for money and the overall success of the programme must be judged. Measures will be taken to ensure the programme delivers within the overall agreed funding envelope, and these measures will be the subject of appropriate audit and scrutiny.

4.11. We will propose that investment needs to yield the maximum value for Slough and will ask Officers, whilst taking an appropriate approach to procurement and considering the desired delivery timescales, to ensure every opportunity is taken both to support local and regional businesses and to ensure opportunities are maximised to improve skills and competencies across the Council's workforce in ways that lead to a tangible and lasting improvement in our customer and digital capability as an organisation.

Other financial implications

4.12. Details of these implications will be identified during the Design Phase of the programme, but we anticipate implications most significantly on our arvato contract and possibly on other contracts we may have for IT services.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Contract Management – the arvato work programme will need to be altered.	Information Governance Board to engage key stakeholders in re-setting priorities.	Stop initiatives which will be replaced by better initiatives emerging from this programme.
Legal – the current arvato contract cannot be re-negotiated to enable delivery of our ambitions.	Begin exploring opportunities at the start of the Design Phase.	Identify opportunities for solution development which will benefit arvato and the Council.
Employment Issues – the future operating model will have a number of workforce implications primarily related to organisational and job redesign, behaviour and culture change and workforce reductions; details will begin to emerge during the Design Phase which could cause some staff to become unsettled.	Employee engagement will be a key activity of the Design Phase.	Begin mind-set shifts that will be required to deliver the benefits of the programme.
Equalities Issues – solutions could be designed that are not suitable for particular customers.	Appropriate customer representatives will be involved in solution design.	N/A
Communications (customers) – engagement with customers may raise expectations that cannot be met.	Establish contextual messages to manage expectations.	Reduce existing over-expectations.
Financial – double counting of benefits which have already been identified in other Outcome areas.	Develop a benefits framework that refers to all existing business plans.	Identify business plans with under-stated benefits already identified in relation to digital enablement.

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Financial – the £625k resource requirements for the Design Phase are estimates and have not been tested in the market. It may be that more temporary resources are required and that some of these costs are currently understated.	The Finance team will work closely with the project team to update these requirements and costs as further information is received.	N/A
Financial – there is additional capital investment required, the details have still to be determined but are likely to be £2m plus.	A submission will be made for consideration under the capital programme.	N/A
Timetable for delivery – the programme will be competing for resources as there are many other priorities across the Council.	Engage the PMO in Portfolio Management.	N/A
Project Capacity – arvato are unable to commit the resources required to complete the solutions design in the timescales required.	Engage arvato as a key partner in the programme.	N/A
Project Capacity – IT is unable to recruit Business Analysts (several attempts have already been made).	Restart the recruitment process, adding market supplements.	N/A
Project Capacity – use of internal staff either reduces their performance of ‘day jobs’ or stops them from engaging in this programme as required.	Cabinet and CMT to set and clarify corporate priorities. Budget to backfill.	Ask staff to think very carefully about their ‘day jobs’ – evaluating what they do regarding its customer value – and reset their own work accordingly.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are not considered to be any Human Rights Act implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An EIA will be done as part of the Design Phase.

5. Supporting Information

SBC needs a customer-led Digital Transformation Programme

- 5.1. Customers are taking control, they are increasingly capable with digital tools, their expectations are increasing, and they want consistent experiences. They don't want to experience the organisational silos and disconnects that can make life so exhausting, they see an organisation as a whole and they also want to be seen as a whole. They want to be understood so that their needs (see sidebar 2) are met and they want their engagements to be easy and their experiences to be enjoyable (where appropriate of course).
- 5.2. Customer-centric organisations enjoy demonstrable benefits including increased customer satisfaction, income growth and reduction in waste. In the social context of local government, customer satisfaction means people have better lives, and in the business context customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty which means business growth. Of course all organisations seek to reduce waste so that costs are reduced and all resources are used for maximum benefit.
- 5.3. Customer-centric places are places where people and businesses want to be because in those places their needs are met and going about their activities is both easy and enjoyable. In Slough this is both desirable for existing customers and for attracting new customers.
- 5.4. Whilst this seems a very bland way to put it, a summary of all the stated transformation aspirations of SBC is to maximise customer outcomes and revenue and eliminate waste whilst meeting statutory obligations. The way to do this is to achieve a state of perfect alignment between the organisation, our customers and staff³. This state of alignment could be described as a state of hyper customer-centricity. It is a state in which our value proposition (our brand and the products and services we provide) is absolutely

Sidebar 2

Needs vs Wants

In the context of customer alignment, this distinction is not as clear as it may first seem – it is important to understand the distinction.

A 'need' is a must have (essential), and a 'want' is a nice to have (not essential).

To survive, all human beings have basic needs for food and water, shelter and health. Anything else could be considered a 'want'. However, to meet these basic needs, it is essential to fulfil other higher-level needs, such as the need for money (so having more money may be a need, not a want).

Where the achievement of specific other outcomes (not survival-related) is in focus, there will be basic needs which must be fulfilled to achieve those. For example, where the outcome is to have an extended house a basic need will be to have Planning approval.

Depending on circumstances, different customers will have different basic needs to achieve the same outcome. For example, to pay their Council Tax online, customers without Broadband may need Internet access in a local community facility whereas customers with Broadband would not.

³ Sidebar 3 highlights a common objection in the public sector and the reasons why this objection is unfounded. Read more at <https://www.peregrineleadership.com/files/CustomerServiceGovernment.pdf>

clear, we truly understand the needs of our customers in relation to the value proposition, and we focus all of our resources only on those needs.

- 5.5. Customer alignment is not an idea or vague concept, it is a mission; a strategy, mind-set and culture, people and data that generates the most and longest lasting value.

Our customer capability is low

- 5.6. Anecdote suggests that we have lost touch with many of our customers who would benefit from a much better understanding of their needs (which do change over time) and services that are designed and constantly adapted around those needs.

- 5.7. Using a customer capability assessment tool which assesses the nine core building blocks of customer capability, our own light-touch assessment⁴ of our customer capabilities reveals that we have plenty of room for improvement:

- i) *Customer Vision*: Our value proposition is not clear, our brand is not clear and not valued by customers, the desired customer experience is not clear, leadership does not promote the value proposition, and employees are not motivated by it.
- ii) *Customer Strategy*: We do not have a coherent customer strategy which: targets, acquires, develops and retains valuable customers; manages customer expectations and where appropriate signposts customers to partners; customises products, pricing, communication and channels; services customer management and contact; and drives customer capability and infrastructure development.

In the public sector, customers have no choice but to use our services, so why bother?

The short answer:

- Delivering on the needs of customers is why local authorities exist – it's a statutory requirement and morally appropriate;
- A customer-centric whole system model reduces demand on and defers entry into the formal system; and
- A customer-centric model is far more efficient.

Customer-centric public sector organisations demonstrate four strengths:

1. Understand the customer – clarity about who customers are, how they are defined, their interests, needs and behaviours *and what the organisation wants to do for / with them*.
2. Build operations around the customer – ensuring that the basic organisation building blocks (strategy, performance, systems, processes, structure and behaviours) focus on delivering desired customer objectives.
3. Manage stakeholder relationships – making it important to manage relationships openly and communicate effectively.
4. Use customer understanding to deliver target outcomes – exploiting the investment in the areas above to improve performance against objectives and maximise efficiency.

⁴ The Design Phase of this programme will explore our alignment in more detail, evaluating the extent to which this initial analysis is true – establishing our aspiration, current strengths and weaknesses, and the gap we wish to close.

- iii) *Customer Experience*: A basic customer experience is not designed for each customer segment, and where it is, that experience is not delivered consistently across all channels. Customer feedback does not really shape customer experience design and customer perceptions do not match our customer vision.
- iv) *Staff Involvement*: Staff members are not treated like a key customer asset. They are not listened to, without pre-conceptions, to inform customer strategy and commissioning. They are not given a license to redesign ways of working, and are not trusted to be brilliant with customers.
- v) *Organisation Alignment*: Customer focus is not pervasive across the organisation. It is not reflected in the organisation structure and customer-facing processes, not everybody understands their role (who to interact with and how), and customer focus is not extended into the back office and suppliers.
- vi) *Customer Processes*: We are not clear which processes matter most to customers. Our processes do not support our customer strategy and organisation objectives. Processes are fragmented and customer journeys are not seamless (for example, there are lots of handoffs).
- vii) *Customer Information*: Customer information does not drive effective customer interaction. We do not source, maintain and leverage customer information assets. Operational and analytical systems are not or are only loosely integrated. Customer information does not drive more desirable customer relationships.
- viii) *Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Technology*: Technology does not seamlessly enable customer alignment. CRM technology is not integrated across the organisation and supply chain and interfaces do not meet our customer strategy requirements.
- ix) *Customer Metrics*: We do not monitor the effectiveness of our customer strategy. We have not set and do not monitor measurable customer objectives at all levels. Customer metrics are not linked to corporate goals and we do not fine-tune the customer strategy with confidence that we're doing the right things.

5.8. Whilst this does not fully explain our current capability, it is interesting to note that in recent years we have outsourced customer services, losing an in-house function and a senior customer lead.

We are ‘digitally immature’

5.9. There have been significant IT infrastructure and desktop technology improvements delivered by arvato in recent years, but our digital maturity is still low – around 3 or 4 on the European Digital Capability Framework below:

1. Digital is at the heart of policy and strategy. Services are digital by default. Digital culture is strong: agile, user-centred, innovative and responsive.
2. Senior management have made significant progress in delivering the vision and plan, implementing new capability and trialling it successfully by re-engineering a range of services to be digital by default.
3. Senior management in place with a remit to set targets, develop over-arching vision and plan, and develop necessary capability and culture. Digital is seen as a key transformation and advocacy is strong at key parts of the organisation.
4. Some digital services, but often of limited quality. Digital teams in place but tend to be silo'd in business units or service/programme teams and have limited budget and remit. Senior (board level) digital management not in place.
5. No awareness of digital capability, no resources allocated, no digital strategy, plan or metrics, no understanding of best practice, no digital services.

Our customers are ready for digital

- 5.10. Independently provided geo-demographic data has helped us to better understand the residents of Slough and their readiness for adopting digital channels of engagement.
- 5.11. Up to 97% of the adult population can use digital channels, 2% are unwilling or incapable, and 21% will need assistance to move to digital channels⁵.
- 5.12. Whilst this analysis will be done in more detail (in particular to include our own data) in the Design Phase, it is safe to say that Slough residents are definitely ready for a digital SBC.

We need to think and operate differently in order to deliver this transformation

- 5.13. Digital transformation is uniquely challenging. It requires from all key stakeholders, a strong belief in and commitment to a set of guiding principles. It is about transformation and thus encompasses using customer insight to define a vision of the future and fundamentally changing customer journey, business processes, staff capability, culture and behaviour, management systems and infrastructure. It touches every function and business unit. It demands the rapid development of new skills and investments that are very different from business as usual. It requires “hard wiring” digital into the organisation’s structures, processes, systems and incentives. There is no blueprint for

⁵ Further details of this analysis are set out in Appendix A.

success. It includes managing and verifying a multiplicity of digital identities. It carries the threat of heavy fines and public criticism from data breaches.

Progress to-date

5.14. We have agreed a **digital vision**⁶ for Slough and the Council. The vision is of:

Slough, a leading digital city which is visionary, customer-centric, digital, open and collaborative; and

Slough Borough Council, a leading digital council which is visionary, digitally savvy, obsessed with the customer, curious and innovative, digital and enabling, open and collaborative, and mobile and flexible.

- 5.15. We have identified a full **programme** for delivering the vision and defined high-priority elements (visionary, obsessed with the customer, curious and innovative (excluding some data capabilities), and mobile and flexible) which are covered by this paper. As appropriate, separate programmes and projects are being or will be defined for digital city, curious and innovative (data capabilities), digital and enabling, and open and collaborative.
- 5.16. We have agreed **guiding principles** which will steer decision-making, enabling us to stay on track towards achieving the vision. These should now inform departmental and service decision-making when considering all forms of change (digital or otherwise) and should also inform the procurement of contracts for the supply of services by outside organisations.
- 5.17. We have defined a **high-level proposed future operating model with digital building blocks**⁷. Customers are at the heart of the model. We will develop key customer and agile working capabilities to ensure that the model is delivered and future-proofed. Crucially, we will align our organisation and our supplier organisations which provide front-line services, with the needs of customers. This will necessitate changes to the Council's operating model, culture and behaviours.
- 5.18. We have organised the programme around the key outcomes in the vision and identified key tranches of programme activity that will enable us to progressively develop and grow our digital capabilities. Whilst work to define all elements of the programme is progressing, the primary focus at this time is on our customer and mobile and flexible capability – we are now at the end of the Define Phase of the Customer and Mobile and Flexible programmes.
- 5.19. Working with arvato, we have identified the **base digital solutions** (Customer Portal, CRM and customer Business Intelligence tools) which will enable us to make a high impact start to our journey, are supplied by an organisation that will work with us in the right way, and comply with our over-arching digital guiding principles. We have engaged

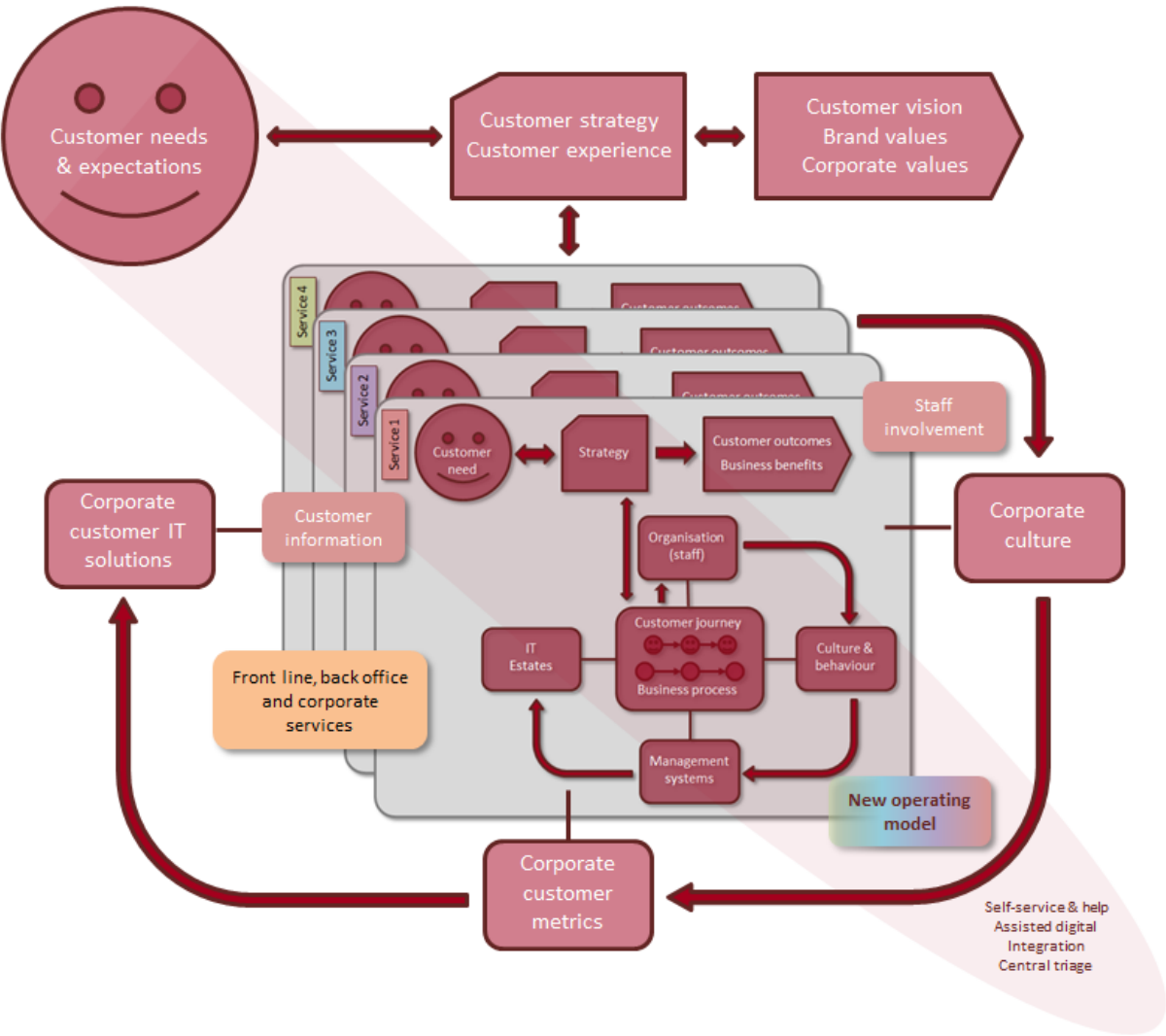
⁶ The full vision statement is set out in Appendix B.

⁷ The proposed customer-centric future operating model with digital solutions is set out in Appendix C.

with the Procurement team and been advised that these solutions can be purchased on our behalf by arvato. It should be noted that although the supplier mentioned above has Website capabilities to deliver our Self Help proposition, we are yet to decide exactly how we'd like to proceed with the Website. There are options which will be evaluated at a later date.

5.20. We have established a **transformation approach** which is depicted in Figure 1. The underlying principle is that we will adopt a top-down and bottom-up approach – at corporate level, understanding customer-needs and expectations regarding the whole Council and developing our corporate customer vision, strategy, culture, metrics and digital solutions which will be fed as a suite of design principles into or enable service specific transformations. At service level we will understand front-line and back-office service-specific customer needs and develop service-level strategies and changes which may include the integration of services across current organisation silos. Staff will be fully involved in the transformation journey.

Figure 1: Transformation approach



Next steps

- 5.21. We are now entering a Design Phase with particular focus on developing our customer and mobile and flexible (agile) working capabilities. The Design Phase will run for a period of 6 months from November 2016⁸. It will comprise the primary activities set out below.
- 5.22. *Establish governance*: We will establish the governance arrangements required for the Design Phase.
- 5.23. *Conduct customer capability assessment*: We will assess our capabilities in respect of the nine customer capabilities described above and establish our aspirations, identify key weaknesses and develop the detailed plans to address those weaknesses. This will inform our customer strategy and our customer capability development.
- 5.24. *Appoint Head of Customer*: We will appoint a Head of Customer who will drive the Customer Programme.
- 5.25. *Understand customers*: We will run a series of customer workshops, and combine Slough data with CACI data to further develop our understanding of the needs of our customers. This analysis will focus primarily on customer needs in relation to digital channels and engagement but will also include customer input to help formulate the target operating model.
- 5.26. *Develop customer vision*: We will analyse branding and transformation work recently completed or currently in progress and run a workshop with members and staff to articulate our customer vision.
- 5.27. *Review services / processes*: We will identify and prioritise services to be incorporated into the CRM and/or digitised. Initially with a focus on transactional processes, this review will support the redesign of transactional processes (customer journeys) by applying digital solutions, automation and organisational change and will inform the design of the target operating model. We anticipate that between 50 and 100 customer journeys will be identified. We will run workshops involving staff in service groups to: identify digital opportunities across a sample of their current customer journeys; and map out as-is and to-be customer journeys to understand how the opportunities will be realised. These will be used to refine the draft of the target operating model and the identification of digital solutions themes that will be used in digital solution design. We will analyse business processes which support the customer journeys analysed in order to identify and articulate business benefits which will include FTE-linked efficiency savings.
- 5.28. *Complete customer-centric digital business model design*: We will engage with relevant stakeholders to further develop and complete the design of the customer-centric digital business model. This will incorporate the review of services / processes described above, and the concepts of 'enabling, entrepreneurial and digital' as already articulated

⁸ Appendix D depicts the schedule for this phase (including key driver and delivery milestones).

elsewhere and will describe in more detail how the organisation will function and be structured. This will be validated throughout by managers, Heads of Service, Assistant Directors and Strategic Directors.

- 5.29. *Complete customer strategy*: We will complete our customer strategy. This will incorporate the new target operating model and ensure that our business strategy also sets out how we will connect with customers, set expectations and drive loyalty. This will include an element of high-level customer experience design and will have an impact on our corporate values and behaviours which may need to be refreshed.
- 5.30. *Establish high-level customer metric framework*: We will identify the corporate-level customer metrics that will be used to ensure that we deliver the customer strategy.
- 5.31. *Procure core customer portal, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and customer Business Intelligence (BI) technologies*: We will procure the core suite of technologies that will enable us to begin to implement the customer strategy as soon as possible. Potential solutions have been identified which will give us not only a strong technological foundation but also excellent prospects for advancement and innovation. Note: The corporate website will need to be replaced in order to enable implementation of the customer strategy – it is currently felt that traditional or even the most advanced local authority websites are not the solution for Slough and a separate project will be set up to identify and design the right solution.
- 5.32. *Design mobile and flexible working IT architecture*: We will identify technologies to support mobile and flexible working and design the underpinning IT architecture.
- 5.33. *Design other technology solutions*: We will identify other technology solutions or tools that will be required to support the operations of the core solutions. These will include tools identified in the multichannel digital architecture shown in Appendix E.
- 5.34. *Refresh Data and Information Sharing and Management Policy*: We will refresh this policy in order to ensure that the necessary agreements are in place to immediately make the most of customer data.
- 5.35. *Refresh HR policies*: We will refresh HR policies in order to ensure that we maximise the opportunities for mobile and flexible working.
- 5.36. *Create Deliver Phase Plan*: We will create the detailed plan for the delivery phase. This plan will phase benefit delivery, describe the changes required and set out the enabling activities which will include further service / process review, business process re-engineering, organisations, culture and behaviour, management systems, IT and estate change.
- 5.37. *Complete Full Business Case*: We will identify and analyse costs and combine these with the benefits analysis. We will also identify external funding sources and opportunities for collaboration.

Design Phase enablement

- 5.38. *Programme Management and Coordination*: In order to ensure that it is completed at pace and on time, and that risks are managed, the Design Phase will be run as a project. Nick Vat will direct the project and it will require a fulltime project manager and fulltime project coordinator. It will be run in accordance with the corporate PMO's project management standards.
- 5.39. *Customer capability assessment and service / process review*: Special tools and skills are required to conduct these activities. Nick Vat will supply and run the customer capability assessment, an Interim Business Analyst (currently being recruited) will set up and run the service / process reviews and will be supported by three additional business analysts.
- 5.40. *Customer engagement*: When conducted in the wrong way and with the wrong tools this can be an onerous and fruitless task. It is important that the right approach and skills are used to engage with customers to ensure that we gain the insights needed and the ongoing involvement of customers in the transformation programme. We will need to run this as a project to design the engagement, identify the customer cohorts, recruit customers, setup and run workshops, gather (directly from customers, internal databases and other sources such as Healthwatch) and analyse data.
- 5.41. *Target operating model design*: Will require engagement from across the business for both design and validation. This activity will require inputs from other activities (particularly customer capability assessment, service / process review and customer engagement) and will require senior level involvement and validation (managers, Heads of Service, Assistant Directors and Strategic Directors). Nick Vat and a Business Analyst will facilitate the workshops and produce the outputs. HR business partners will be responsible for analysing the workforce and identifying change requirements in the light of the new target operating model.
- 5.42. *IT and procurement*: Will be responsible for ensuring specification and procurement of the solutions and refreshing the data and information sharing and management policy. Particular emphasis will be placed on procuring in time to deliver it before the current Oracle CRM is no longer supported (which will be in June 2017). There are likely to be implications on the existing arvato contract which will require negotiations with arvato.
- 5.43. *Communications and engagement*: Managing stakeholders and consistent communication will be key for ensuring that this programme is understood and received by the business in a positive way. In addition to communications support for customer engagement, the programme will require communications and engagement support for the whole programme (staff, supplier and partner engagement too). This will require development of a communications strategy and plan and the use of multiple channels for engagement.

- 5.44. *Business case*: Will require development of the benefits framework (which will identify the current baselines and include a first suite of new metrics) and the development of the financial case.
- 5.45. The Design Phase will require considerable effort from a core programme team, input from across the Council, and additional resources. We have adopted a principle of using internal resource as far as possible, both to keep the costs down and to enable continuity into the Deliver Phase. However, as indicated in the Risk Register, it is necessary to make provision for temporary external resources.

Corporate resources	Notes	Estimated effort (%)
Business Analysts (services)	Currently engaged in service change projects across the Council	10 – 100
Communications	The Communications team	30 – 40
Council Officers (all staff) and Members	Ranging from some involvement to extensive involvement for periods of time	
Finance	The Finance team	30 – 40
Head of Customer	Currently being recruited	100
HR	The HR team	30 – 40
Interim Business Analyst	Currently being recruited	100
IT	IT Manager	80
Legal services	An officer with arvato contract knowledge	5
Performance management	All Performance Managers	30 – 40
PMO	An Officer providing Portfolio management and input in programme design	10 – 20
Procurement	Head of Procurement	10 – 20
Project Manager (Customer)	Secondment from PMO	100
Project Manager (Mobile and Flexible)	An officer from the Facilities Management team	70 – 80
Project Support (Mobile and Flexible)	An officer from the Facilities Management team	30 – 40
Programme Direction	Nick Vat	80

Additional resources	Estimated effort (%)	Estimated cost (£)⁹
arvato (primarily solution architects for demand outside the existing contract)	60 – 80	90,000
Business Analysts (x3)	100	180,000
Change Manager (communications and engagement, and behaviour design)	100	60,000
External service provider (for customer engagement project)	Project	100,000
Project Support	100	40,000
Backfill for PMO (secondment to Customer Project Manager)	100	40,000
Backfill for Facilities Management		20,000
Backfill for IT Manager	100	80,000
Other – such as marketing materials and IT equipment for temporary resources.		£15,000
Total		£625,000

- 5.46. We will seek to extend some of these resources into the Deliver Phase; this will be clarified in the Business Case produced by the Design Phase.
- 5.47. Procurement of the core digital solutions will require significant investment. During the Design Phase we will complete the detailed design for these solutions and subsequently present a business case for their procurement. Currently the one-off cost is estimated at £2m plus (including licenses and professional services for implementation). There will also be additional ongoing revenue costs. Procurement of mobile working solutions will also require investment that will be identified in a separate business case.

6. Comments of Other Committees

None.

⁹ Where appropriate, all estimates include on-costs of 25%.

7. Conclusion

A customer-centric Council which understands its customers, builds operations around them, manages relationships openly and communicates effectively, and uses customer understanding to deliver target outcomes is what will be enabled and delivered by the Customer and Digital Programme.

This report presents the outline case for change, highlighting the Council's current customer and digital capability and the gaps that must be closed to take full advantage of digital opportunities. It also identifies significant sources of benefit that the programme will deliver and which will help the Council to achieve its strategic, operational and financial targets.

The report outlines the activities and resources required for the next phase (the Design Phase) of the programme and risks that will need to be managed.

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that Officers are instructed to commence the recruitment of the Programme Team and the Design Phase of the Programme at an estimated cost of £625k.

8. Appendices Attached

- 'A' - Slough's digital capability
- 'B' - Digital vision
- 'C' - Customer-centric future operating model with digital solutions
- 'D' - Schedule Gantt
- 'E' - Multi-channel digital architecture

9. Background Papers

None.

Appendix A – Slough’s digital capability

1. Geo-demographic data has helped us to better understand the residents of Slough and their readiness for adopting digital channels of engagement.
2. According to the Go ON UK Digital Exclusion Heatmap produced in 2015 following a study commissioned by the Local Government Association¹⁰, the likelihood of digital exclusion in Slough is low (see Figure 2: Summary of Digital Exclusion Findings for Slough). Infrastructure is excellent (98% of households receive broadband speeds of more than 10 megabits per second, 82% of households receive 4G mobile data from all providers); digital skills are good (91% of adults have been online, 75% have all 5 basic digital skills¹¹, and 24% have used all 5 of these skills in the last 3 months); and social factors are well within ranges that contribute to digital inclusion (91% of adults are under 65 years old, 65% have qualifications and earn around £22,500 per annum, and 86% do not have long-term illness or disability).
3. From this data we can deduce that at least 85% of Slough adult residents have digital access and devices, and would be willing to use digital channels if they are easy to use, quick to access and deliver the expected outcomes. We can also deduce that not more than 35% of the population will require some assistance in accessing services through digital channels.

Figure 2: Summary of Digital Exclusion Findings for Slough

4. Further to this, we have analysed Acorn data (provided by CACI) and identified five personas which represent distinct digital profiles of the adult residents of Slough:

Resident persona	Proportion of adult population	Preferred engagement channel
A – Digitally capable but prefer other methods (typically young families).	20%	Respond to mail.
B – Part of the digital generation – often online (typically young singles).	20%	Purchase local government services online.
C – Digital channels are most acceptable (typically established families).	36%	Prefer email.
D – Use the Internet mainly for social	21%	Prefer phone calls.

¹⁰ The Go ON UK Digital Exclusion Heatmap has been developed with support from the BBC as part of their Make It Digital and wider digital literacy initiatives, the Local Government Association and The London School of Economics and Political Science, using fresh insight into Basic Digital Skills in association with Lloyds Banking Group. - See more at:

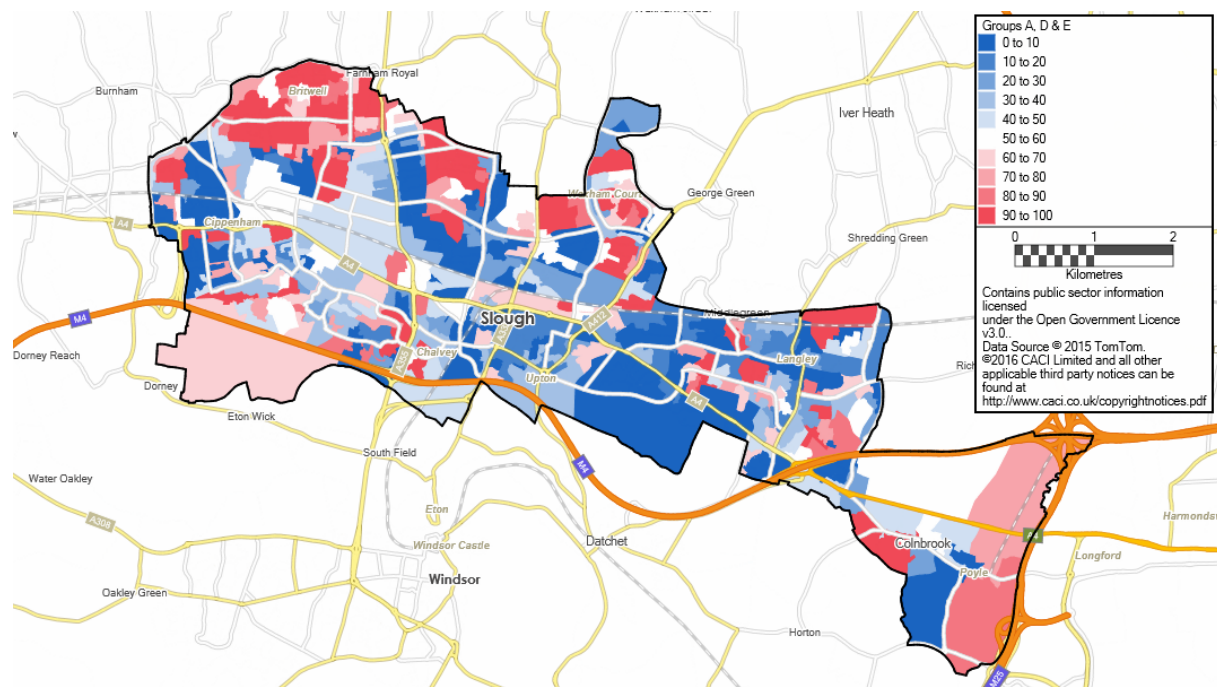
<https://doteveryone.org.uk/resources/heatmap/?area=Slough&metric=social#sthash.jMRZcDRI.dpuf>

¹¹ The 5 basic digital skills are: managing information, communicating, transacting, problem solving and creating.

networking (typically financially struggling).		
E – Reject digital communication methods (typically retired).	2%	Prefer visits.

- This analysis supports the conclusions of the Digital Exclusion study above and adds richness to the insight, enabling us to describe and identify customers with varying degrees of digital capability as well as engagement preferences. 97% of the adult residents use digital tools (personas A, B, C and D). 56% are digitally capable and prefer digital channels of engagement (B and C). 20% are digitally capable but prefer non-digital channels of communication (A). 21% have some digital capability and prefer non-digital channels of communication (D).
- As shown in Figure 3: Likely Location of Personas A, D and E, we also know where those personas are most likely to reside.

Figure 3: Likely Location of Personas A, D and E



- Whilst this analysis will be done in more detail (in particular to include our own data) in the Design Phase, it is safe to say that Slough residents are definitely ready for a digital SBC.
- It is significant to note that we will encourage all who can to use digital channels (up to 97% of the adult population), we will provide appropriate levels of support for those who need assistance moving to or using digital channels (21%), and we will keep traditional access to services open for those who are absolutely unwilling to use or are incapable of using digital channels (2%).

Appendix B – Digital vision

Slough is a leading digital city

1. Slough is visionary, customer-centric, digital, open and collaborative. The city's development is led by a clear and compelling vision which is jointly owned by all key stakeholders; the city has a detailed and segmented understanding of our citizens' and businesses' needs and builds solutions with them around their needs; the whole city is digitally connected, and services are digital by default; and the city creates spaces and opportunities for new collaborations, sharing and reusing assets (including data) and services. *Slough Borough Council's role is to enable the attainment of this vision.*

Slough Borough Council is a leading digital council

2. *Visionary.* Our development is led by a clear and compelling vision which is jointly owned by all key stakeholders. Achievement of the vision is led by a broad-based leadership team which draws on the strengths of all relevant partners and communities.
3. *Digitally savvy.* We engage city stakeholders in the development of our city into a leading digital city. We understand digital opportunities and digital is woven into the fabric of the organisation. Digital is part of our employee competency framework.
4. *Obsessed with the customer.* Everything we do is aligned to customer needs; we are focussed only on those things that they value most, and they experience what we promise them.
5. *Curious and innovative.* We are data-driven, combining outputs from different processes to generate new insights, learning from every customer interaction and relentlessly evolving and improving the customer experience and outcomes.
6. *Digital and empowering.* Everything possible is digital or automated to its fullest extent; we are lean, responsive and reliable. We are unafraid and empower staff to continually adapt their products and services. We empower customers and staff to self-serve. We do not exclude anybody from services because they don't have digital capabilities.
7. *Open and collaborative.* We create spaces and opportunities for new collaborations, we share and reuse our assets and services, our data is open for anybody to use, and our systems are flexible, resilient and adaptable.
8. *Mobile and flexible.* Everything is accessible via mobile device. We deliver services at our customer's location and can work from anywhere and at any time.

Appendix C - Customer-centric future operating model with digital solutions

1. Customers will self-serve as a matter of principle and services will be designed with digital delivery as the default solution.
2. All routine customer transactions will be fully automated and integrated into operational systems where possible (wherever possible we will bring the back office into the front office).
3. Staff from across the organisation will undertake their business using the digital solutions and new processes designed to enable optimal customer service with minimal waste.
4. We will explore¹² opportunities for the re-design of complex transactions to enable better customer experiences and more efficient use of resources. It is conceivable for example that we will create an advanced, integrated single contact centre with specialist strategic support. Staff in the contact centre might work collaboratively to process complex service assessments relating to services from across the organisation.
5. This way of working will be underpinned by a 'single view of the customer' which will be made possible either through a single Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution or through multi-screen access to disparate systems.
6. Engagement with customers will be multi-channel and it is our aim to provide a wide range of channels such as web, mobile, social, a request via Siri, email, telephony (including for example voice, text, Whatsapp and Skype), face-to-face, post and partner.
7. In order to drive efficiencies, customers will be actively encouraged to participate in self-management and assessment where appropriate and face-to-face and telephone contact will be limited to specialist needs or to support customers who need special assistance.
8. As shown in Figure 4, customers will access our offering through three primary propositions:
 - 8.1. A *customer portal* for transactions (such as making complaints, reporting problems or paying council tax). This will provide a single route into the Council's online services and information tailored around the individual's specific needs. It will link various back office systems and data sources to provide an easy-to-use digital one-stop shop for customers.
 - 8.2. A mobile first, responsive *website* for information, advice, signposting and community interaction (providing such content as provided by SBC, partners, suppliers, community groups and customers). This will incorporate existing platforms (e.g. Facebook and Twitter) or develop new platforms (such as bespoke websites) to encourage and / or enable customers to collaborate with the rest of the community, with limited interaction from the Council required.

¹² This will take place during the Design Phase.

- 8.3. *Service delivery* for services (designed to deliver consistent customer experiences in line with the customer strategy).
9. Underpinning the customer interfaces are several key capabilities:
- 9.1. *Integrated customer relationship management (CRM) technologies* that interface with customers and support seamless customer journeys and customer centred workflows.
- 9.2. Integrated data from customers, suppliers and the back office will support mobile and flexible working and enable the generation of: customer-centred workflows and a single view of the customer (including a single customer record); and *business intelligence* to inform strategic decisions, tailor services, and predict service requests ultimately improving *commissioning, influencing and procurement*. Targeted information will provide customers and staff with quicker and easier access to information through the website, over the telephone, or by pushing information to them, reducing the number of basic information requests received by the Council.
- 9.3. An *assisted digital* team which will support people to adopt digital channels or who can't use online Council services on their own. Up to 97% of Slough's adult population has the capability to 'go digital'. The 76% with high levels of capability will be supported by the availability of the leading digital solutions described above, maximisation of the breadth and depth of services available online, and active promotion of digital self-service channels. The 21% who are not so capable or willing will be further supported with assistance or training (provided by the assisted digital team, staff and partner organisations) and access to self-service terminals. The 2% who are absolutely unwilling or incapable will have traditional access to services but with a refined 'triage' system in place to identify and provide the right level of support. A key part of the assistance concept will be to work with customers to help overcome the barriers that might exist so that future contact can be carried out digitally. As suggested above, the assisted digital team may also be a group (or multi-disciplinary team) with varied but complementary experience, qualifications, and skills that can support / process more complex transactions or solve a problem.
- 9.4. *Agile working* (mobile and flexible) which will enable staff to work closer to their customers (for example, in their homes or on their building site) and at times that are more suitable or flexible.
10. Figure 5 shows a more in-depth view of the key digital building blocks, and Figure 6 illustrates through the example of the Planning Application process the impact that this could have on services.
11. In the next Phase of the programme, detailed design work will build on these principles and solution themes to develop and agree a future customer-centric model that is enabled through digital solutions which are simple and intuitive.

Figure 4: Customer-centric future operating model with digital solutions

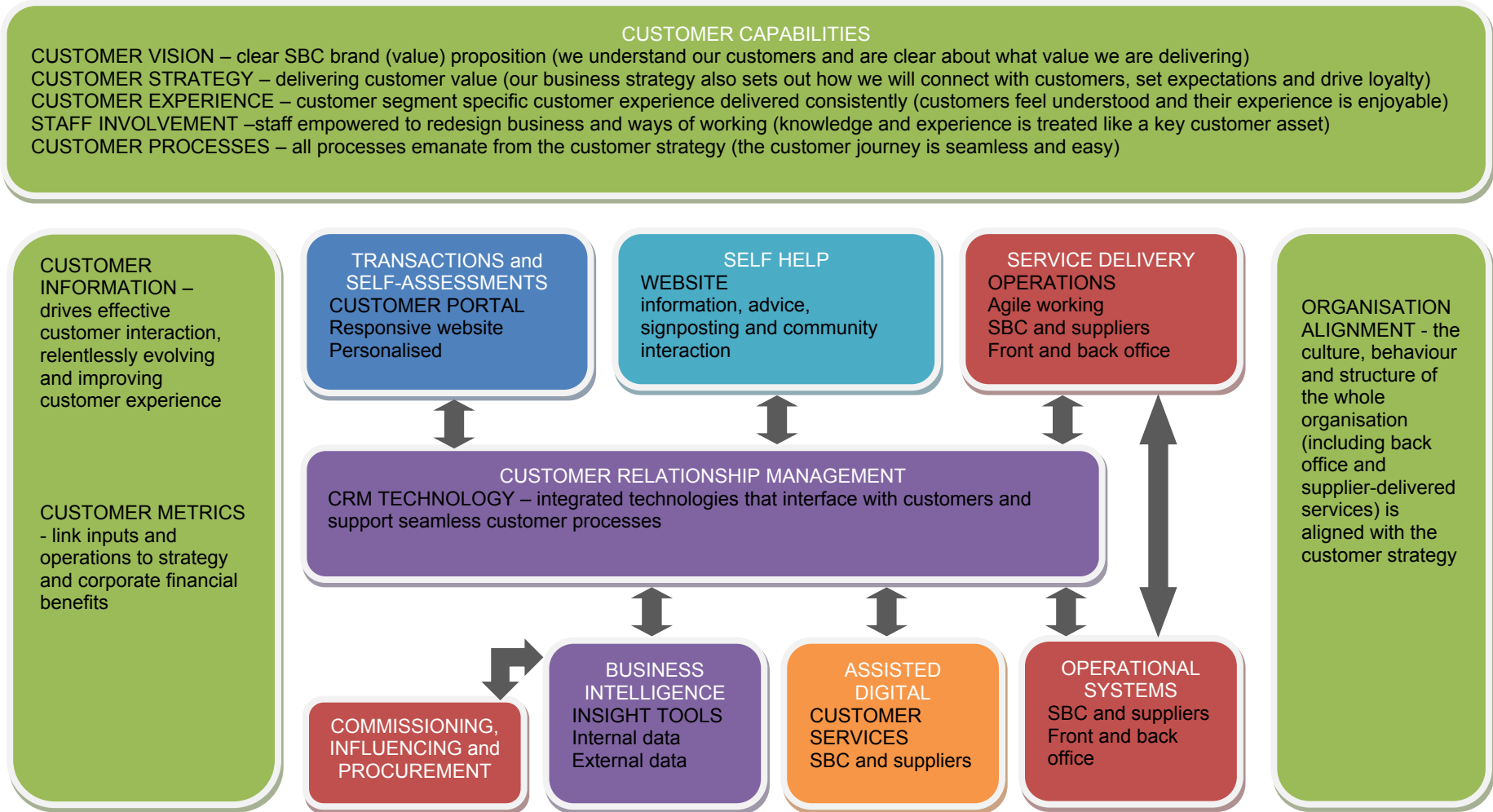
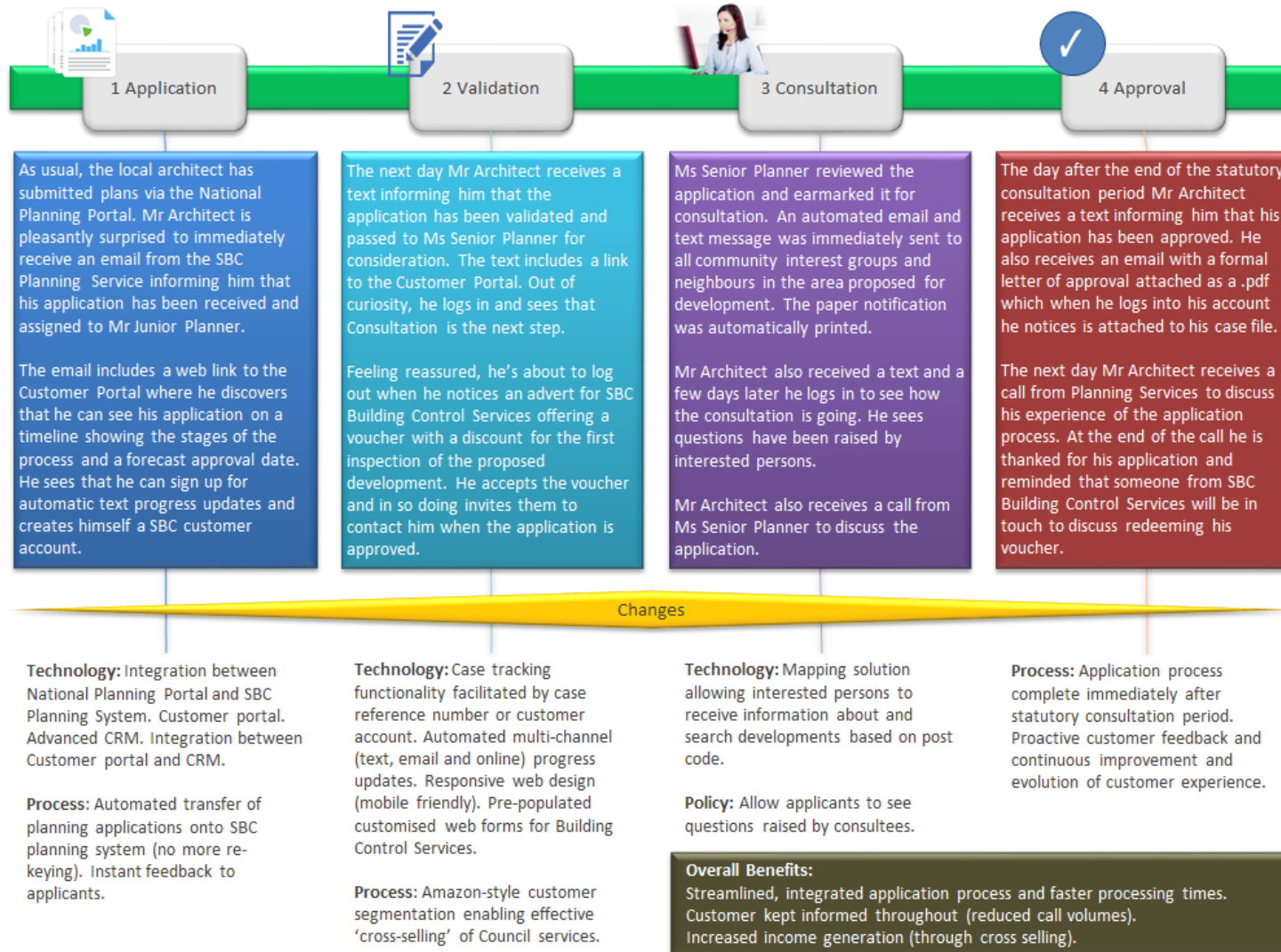


Figure 5: A closer look at the key digital building blocks

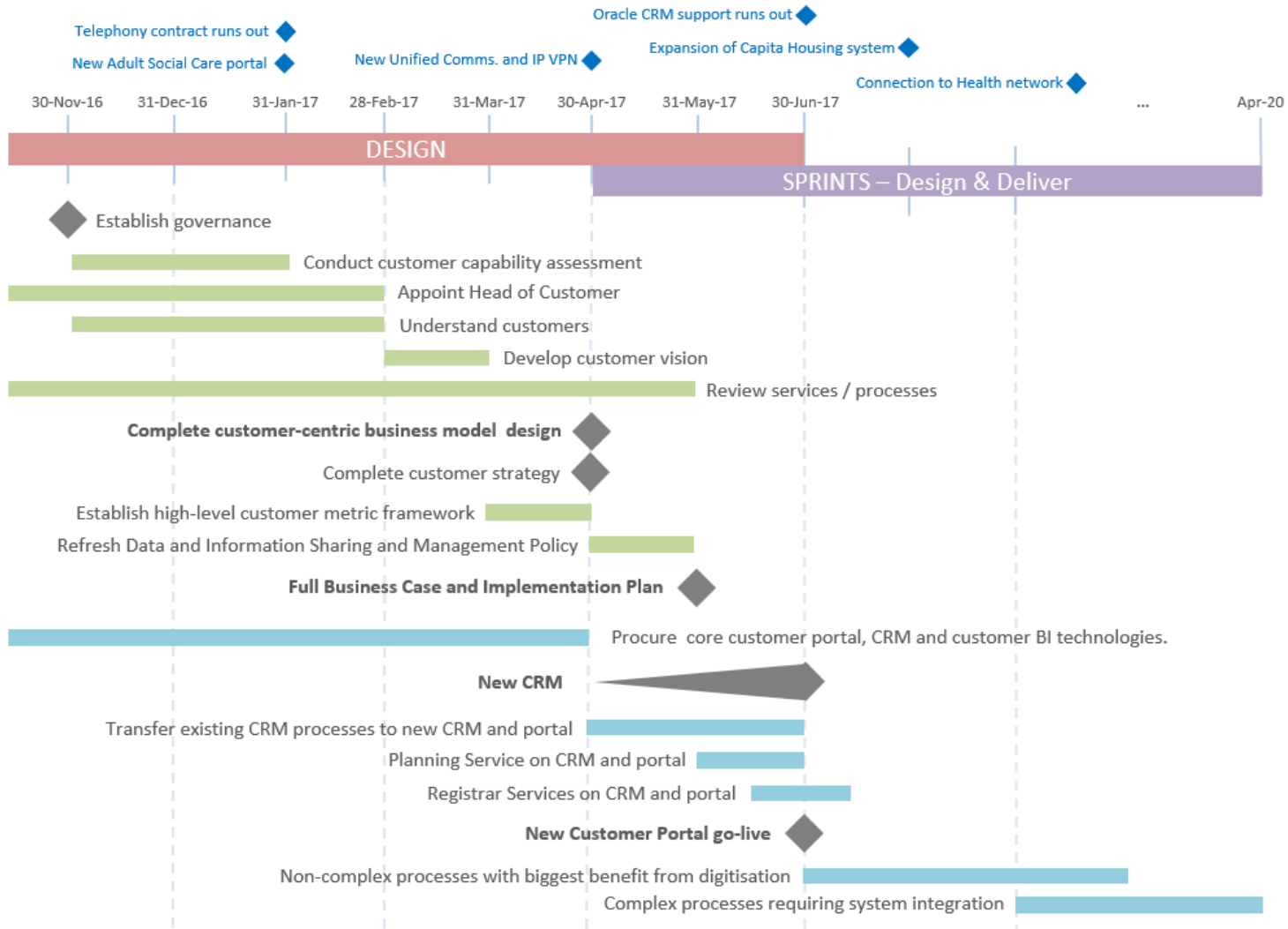


Figure 6: Service implications - the Planning Application process



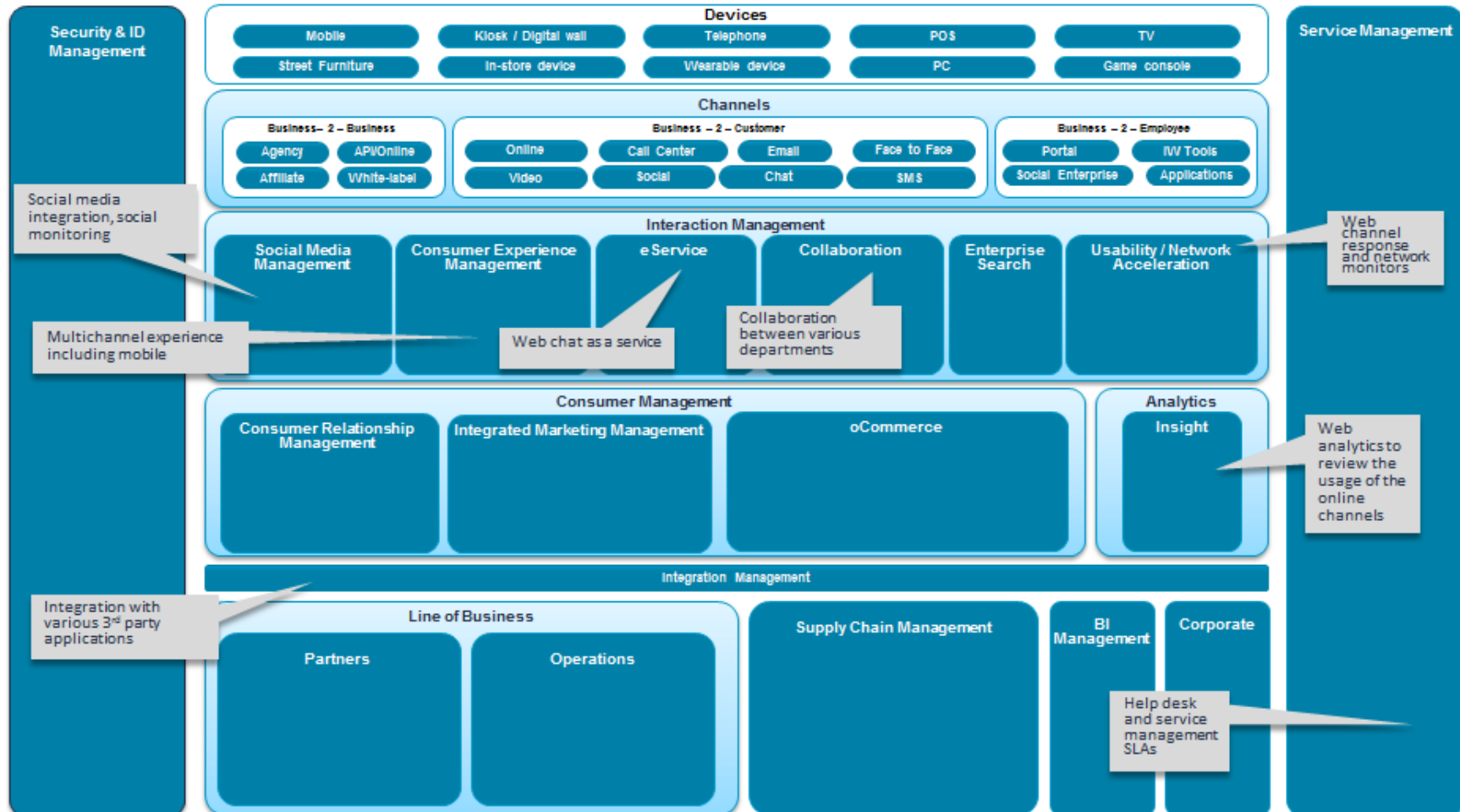
Appendix D – Schedule Gantt

Schedule: Gantt



Appendix E - Multi-channel digital architecture

The capabilities identified by customer journey mapping will require purchase or development of many of the services in the multi-channel digital architecture.



SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 14 November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Stephen Gibson, Head of Asset Management

(For all enquiries) (01753) 875852

WARD(S): All.

PORTFOLIO: Housing & Urban Renewal - Cllr Ajaib
Leader of Council - Cllr Munawar

PART I **KEY DECISION**

PROPOSED STRATEGIC ACQUISITION STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On 14 September 2015, Cabinet approved the introduction of the Strategic Acquisition Strategy, which provided a framework for the Council to operate commercially and undertake a new approach to asset investment through the acquisition of land and/or property generating income up to £25m (inclusive of acquisition costs). On the same occasion cabinet agreed that all strategic acquisitions would normally be made within the Borough of Slough in order to accelerate regeneration objectives, realise local economic developments and provide long-term strategic benefits.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to allocate an increased budget to secure additional land and/or investment assets that will improve the Council's financial resilience with greater flexibility to acquire assets outside Slough.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to Recommend:

- (a) That it be agreed that whilst strategic acquisitions will normally be made within the Borough of Slough, to reduce risk, maximise financial returns and widen the potential to create a more balanced portfolio is achieved by buying investments outside Slough.
- (b) That the scoring criteria associated with out-of-borough investment assets be amended.
- (c) That the Capital Programme for 2016/17 be amended to increase the existing budget by an additional £25m.

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

The introduction of a streamlined procedure to pursue strategic acquisition has created the conditions for the Council to maximise the value of its existing asset base, acquire

land and property that will make a significant contribution to the town centre regeneration strategy and supply an income stream that could contribute to the provision of front line services.

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

Individual acquisitions will be reviewed in line with the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The introduction of the Strategic Acquisition Strategy has created a mechanism for the Council to assemble land and gain control of key sites that will facilitate broader regeneration and economic development objectives. The acquisition of income generating assets has increased the Council’s revenue in 2016/17 and is also closely tied to Outcome 7, which seeks to maximise the value of the Council’s assets and income.

4 **Other Implications**

a) **Financial**

SBC currently owns a portfolio of property and land assets that comprises investment (commercial) and service delivery (operational) assets. Commercial assets are held for the purpose of generating rental income and/or capital appreciation. The portfolio includes light industrial units and retail premises as well as ‘minor’ interests, for example wayleaves, easements and licenses. Whilst the investment portfolio has through the activities of the SAB reduced the Councils revenue pressure, its net financial contribution remains modest compared to other councils who have a more bullish approach to strategic investment and seek to dilute-risk by acquiring assets outside their boundaries.

It is anticipated that there will be a requirement to fund strategic acquisitions from a range of options including borrowing funds from the Public Works Loan Board and utilising internal balances.

b) **Risk Management**

Risk

Legal – competing priorities could create delays.

Property market risk – property is a riskier asset than other asset classes because of its physical characteristics, which need to be managed and maintained together with the time needed to liquidate time
The Council may not achieve its target returns if market conditions significantly worsen

Mitigating action

Appoint external solicitors to undertake due diligence and provide comprehensive reports on title, deeds, leases etc, as required.
Undertake appropriate due diligence and appoint specialist advisers as required.
Target assets/locations where income is secured and rental growth identified.

No risks identified

Opportunities

Market conditions can go up as well as down, with the Council benefitting from increased returns during an upturn.

<p>Human Rights Health and Safety Employment Issues</p>	<p>No risks identified No risks identified</p>	<p>It is proposed to appoint agents to act on behalf of the Council as they offer investment expertise and market intelligence not held internally.</p>
<p>Equalities Issues Community Support Communications Community Safety Finance - Abortive costs including legal and survey fees, staff costs, initial feasibility costs.</p>	<p>No risks identified No risks identified No risks identified No risks identified Whilst efforts will be made to reduce abortive costs it is inevitable that the Council will on occasions incur costs on projects that do not proceed.</p>	<p>The proposed process would speed up timescales and enhance the Councils ability to compete for strategic acquisitions.</p>
<p>Timetable for Delivery – The existing approach is cumbersome and has added to the inability to pursue strategic acquisitions.</p>	<p>Introduce a Strategic Acquisition Board with the specific remit of considering strategic acquisitions.</p>	<p>The proposed process would speed up timescales and enhance the Councils ability to compete for strategic acquisitions.</p>
<p>Governance – Poor performance</p>	<p>Introduction of specific procedures relating to Strategic Acquisitions, which set out objectives, criteria and delegated authority.</p>	<p></p>
<p>Performance –</p>	<p>No risks identified</p>	<p></p>

b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Under Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council may acquire by agreement any land whether situated inside or outside their area. It may do so for the purpose of (a) any of their functions under that or any other enactment or (b) for the benefit, improvement or development of their area. However, the reference in Section 120 to the benefit of the area requires some more direct connection with the property acquired than the mere fact that income from it could in future be applied to the provision of local services. Accordingly the Council may not rely on this provision to acquire property outside their area simply for the purposes of generating revenue to support services.

Under Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003, however, the Council may invest (a) for any purposes relevant to its functions under any enactment or (b) for the prudent management of its financial affairs. Investment is generally considered to mean the acquisition of an asset to be used as a source income or alternatively the asset may be a source of capital gain. Accordingly the Council may invest in property, regardless of the location of the property under this provision if it does so for the purpose of the prudent management of its financial affairs.

The constraints upon the Council in exercising its investment powers under Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003 are that it must always comply with ordinary “Wednesbury” principles i.e. it must act reasonably and have regard to relevant matters which, in this context, would include the Guidance issued by the Secretary of State relating to local government investments, which has statutory force under Section 15, and to regulations made under that section. This guidance calls in particular for the production of an appropriate investment strategy and the Council would then need to adhere to that strategy unless there are sensible reasons for not doing so.

The Council also have power to acquire land outside its area under the general power of competence contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. Under Section 4 of that Act, however, anything done for a commercial purpose in exercise of this general power of competence must be done through a company. For these purposes, acquisition of property for the purposes of generating profit would amount to doing something for a commercial purpose and would need to be done through a company if this power is to be relied upon.

c) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equalities issues associated with this report. However the accessibility of properties will be one of the factors for consideration in deciding between investments.

5 Supporting Information

Background

- 5.1 In approving the Strategic Acquisition Strategy in 2015, Cabinet noted the financial driver to acquire income generating assets to offset continued reductions in central government grant and the regenerative benefits associated with purchasing sites to bring forward housing and commercial development.
- 5.2 Cabinet delegated authority to the Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources in consultation with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewals and the Leader of the Council, authority to:
- Introduce the proposed Strategic Acquisition Board (“SAB”), and thereafter,
 - Delegated authority to the SAB to make strategic acquisitions in line with the objectives, criteria and governance procedures set out in the report in consultation with the with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewals and the Leader of the Council.
- 5.3 A strategic acquisition was defined as the acquisition of land or properties that will allow the Council to expedite key outcomes contained within the 5 Year Plan. To be considered strategic, it is agreed that an acquisition must make a significant contribution towards regeneration objectives and/or provide a commercial return on investment that will improve the financial resilience of the Council
- 5.4 An initial budget of £25m has been agreed to make strategic acquisitions. To date, a total of £13.6m has been spent, generating additional gross income of £596,775 for 2016/17. The sum of £9.2m has been set aside for anticipated pipeline acquisitions in the current financial year (which will generate an additional initial income of circa £500,000 pre annum), leaving a balance of £2.2m to acquire additional assets. Working on the assumption that the pipeline of acquisitions will be secured, this report seeks approval for a second tranche of £25m to build the portfolio.

Economic Overview

- 5.5 The recent vote by the UK to leave the European Union has triggered a large amount of uncertainty within the market. The instant effect of this has caused the financial markets to exhibit volatility. This in turn has pushed investors into a defensive position when considering their investments resulting in a slowdown in acquisitions.

- 5.6 Over the last five years, the United Kingdom has remained one of the fastest growing economies, with GDP growing marginally at approximately 1.8% p.a. which is a downward growth projection from 2.2%. The UK is expected to avoid recession.
- 5.7 Employment figures have looked encouraging with the current unemployment rate standing at 4.9% which represents a 11 year low
- 5.8 The base rate currently stands at 0.25% decreasing from 0.5% in August 2016. This is predominantly due to weaker UK economic growth forecasts, the decision to leave the European Union and global uncertainty.

Property Market Outlook

- 5.9 Trading volumes in property for the first 8 months of 2016 totalled approximately £29.4 billion down by 39% compared to last year. Industrials were the only sector not to see a fall in volumes.
- 5.10 Overseas investors contributed £12.2 billion with UK institutions and private property companies investing £5.6b & £4.5b respectively.
- 5.11 Property fundamentals remain strong with a low base rate, weak sterling and stable yields. However, the uncertainty will cause the commercial property market to pause in the short term.
- 5.12 All property equivalent yields are expected to soften by the end of 2016 and move out slightly more in 2017 to circa ½% overall. The sharpest outward movement is projected for offices at ½% in 2016 and another ¼% in 2017.

Assessment Criteria – Investment Properties

- 5.13 Whilst the SAB has already been delegated authority to consider investment opportunities outside Slough, all of the acquisitions undertaken to date have been located within the Council's area of operation. Although this could be argued to be a positive outcome, retaining a narrow focus has limited the growth and balance of the portfolio. Looking at examples from peers, it is clear that to reduce risk, maximise financial returns and widen the potential to create a more balanced portfolio, other local authorities have flexibility to acquire investment assets outside their areas of operation.
- 5.14 In approving the Strategic Acquisition Strategy, Cabinet agreed to use a defined list of property specific criteria to score proposed acquisitions. It was also agreed that the minimum score should be at least 240 out of a maximum score of 400, which is equivalent to 60% of the maximum score. The only exception being that the Board should have the discretion to buy assets in Slough that may fall outside the investment criteria if there is an overriding strategic benefit to do so.
- 5.15 Whilst this report does not propose to change the potential to acquire assets outside Slough and highlights the portfolio and financial benefits of retaining this approach, it is suggested that out-of-Borough acquisitions should score a minimum of 300 (75%) out of 400.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

6.1 This report has not been considered by any other committees.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 The primary purpose of this report is to seek approval to allocate an increased budget to secure additional land and/or investment assets that improve the Council's financial resilience and brings forward sites for residential and commercial regeneration. Whilst the primary focus will remain on acquiring in-borough investments, the ability to realise growth and income targets will be enhanced by widening the scope of the SAB.

7.2 The report consequently seeks approval to amend the Capital Programme for 2016/17 and increase the existing budget by an additional £25m.

8. **Background Papers**

None

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Stuart Aislabie, Principal Asset Manager
(01753) 477226

WARD(S): Chalvey

PORTFOLIO: Environment & Leisure – Councillor Bal

PART I
KEY DECISION**LEASE SLOUGH REFUGEE SUPPORT, 28 BATH ROAD, SALT HILL PARK****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the letting of 28 Bath Road, Salt Hill Park to Slough Refugee Support (SRS) and for Cabinet to recommend approval to Full Council, acting as Trustees of Salt Hill Park, on 29th November 2016.

2 Recommendation

The Cabinet is requested to Recommend to Full Council on 29th November 2016 that the Council enter into lease agreement with SRS for 28 Bath Road, Salt Hill Park.

3 Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, The JNA and the Five Year Plan**3a Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The proposal meets the following priorities of the Joint Wellbeing Strategy

Health

Ensuring better community engagement to improve the wellbeing of our residents.

Safer Slough

A place where people feel safe to live, visit and play.

Safeguard and support vulnerable adults and children in our communities.

Promote cohesive open communities that value diversity, encourage a sense of belonging and engender a sense of local pride.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The proposal also has the potential to make the following contributions to corporate objectives:

Enabling and preventing

Will contribute to deliver the Council's community cohesion strategy by providing a location from which SRS can provide its services and help refugees better acclimatise to life in Slough.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no immediate financial revenue/capital spend implications as a direct consequence of this report.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Community	None	
Property	None	
Financial	None	
Legal	None	
Human Rights	None	
Employment	None	
Planning	None	
Public Consultation	None	

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no immediate Human Rights Act and Other Legal implications as a direct consequence of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need to carry out an EIA.

(f) Land and Property Implications

If approved, 28 Bath Road will be leased to SRS for a term of 5 years at an annual rent of £8,700. There is a tenant only right to break the lease on the 3rd anniversary of the lease.

5. **Supporting Information**

Background

- 5.1 28 Bath Road is a former park keeper's cottage located in the south eastern corner of Salt Hill Park, on the junction with Bath Road and Stoke Poges Lane.
- 5.2 SRS have been in exclusive possession of the building for sometime with the last lease being in place from 2006 to 2008. Terms for a new lease were agreed in 2008, but never formalised despite a rent increase at this time.
- 5.3 SRS is a registered charity focused exclusively on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. It was established in 1997 in order to welcome and offer practical help to some of the most marginalised people in the local community. In addition to support the SRS also offers practical advice such as accessing initial benefits, how to access health and education services, job searching and IT/Life classes with crèche support.
- 5.4 Terms have been agreed with SRS for the granting of a 5 year lease with a rent agreed at £8,700 per annum. SRS will be responsible for the running costs of the building

(business rates, utilities, insurance, etc). The Council will continue to maintain the external parts of the property given its age and prominent location within the park.

- 5.5 The rent agreed is supported by a District Valuer community use rental valuation carried out at the time terms were agreed.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Regularising the lease agreement with SRS, who are already well established at 28 Bath Road, will give both the Council and SRS certainty and security with regards occupation of this site. In turn SRS will be able to continue to provide and fund the support services it already provides to the local refugee community.

7. Appendices Attached

None

8. Background Papers

None.

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Dave Gordon (Scrutiny Officer)
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875411

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Ajaib –
Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal

PART I
NON-KEY DECISION

REFERENCES FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - GARAGES

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (3rd November 2016).

2. Matters for resolution from Cabinet

The Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel made the following recommendations for resolution by Cabinet:

- That the Panel recommend to Cabinet that a Consultative Commissioning Group be established to improve resident involvement and that the Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal lead the Group.
- That the Panel requests Cabinet to support the development and rolling out of community based parking schemes for parking areas on Housing land.

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

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) Priorities

Priorities:

- **Regeneration and Environment:** By improving the quality of Slough Borough Council (SBC)'s parking provision and the options available to residents, the environment in Slough will be ameliorated..
- **Housing:** The creation of a Consultative Commissioning Group will allow residents to feed into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and be involved in the forthcoming options appraisal.

Cross-Cutting themes:

- **Civic responsibility:** By ensuring that residents are able to express their views and participate in the future of housing in Slough, the service will become better placed to respond to the needs of local residents.
- **Improving the image of the town:** By enhancing the quality of parking provision in Slough, the local environment will be improved for residents and visitors.

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The references from the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel also address the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- *There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough*

Resident engagement has been built into the governance structure for the new repairs, maintenance and investment contract to ensure that residents have the opportunity to influence and monitor the performance of the new Service Partner. This will allow them to contribute to improving the quality of homes in the borough and influence investment programmes to improve their local environment.

- *Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley*

Engaging with residents will increase officers' understanding of local concerns and issues that impact on residents' safety and ensure the effective and appropriate deployment of resources to address residents' concerns.

- *The Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation*

Using digital media to engage with residents is a cost effective and simple way to engage with a broad range of residents whilst minimising the need for face to face meetings which do not appeal to the majority of residents.

- *The council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised*

The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised by the decommissioning of loss-making assets, returning sites into more productive community use and ensuring correct charges are made for the rental of garages.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

A budget of £72,000 was allocated to resident involvement in 2016/17 (excluding salary costs). Within this, £25,000 was assigned to tenant participation and a further £39,500 to project work which included the cost of the annual resident satisfaction survey.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
None	None	There are no risks, threats or opportunities arising from the report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications relating to the content of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Using digital media to engage with residents as far as possible will increase accessibility to involvement opportunities by avoiding the need to attend face to face meetings. Wherever more in depth involvement opportunities are needed, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out to mitigate any risk of potential discrimination against any of the 9 protected characteristics.

5 Supporting Information

Resident Involvement

- 5.1 The establishment of a Consultative Commissioning Group has been proposed as part of the Housing Service's recent review of co-regulation. Such a Group would consist of members and Council tenants and leaseholders. Its remit would be to review the Housing Revenue Business Plan, the Housing Strategy and to be the lead consultative group on the Options Appraisal for the Council's housing stock.
- 5.2 The Consultative Commissioning Group as proposed would include members of the Resident Forum as well as other residents recruited specifically for the Commissioning Group. The Commissioning Group will be supported; the consultant recently recruited by SBC's Housing Service has been asked to provide this.
- 5.3 Overall, this would be an embedded element within the initial project plan for the development of the Housing Services. This project plan would be flexible and designed to ensure consultation is informed and robust. It would also embrace digital engagement (e.g. Facebook page, Twitter account) and also include an online forum. From the Consultative Commissioning Group offering a high level of involvement, to more informal engagement through electronic communications, SBC would identify the most appropriate methods by which residents could be involved.
- 5.4 The Panel signalled their support for the proposed forms of engagement with local residents. Members specified that traditional forms of communication should not be rendered obsolete as SBC adopted digital methods and were also keen for bodies convened for resident involvement reflected the diversity of the local populace. They also clarified that they wished for the scrutiny function to continue to be involved in the service; the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be deciding as to how scrutiny of the matter should be allocated amongst the scrutiny bodies on 17th November 2016.

Neighbourhood Services – Garages

- 5.5 As part of an item examining the new licensing arrangements for garages between SBC and residents, the Neighbourhood Services team also raised the matter of pressure on parking facilities. With service users encountering difficulties in finding parking spaces, a request has been made by local residents for the service to investigate potential alternatives. In particular, they have asked for the potential introduction of community parking facilities that would be available for the exclusive use of tenants to be evaluated
- 5.6 In response to this, Neighbourhood Services are proposing to work in conjunction with Transport and Highways to identify how both services can co-ordinate the provision and management of on-street and off-street parking on council housing land.
- 5.7 In their discussion of agenda item, the Panel noted that garages required a significant review. The existing stock included sites of variable quality, and also garages built some time ago which were not of sufficient size to store modern vehicles. Given this, the Panel were supportive of the forthcoming review into local garages and also the stated intention of analysing the opportunities for alternative parking provision.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Cabinet is requested to decide upon recommendations outlined in section 2 and discussed in sections 5.1 – 5.7 of this report.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

- '1' - Agenda papers, Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (3rd November 2016)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st November 2016

CONTACT OFFICER: Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services
(For all enquiries) 01753 875011

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Leader, Finance and Strategy – Councillor Munawar

PART I
NON-KEY DECISION

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS**1. Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet endorsement of the published Notification of Decisions, which has replaced the Executive Forward Plan.

2. Recommendation

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

3. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The Notification of Decisions sets out when key decisions are expected to be taken and a short overview of the matters to be considered. The decisions taken will contribute to all of the following Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities:

- Health
- Economy and Skills
- Housing
- Regeneration and Environment
- Safer Slough

4. Other Implications**(a) Financial**

There are no financial implications.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 require the executive to publish a notice of the key decisions, and those to be taken in private under Part II of the agenda, at least 28 clear days before the decision can be taken. This notice replaced the legal requirement for a 4-month rolling Forward Plan.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 The Notification of Decisions replaces the Forward Plan. The Notice is updated each month on a rolling basis, and sets out:

- A short description of matters under consideration and when key decisions are expected to be taken over the following three months;
- Who is responsible for taking the decisions and how they can be contacted;
- What relevant reports and background papers are available; and
- Whether it is likely the report will include exempt information which would need to be considered in private in Part II of the agenda.

5.2 The Notice contains matters which the Leader considers will be the subject of a key decision to be taken by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, officers, or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the Plan.

5.3 Key Decisions are defined in Article 14 of the Constitution, as an Executive decision which is likely either:

- to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the Borough.

The Council has decided that any expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more shall be significant for the purposes of a key decision.

5.4 There are provisions for exceptions to the requirement for a key decision to be included in the Notice and these provisions and necessary actions are detailed in paragraphs 15 and 16 of Section 4.2 of the Constitution.

5.5 To avoid duplication of paperwork the Member Panel on the Constitution agreed that the Authority's Notification of Decisions would include both key and non key decisions – and as such the document would form a comprehensive programme of work for the Cabinet. Key decisions are highlighted in bold.

6. Appendices Attached

'A' - Current Notification of Decisions – published 21st October 2016.

7. Background Papers

None.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

1 NOVEMBER 2016 TO 31 JANUARY 2017

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

Slough Borough Council has a decision making process involving an Executive (Cabinet) and a Scrutiny Function.

As part of the process, the Council will publish a Notification of Decisions which sets out the decisions which the Cabinet intends to take over the following 3 months. The Notice includes both Key and non Key decisions. Key decisions are those which are financially significant or have a significant impact on 2 or more Wards in the Town. This Notice supersedes all previous editions.

Whilst the majority of the Cabinet's business at the meetings listed in this document will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information.

This is formal notice under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that part of the Cabinet meetings listed in this Notice will/may be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

This document provides a summary of the reason why a matter is likely to be considered in private / Part II. The full reasons are listed alongside the report on the Council's website.

If you have any queries, or wish to make any representations in relation to the meeting being held in private for the consideration of the Part II items, please email catherine.meek@slough.gov.uk (no later than 15 calendar days before the meeting date listed).

What will you find in the Notice?

For each decision, the plan will give:

- The subject of the report.
- Who will make the decision.
- The date on which or the period in which the decision will be made.
- Contact details of the officer preparing the report.
- A list of those documents considered in the preparation of the report (if not published elsewhere).
- The likelihood the report would contain confidential or exempt information.

What is a Key Decision?

An executive decision which is likely either:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the borough.

Who will make the Decision?

Decisions set out in this Notice will be taken by the Cabinet, unless otherwise specified. All decisions (unless otherwise stated) included in this Notice will be taken on the basis of a written report and will be published on the Council's website before the meeting.

The members of the Cabinet are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • Leader of the Council - Finance & Strategy | Councillor Munawar |
| • Education & Children's Services and Health & Social Care (& Deputy Leader) | Councillor Hussain |
| • Housing & Urban Renewal | Councillor Ajaib |
| • Environment and Leisure | Councillor Bal |
| • Regulation and Consumer Protection | Councillor Sohal |
| • Transport and Highways | Councillor Matloob |
| • Digital transformation & Customer Care | Councillor Sharif |

Where can you find a copy of the Notification of Decisions?

The Plan will be updated and republished monthly. A copy can be obtained from Democratic Services at St Martin's Place, 51 Bath Road on weekdays between 9.00 a.m. and 4.45 p.m., from MyCouncil, Landmark Place, High Street, or Tel: (01753) 875120, email: catherine.meek@slough.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Borough's libraries and a copy will be published on Slough Borough Council's Website.

How can you have your say on Cabinet reports?

Each Report has a contact officer. If you want to comment or make representations, notify the contact officer before the deadline given.

What about the Papers considered when the decision is made?

Reports relied on to make key decisions will be available before the meeting on the Council's website or are available from Democratic Services.

Can you attend the meeting at which the decision will be taken?

Where decisions are made by the Cabinet, the majority of these will be made in open meetings. Some decisions have to be taken in private, where they are exempt or confidential as detailed in the Local Government Act 1972. You will be able to attend the discussions on all other decisions.

When will the decision come into force?

Implementation of decisions will be delayed for 5 working days after Members are notified of the decisions to allow Members to refer the decisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, unless the decision is urgent, in which case it may be implemented immediately.

What about key decisions taken by officers?

Many of the Council's decisions are taken by officers under delegated authority. Key decisions will be listed with those to be taken by the Cabinet. Key and Significant Decisions taken under delegated authority are reported monthly and published on the Council's website.

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Are there exceptions to the above arrangements?

There will be occasions when it will not be possible to include a decision/report in this Notice. If a key decision is not in this Notice but cannot be delayed until the next Notice is published, it can still be taken if:

- The Head of Democratic Services has informed the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel in writing, of the proposed decision/action. (In the absence of the above, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be consulted);
- Copies of the Notice have been made available to the Public; and at least 5 working days have passed since public notice was given.
- If the decision is too urgent to comply with the above requirement, the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been obtained that the decision cannot be reasonably deferred.
- If the decision needs to be taken in the private part of a meeting (Part II) and Notice of this has not been published, the Head of Democratic Services will seek permission from the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, and publish a Notice setting out how representations can be made in relation to the intention to consider the matter in Part II of the agenda. Urgent Notices are published on the Council's [website](#).

Cabinet - 21st November 2016

Item	Portfolio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<u>Finance Update</u> To receive an update on the latest revenue and capital position; and to consider any write off requests, virements and any other financial decisions requiring Cabinet approval.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None		
<u>Performance Report: 2nd Quarter 2016/17</u> To receive the latest performance information for the period between July to September 2016.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None		
<u>Medium Term Financial Planning Update and Initial Savings Proposals</u> To consider an update on the Council's medium term financial planning position and consider any initial savings proposals as part of the development of the revenue budget 2017/18.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None	√	
<u>Issues and Options for Review of the Local Plan for Slough</u> To agree Issues and Options for the review of Slough's Local Plan which would be the subject of public consultation.	H&U	All	All	Paul Stimpson, Strategic Lead Planning Policy & Projects Tel: (01753) 875820	Planning Committee	None		

Portfolio Key – F&S = Finance and Strategy, DT = Digital Transformation, E & L = Environment and Leisure, E & C = Education and Children, T & H = Transport & Highways, R & C = Regulation and Consumer Protection, H & S = Health and Social Care, H & U = Housing & Urban Renewal

Bold – Key Decision

Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision

Italics – Performance/Monitoring Report

<u>Draft Housing Strategy</u> To consider the draft Slough Housing Strategy and consider the arrangements for the public consultation.	H&U	All	All	Mike England, Interim Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources Tel: 01753 875301	-	None	√	
<u>CPO Approvals for Empty Properties</u> To seek Cabinet approval to apply for a CPO to bring seven properties back into residential use and remove the blight caused to the neighbourhoods.	H&U	Baylis and Stoke; Cippenham Green; Langley Kederminster ; Wexham Lea	All	Amir Salarkia, Interim Housing Regulation Manager Tel: 01753 875540	-	None	√	Yes, p3 LGA
<u>Strategic Acquisition Strategy</u> To seek approval to allocate an increased budget for the Strategic Acquisition Strategy to secure additional land and/or investment assets that will improve the Council's financial resilience.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Gibson, Head of Asset Management Tel: 01753 875852	-	None	√	Yes, p3 LGA
<u>Lease Slough Refugee Support, 28 Bath Road, Salt Hill Park</u> The Cabinet is requested to approve the letting of 28 Bath Road to Slough Refugee Support and to recommend same to full Council on 29th November 2016.	E&L	Chalvey	Regeneration & Environment	Stuart Aislabie, Principal Asset Manager Tel: 01753 477226	-	None	√	
<u>Digital Transformation</u> To set out the emerging business case considerations for and approach to the Council's digital transformation and seek approval to proceed with the Design Phase as proposed.	DT	All	All	Nick Vat, Business Transformation Manager Tel: 07949 329 645	-	None		

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Bold – Key Decision

Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision

Italics – Performance/Monitoring Report

<u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u> <i>To consider any recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels.</i>	DT	All	All	Shabana Kauser, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01753 787503	-	None		
<u>Notification of Forthcoming Decisions</u> <i>To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</i>	F&S	All	All	Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01753 875011	-	None		

Cabinet - 19th December 2016

Item	Port- folio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<u>Finance Update</u> To receive an update on the latest revenue and capital position; and to consider any write off requests, virements and any other financial decisions requiring Cabinet approval.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None		
<u>Council Taxbases for 2017/18</u> To present information on the properties in Slough and their categories of occupation for the purpose of determining the council taxbase for the borough for the 2017/18 financial year.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None		

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Italics – Performance/Monitoring Report

<u>Subsidiary Housing Companies Update</u> Further to the Cabinet decisions of 5 th September 2016, to receive an update on the establishment of a housing company group structure and business plan.	H&U	All	All	Stephen Gibson, Head of Asset Management Tel: 01753 875852	-	None		Yes, p3 LGA
<u>Learning Disabilities Services Reconfiguration Update</u> As agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 17 th July 2016, to consider a further report on the progress made in reconfiguring learning disability day services.	H&S	All	All	Alan Sinclair, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care Tel: (01753) 875752	-	None		
<u>Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan Progress Report</u> Further to the report to Cabinet on 17 th October 2016, to consider a final report on the community hub proposals forming the Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan, subject to the provision of a viable business case, if required.	H&U	Langley Kedermister	All	Stephen Gibson, Head of Asset Management Tel: 01753 875852	-	Trelawney Avenue Update v6, 17/10/2016 Cabinet	√	Yes, p3 LGA
<u>RMI Contract - Progress Update</u> To consider a report updating the Cabinet on the procurement of a Repairs, Maintenance & Investment contract and to determine the shortlist of bidders.	H&U	All	All	Mike England, Interim Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources Tel: 01753 875301	-	None	√	Yes, p3 LGA
<u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u> <i>To consider any recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels.</i>	DT	All	All	Shabana Kauser, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01753 787503	-	None		

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Italics – Performance/Monitoring Report

<u>Notification of Forthcoming Decisions</u> <i>To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</i>	F&S	All	All	Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01753 875011	-	None		
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Cabinet - 23rd January 2017

Item	Portfolio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<u>Finance Update</u> To receive an update on the latest revenue and capital position; and to consider any write off requests, virements and any other financial decisions requiring Cabinet approval.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None	√	
<u>Council Tax Support Scheme 2017-18</u> To agree a scheme for the administration of Council Tax support for 2017-18.	F&S	All	All	Stephen Fitzgerald, Interim AD, Finance & Audit Tel: 01753 875358	-	None	√	
<u>Five Year Plan 2017-2021</u> To consider the revised Five Year Plan 2017-21, and if approved to recommend to full Council on 31 st January 2017.	F&S	All	All	Tracy Luck, Assistant Director Strategy & Engagement Tel: 01753 875518	-	None	√	
<u>Slough Housing Strategy</u> To consider the new Slough Housing Council, and if approved to recommend the document to full Council on 31 st January 2017.	H&U	All	All	Mike England, Interim Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources Tel: 01753 875301	-	None	√	

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Italics – Performance/Monitoring Report

<u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u> <i>To consider any recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels.</i>	DT	All	All	Shabana Kauser, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01753 787503	-	None	√	
<u>Notification of Forthcoming Decisions</u> <i>To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</i>	F&S	All	All	Catherine Meek, Head of Democratic Services Tel: 01753 875011	-	None	√	

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