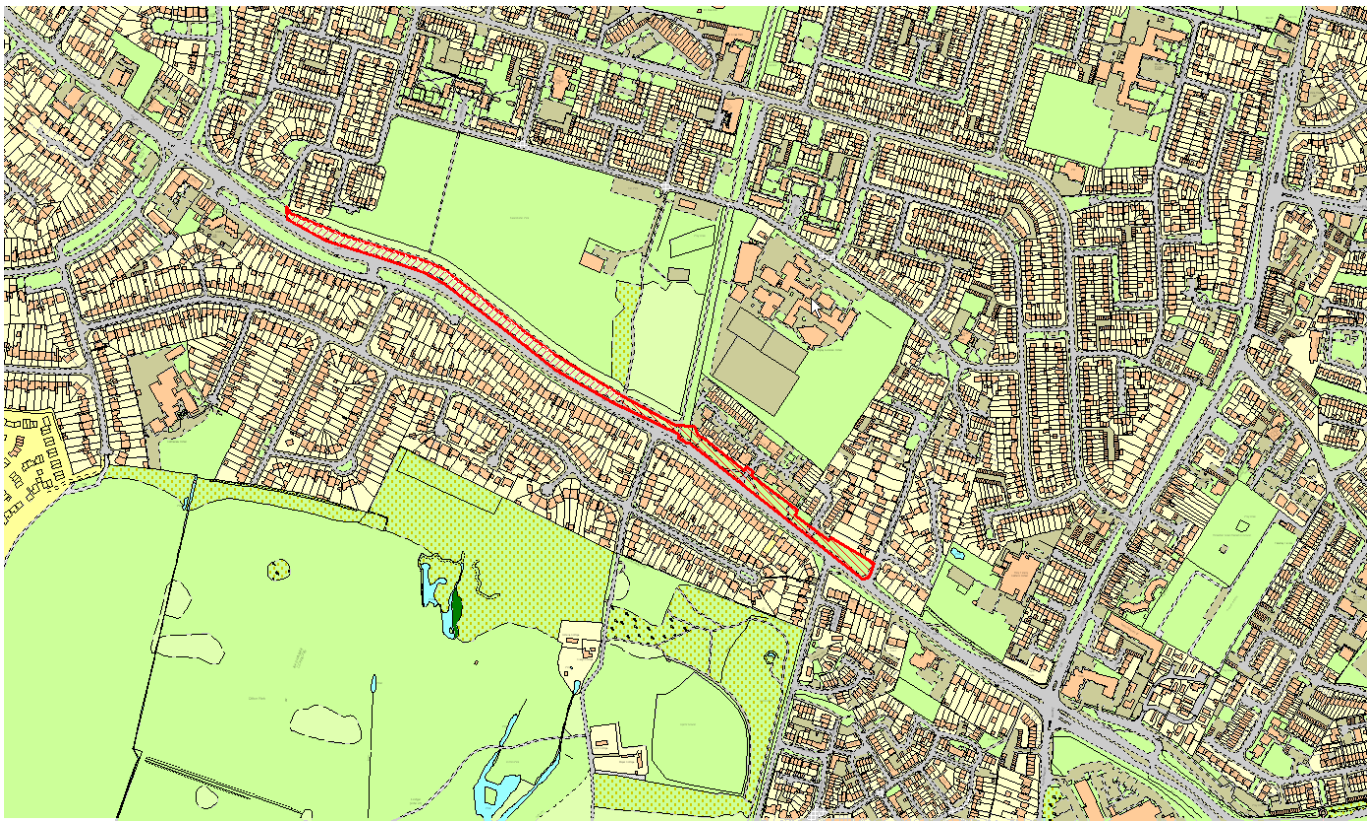
		Applic. No:	S/00712/000
Registration Date:	10-Aug-2015	**Ward:**	Langley Kedermister
Officer:	Neetal Rajput	**Applic type:**	

Applicant: Mr. Savio Decruz, Local Highway Authority, SBC

Location: Between Upton Court & Langley Broom

Proposal: Widening of the existing carriageway in Parkland verge to form additional bus and traffic lanes and footway / cycleway connections along A4 London Road.

Recommendation: Delegated to the Planning Manager



1.0 **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 This application has been referred to the Planning Committee for consideration as the application has been submitted by the Local Highway Authority and a number of objections have been received.

1.2 Having considered the relevant policies set out below, the representations received from consultees and all other relevant material considerations, it is recommended that the application be delegated to the Planning Manager for formal determination following resolution of outstanding highway and transport matters and finalising of conditions.

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 **Proposal**

2.1 This is a full planning application for widening of the existing carriageway in parkland verge to form additional bus and traffic lanes and footway / cycleway connections along A4 London Road. The formation of a bus lane is to provide a high quality bus priority route between Slough Trading Estate, Slough Town Centre (including bus station) and Heathrow Airport running along the A4. The application has been submitted by the Local Highway Authority and scheme is referred to as Slough Mass Rapid Transit 'SMaRT'.

2.2 The bus lane proposal seeks to reduce bus journey times and improving reliability. In peak times bus services along the A4 get stuck in traffic and SMaRT will improve conditions for both passengers and the operators. This will provide the opportunity in particular to increase the frequency of services 75/76 between Slough Trading Estate, the town centre, Langley and Heathrow from one bus every 15 minutes (up to every 18 minutes at peak) to one bus every 10 minutes.

2.3 The SMaRT project will promote sustainable alternatives to private cars, and will ensure that major employment areas such as Slough Trading Estate and the town centre will be accessible by sustainable transport. This increased accessibility and connectivity will help residents to make healthier and more sustainable choices about how they travel, and will enhance social inclusion.

2.4 Relieving traffic congestion and reducing stop-start traffic will also have a beneficial effect on air quality, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas 3 and 4 (Tuns Lane/Farnham Road and Town Centre). A planning application (S/00713/000) has been submitted for road widening in order to facilitate a dedicated bus lane between the service road and the A4 and an additional traffic lane to Tuns Lane junction, this is currently under consideration.

2.5 SMaRT will improve crossings for pedestrians and cyclists via a dedicated formal pathway along London Road. The bus lane will operate 24 hours.

3.0 **Application Site**

3.1 The application site boundary is from Fox Road, along the A4 London Road to Langley Broom.

3.2 The application site boundary falls outside of the town centre and is not within a flood risk zone.

4.0 Site History

4.1 There are no relevant planning applications related to the proposal.

5.0 Neighbour Notification

5.1 238, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 284, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 248, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 3, Langley Broom, Slough, SL3 8NB, 210, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 242, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 274, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 198, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, Flat, 118, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, Flat, 122, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 120b, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 120c, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 120a, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 300, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 2b, Haynes Close, Slough, SL3 8NA, 2c, Haynes Close, Slough, SL3 8NA, 2a, Haynes Close, Slough, SL3 8NA, 87, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 82, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 85, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 88, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 84, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 90, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 89, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 83, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 86, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 68, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 2, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 5, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 4, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 1, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 3, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 9, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 8, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 7, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 6, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 81, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 76, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 80, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 75, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 78, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 79, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 77, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 203, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 207, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 209, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 211, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 201, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 205, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 215, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 213, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 219, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 217, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 221, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 225, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 223, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 11, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 14, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 16, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 10, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 15, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 12, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 74, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 71, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 69, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 73, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 70, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 72, Tobermory Close, Slough, SL3 7JG, 304, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 19, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 290, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 180, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 334, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 32, Hubert Road, Slough, SL3 7SF, 312, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 338, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 270, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 320, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 194, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 250, London Road,

Slough, SL3 7HT, 214, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 218, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 7 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 6 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 2 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 296, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 200, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 11, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 342, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 190, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 254, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 232, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 17, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 186, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 346, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 280, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 308, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 262, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 182, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 244, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 362, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HX, 258, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 178, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 292, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 236, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 332, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 2, Fox Road, Slough, SL3 7SG, 336, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 5 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 4 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 1 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 272, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 298, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 302, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 306, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 234, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 21, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 310, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 220, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 9 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 8 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, 3 Calder Court, Ditton Park Road, Slough, SL3 7HY, Langley Grammar School, Reddington Drive, Slough, SL3 7QS, 326, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 256, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 260, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 314, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 268, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 192, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 208, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 15, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 264, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 318, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 1, Haynes Close, Slough, SL3 8NA, 348, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 2, Haynes Close, Slough, SL3 8NA, 350, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 286, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 212, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 216, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 344, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 322, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 364, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HX, 204, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 14, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 188, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 360, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HX, 229, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 227, London Road, Slough, SL3 7JN, 226, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 324, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 366, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HX, 328, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 176, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 184, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 278, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 2, The Briars, Slough, SL3 8PG, 13, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 316, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 206, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 222, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 266, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 276, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 288, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 240, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 228, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 224, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 230, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 294, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 340, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 252, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 246, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 282, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HT, 330, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HU, 202, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS, 23, Webb Close, Slough, SL3 7SQ, 196, London Road, Slough, SL3 7HS

5.2 There have been seven objections received, these are summarised below:

- Contrary to Policy 2 - Erosion of open space, with creation of tarmac and loss of mature trees.
- Contrary to Policy 7 – unsustainable as the route is not readily accessible to a large selection of Langley population. Existing routes to Heathrow operating in accessible points along Langley Road, High Street and Trelawney Avenue.
- Contrary to Policy 8 – Fails to identify how the quality of the environment will be improved by the loss of mature trees and open space and increase in tarmac.
- Contrary to Policy 9 – No reference to how additional tarmac and roadway will respect the character and distinctiveness of the existing landscape.
- Fails Policy EN1 – visual impact and loss of mature trees.
- Increase in traffic and heavy goods vehicles
- Increase in noise levels - proximity of traffic to properties.
- Loss of privacy – overlooking from buses
- Loss of existing parking
- Increase in pollution levels
- Loss of trees and existing landscaping
- Higher risk of road traffic accidents
- Quality of life reduced to loss of open space
- Need traffic calming measures not potential for increase in traffic
- Pedestrian safety
- Loss of neutral area / neutral safe zone
- No pedestrian safe havens in the neutral areas

6.0 **Consultation**

6.1 Traffic and Road Safety/Highways Development

6.2 The detailed comments are noted within Section 10.0 of this report. Amendments have been requested by the Council's Transport Consultant to change the scheme design, these are noted below.

The following recommendations are requested of the proposed design to take account of the issues arising from the scheme:

1. Where existing traffic islands are proposed to be removed they need to be re-introduced on all sections where they can be incorporated as part of right turn lanes. A further traffic island should be provided outside of the Harvester public house to assist pedestrians cross the carriageway to the bus stop on the north side, as this part of the carriageway will be harder to cross once the road is widened. It is envisaged that a total of 3 traffic islands/pedestrian refuges should be provided in the following locations:
    - East side of the service road leading to Drake Avenue;
    - West side of Haynes Close;
    - Between the entrance and exit of the Harvester public house;
2. Amendments should be made to the existing/proposed refuges at the following locations:
    - East side of the Fire Station access junction – refuge to be widened;
    - West side of Langley Broom the proposed refuge should be located closer to the junction of Langley Broom where the central hatching is wider.

3. Where traffic islands and refuges are to be implemented then connecting paths between the footways and service roads should be provided on desire lines. Redundant paths should be dug out and the verges/parkland reinstated;
4. The central island of the toucan crossing should be enlarged to a minimum width of 3.5m metre;
5. Bus Stops and Shelters – the hardstanding areas around bus stops and the paths leading to the set-back path on the parkland should be reduced in width and area. The connecting paths should be no wider than 1.8m, the bus shelters sited closer to the kerb line and the remaining hardstanding area minimized to help reduce the amount of new paved area on the parkland;
6. All cycleways should be provided as unsegregated shared use to minimize street clutter and signage. The set-back path should be signed with wooden bollards such that the impact of the cycleway signage is minimized on the parkland;
7. Latest DfT guidance on tactile and corduroy paving should be taken into account;
8. The set-back path through the parkland in front of Kedermister Park, which is currently maintained by the Parks Department, and any other sections of the path that are not on adopted highway land should be upgraded to adopted highway and thus maintained by the local highway authority, which would mean the path would benefit from more frequent maintenance and sweeping routines;
9. The set-back path (the new footway/cycleway) in front of Kedermister Park and on the section between Tobermory Close and Langley Broom should be lit with lamp columns along its length and the surface quality improved where necessary;
10. The new footway/cycleway that is proposed adjacent the carriageway between the Cedar Way eastbound bus stop and the Cedar Way toucan crossing should be deleted and the existing footway dug out and the grass verge reintroduced;
11. There are redundant sections of footway at and between Tobermory Close and Langley Broom that are not shown on the drawing as to be dug out and the verge reinstated, but clearly need to be removed and therefore the drawings revised;
12. The footway/cycleway should be realigned further away from the carriageway edge and a highway verge introduced along the section between the Cedar Way toucan crossing and Tobermory Close;
13. The alignment of the footway/cycleway and the existing footway on Haynes Close need to be amended in the vicinity of Haynes Close;
14. The last eastbound bus stop layby before the Upton Court Road junction is being infilled and whilst this is outside of the redline of the application, there is an opportunity to reduce the amount of paved area and replace asphalt with grass verge.

Subject to the applicant making the design changes as listed above and revised drawings being submitted in time for planning committee I would raise no highway objection. The requested changes should be considered as part of the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit which should then be re-submitted for review.

6.3 Tree Management Officer

6.4 4 Mature oak, 2 mature limes between Langley Broom and Haynes Close – The new foot path is shown within the rooting area of these trees, it needs to be moved north or constructed using a no dig methods as described in APN 12. Further where excavation is undertaken to make the foot path carriage way this should be undertaken by hand and if major roots are found further advise sort as to the viability of the trees.

Pine and Purple Plum west side of Haynes Close, Comments as above re foot path and carriageway.

Trees to the front of Tobermory Close and 201 -229 London Road, comments as above, there is one stemmed elm needs to be removed which is of poor structure and need not be replaced.

Trees to be front of Keddermister Park, many of the trees that are near to the new carriageway are relatively young and should not be adversely affected by the work. However one mature lime opposite 272 London Road will need to be removed (possibly reduced) and one mature lime opposite 224 London Road will need to be reduced as excavations will come close to the trees.

I hope this is informative, all in all the effect on the trees can be kept to an acceptable level if tree sensitive construction and excavation methods are used, and if some planting is undertaken to mitigate the trees that have to be removed.

6.5 Berkshire Archaeology

6.6 While there are no implications for the buried archaeological heritage from the above proposal, Berkshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Record notes the existence of a Grade II listed late 18th century milestone immediately adjacent to the proposed works in the south verge of London Road, at its junction with Drake Avenue. The milestone is inscribed and made of stone, painted white.

As I understand it, the listed milestone will not be directly impacted by the proposal (but suggest this is checked by someone more familiar with the proposal) but may be vulnerable to harm from temporary storage areas, compounds, vehicle parking or similar. It may be advisable, therefore, to bring this to the attention of the applicant so that appropriate measures, if needed, can be put in place to protect this designated monument, should this proposal proceed.

6.7 Environmental Quality

6.8 No comments received, should comments be received these will be included on the Amendment Sheet.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 Policy Background

7.1 The following policies are considered most relevant to the assessment of this application:

National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 and the Planning Practice Guidance

The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document, Adopted December 2008
Core Policy 1 – Spatial Strategy
Core Policy 7 – Transport
Core Policy 8 – Sustainability and the Environment
Core Policy 9 – Natural and Built Environment
Core Policy 10 – Infrastructure

The Local Plan for Slough, Adopted March 2004
Policy EN3 – Landscaping Requirements
Policy T8 – Cycling Network and Facilities
Policy T9 – Bus Network and Facilities
Policy T13 - Road Widening Lines
Policy OSC8 – Green Spaces

Other Relevant Documents/Statements
Slough Borough Council Developer's Guide Parts 1-4
Slough Local Development Framework Proposals Map

Composite Local Plan – Slough Local Development Plan and the NPPF - PAS Self Assessment Checklist

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Annex 1 to the National Planning Policy Framework advises that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). The Local Planning Authority has published a self assessment of the Consistency of the Slough Local Development Plan with the National Planning Policy Framework using the PAS NPPF Checklist. The detailed Self Assessment undertaken identifies that the above policies are generally in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies that form the Slough Local Development Plan are to be applied in conjunction with a statement of intent with regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It was agreed at Planning Committee in October 2012 that it was not necessary to carry out a full scale review of Slough's
Development Plan at present, and that instead the parts of the current adopted Development Plan or Slough should all be republished in a single 'Composite Development Plan' for Slough. The Planning Committee endorsed the use of this Composite Local Plan for Slough in July 2013.

7.2 There are considered to be a number of issues relevant to the assessment of this application. The main issues are considered to be are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Visual Impact on neighbour amenity
- Highways and traffic
- Trees and landscaping

8.0 **Principle of Development**

8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states at paragraph 29 that "*The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel*." At paragraph 30, the NPPF states that *"encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion."*

8.2 One of the core planning principles within the NPPF is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth, this includes the provision to upgrade existing infrastructure.

8.3 The Council's strategic objective within the Core Strategy is to reduce the need to travel and create a transport system that encourages sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport.

8.4 Core Policy 7 of The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document reinforces the principles of the transport strategy as set out in the council's Local Transport Plan and Spatial Strategy, which seeks to ensure that development proposals should make appropriate provisions for:

- Reducing the need to travel;
- Widening travel choices and making travel by sustainable means of transport more attractive than the private car;
- Improving road safety; and
- Improving air quality and reducing the impact of travel upon the environment, in particular climate change.

8.5 Providing a sustainable service which will be a genuine alternative to the private car will reduce congestion on the approach to the town centre by encouraging people to leave their cars at home and make use of sustainable transport choices. In turn, this will contribute towards a reduction in emissions from 'stop start' road traffic, which will have a positive impact on the environment and on Slough's Air Quality Management Areas, as such the proposal is compliant with the NPPF. An Air Quality Assessment has been requested, should this be received prior to committee, the outcome will be reported on the Amendment Sheet.

8.6 One of Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities is health which is to ensure better community engagement to improve the wellbeing of our residents and increase residents' level of physical activity. It is considered that the SMaRT project will promote sustainable alternatives to private cars, and will ensure that major employment areas such as Slough Trading Estate and the town centre will be accessible by sustainable transport. This increased accessibility and connectivity will help residents to make healthier and more sustainable choices about how they travel, and will enhance social inclusion.

8.7 The Cabinet Report issued in January 2015, highlighted the potential benefits of SMaRT, for reference these have been outlined below:

- Help to reduce congestion, improve journey time reliability, and enhances access to the Town Centre, Trading Estate and Heathrow. In doing so, the scheme will make Slough a more attractive location for business investment, thus contributing to the local economy.
- By tackling congestion, SMaRT also has the potential to reduce the current £34 million that Slough loses each year in wasted travel time alone.
- SMaRT will enable over 60,000 sq m of office space and other developments to be delivered in the town centre as part of the 'Heart of Slough' project.
- Enable access to a new secondary school in eastern Slough, thus contributing to the provision of skills and educational opportunities for young people.
- Increased connectivity to the town centre will also encourage retail developments and greater patronage of the town centre's amenities, thus contributing to its regeneration.
- SMaRT will unlock the potential delivery of 2,300 dwellings in the centre of Slough as part of the 'Heart of Slough' project. With the scheme stretching to Junction 5 of the M4 it will also enable an additional 1,000 dwellings in the borough and will provide good links to enable housing opportunities to the east of Slough.
- The project will reduce congestion on one of the main approaches into the town centre and Slough Trading Estate, which has the potential to significantly improve the image and perception of the town in the eyes of businesses and visitors. Moreover, the increased connectivity to the centre of town and the Trading Estate will contribute towards enhancing the image of Slough as an economic hub and an excellent location for business investment.

8.8 The proposal would support the growth of infrastructure of the existing road network and promote sustainable travel within the Borough. The principle of the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable. The principle of the proposal would comply with the Council's strategic objectives of The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document, December 2008, and the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

9.0 **Visual Impact on neighbour amenity**

9.1 Core Policy 8 of The Slough Local Development Framework require that development shall be of a high quality design which shall respect its location and surroundings and provide landscaping as an integral part of the design. The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

9.2 As a result of the proposal, there will be visual impact to the residents along London Road as the road will be widen, thus there will be encroachment on the existing footpath/parkland. However, where there are opportunities to enhance the environment via replacement trees and soft landscaping, this will be implemented. In terms of impact to the residential properties along London Road, the scheme offers an opportunity to better walking and cycle network by means of re-alignment of the footpath.

9.3 It is considered that the works are required to serve the existing community and future

growth in the borough, as such investing in the existing road network is essential and mitigation such as replacement tree planting will be incorporated into the design of the scheme. Therefore, it is not considered that there will be a detrimental impact to the amenities of residents along London Road.

9.4 In terms of design and impact on residential properties, it is concluded that the proposal would be acceptable having regard to the proposed visual impact. The proposal would comply with Core Policy 8 of The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document, December 2008 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.0 **Highways and Traffic**

10.1 This is a proposal for road widening to facilitate a bus lane along the section of the A4 London Road between Upton Court Road and High Street Langley. The intention of the scheme is to provide a high quality bus priority route between Slough Trading Estate, Slough Town Centre (including bus station) and Heathrow Airport running along the A4. Much of the proposed scheme between the Trading Estate and Heathrow Airport is already within the adopted highway and the proposed works do not require planning consent, but there are two sections of the route that do require planning consent, as the land on which the works are proposed to take place is not within the adopted highway. It should be noted that the area of the planning application is smaller than that of the full scheme shown on the submitted drawings. The area covered by the application is between Fox Road and Langley Broom and is along the northern side of the existing carriageway.

The applicant has not submitted a Design and Access Statement in support of the application but has provided scheme design drawings. Further drawings and information has been provided on request including accident data, road safety audit and designer response, drainage design drawings and landscaping mitigation plans. Stage 1 Road Safety Audits were undertaken by an independent road safety auditor (Acorns Projects Ltd).

10.2 The proposed scheme is consistent with Policy T8: Cycle Network and Facilities of the Slough Local Plan 2004, as it seeks to provide some enhanced cycle facilities along the route. In applying this policy, the Council will ensure that the design of the development will achieve a high level of safety, security and convenience for cyclists compatible with a high quality environment within the scheme and with no detriment to the occupants of nearby buildings. It is considered that in the large part the scheme addresses the Policy, but further consideration should be given to personal security where the footway/cycleway is set back from the road is not lit.

10.3 The proposed scheme is consistent with Policy T9: Bus Network and Facilities of the Slough Local Plan 2004. This Policy seeks to ensure that Development proposals are designed to provide improved facilities for and access to bus services. The scheme is designed provide bus lanes that will operate 24 hours a day and this will help improve punctuality and reliability of services along the A4 corridor. Whilst modal shift from car to bus cannot be guaranteed with schemes such as the one proposed, other schemes around the UK have achieved modal shift.

10.4 The proposed scheme is consistent with Policy T13 – Road Widening Lines of the Slough Local Plan 2004. The existing widening line allows for highway improvement in whatever form and the A4 London Road adopted widening line extends from Slough Town Centre to M4 J5 including the section within this planning application.

10.5 Accident Analysis

Accident data has been reviewed on the section of the scheme on A4 London Road between Upton Court Road and High Street Langley. Over the 5 year period between 1/4/09 and 31/03/14 there were only 11 accidents of which 1 was serious and 10 were slight accidents. This is considered a very low accident rate for the length of scheme. Two of the accidents were caused by fatigued drivers and a third accident was caused by intoxicated driver. The causes of the remaining accidents have been reviewed and there were no obvious patterns, but 4 accidents did involve pedal cyclists of which two of them occurred at the junction of Tobermory Close where left turning vehicles collided with cyclists on the carriageway and on the footway.

10.6 General Scheme Description

The new eastbound bus lane starts at the junction of London Road/Upton Court Road/Trelawney Avenue and the bus lane replaces the existing bus layby and then continues east generally along the alignment of the existing cycleway which is located adjacent to the carriageway edge. Whilst the back edge of the existing cycleway is not fully shown on the submitted drawings the new bus lane does in some sections extend beyond the back edge of the cycleway. At the widest point it extends a further 2.4m into the parkland in the vicinity of Drake Avenue.

To the east of the Cedar Way toucan crossing, the general alignment of the eastbound bus lane is in part within the existing footway/cycleway that abuts the carriageway edge. A consequence of this is that the shared use footway/cycleway is then widened into the adopted verge in front of the Tobermory Close housing development. Between the junctions of Tobermory Close and Langley Broom, the bus lane continue in the alignment of the footway/cycleway an thus a new path is provided within the adopted verge, set-back from the new carriageway edge by a distance of circa 10m.

10.7 Lane Widths

The existing carriageway width along this section of London Road ranges from 9.4m outside 246 London Road to 13.3m at the existing toucan crossing at Green Drive. The proposed carriageway width will measure within the range of 12.5m near the Fire Station to 15.7m at the Cedar Way toucan crossing. The maximum widening of the carriageway falls within the section near Drake Avenue where the carriageway width will increase by 4.8m. The width of the carriageway lanes does vary slightly along the length of the route to take account of the curvature of the road, right turn lanes, crossing points and the start and end of bus lanes. The nearside lane widths are generally circa 3.35m wide and the all traffic running lanes are circa 3.0m wide. The proposed lane widths are considered acceptable subject to any specific comments set out below.

10.8 Impact on Pedestrian Movement and Facilities

10.9 Traffic Islands and Informal Pedestrian Crossing Locations

There are a number of existing traffic islands along this section of London Road which have dropped crossings for pedestrian use. The proposed scheme removes all but one of the traffic islands and this will make it harder and less safe for pedestrians to cross the widened carriageway. The road safety stage audit identifies this as a Problem as the *"removal of existing pedestrian refuge islands could result in a slight detriment to pedestrian safety."* Whilst the Designers Response states that the islands will be reinstated this is not the case in latest design drawing. There does not seem to be a technical reason why traffic islands/refuges cannot be reintroduced as part of the proposed right turn lanes. The re-introduction of the traffic islands should also be considered as a safety feature, as they help to prevent overtaking manoeuvres being undertaken in the right turn lanes and thus the likely exceedance of the speed limit.

The one existing traffic island being kept is located 20m to the east of the junction with eastern access to the London Road service road at Drake Avenue. This island provides a crossing facility for pedestrians between Fox Road and the shops on London Road service road. The width of the westbound carriageway in this vicinity is 3.85m and therefore it could be narrowed to 3.35m which would allow the right turn lane and the associated traffic island to be enlarged to provide a better pedestrian facility in a busy location.

10.10 Controlled Crossing for Shared Cycle/Pedestrian Use

The existing carriageway has a toucan crossing where Green Drive meets London Road 20 metres to the east of the Cedar Way junction. The existing crossing facility does not have a central island and therefore from a pedestrian/cyclist perspective it provides the most direct and accessible alignment with the least amount of delay for these users. However there are both highway safety and traffic flow disbenefits with straight across crossings on roads with multiple lanes and these are as follows:

- There is a higher risk of collisions between vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists as they may start crossing at the end of the green man phase as the light changes to flashing amber and drivers overtaking nearside vehicles (bus) may not be able to see pedestrians on the crossing leading to potential collisions;
- The wider the road corridor width there is a risk that drivers may not see the traffic signals as the aspects may be outside the drivers peripheral vision; and
- Greater crossing distance meaning that the lights are at red for longer, which causes delays to road traffic.

With the widening of the carriageway to 15.67m in this location, it would exceed the maximum recommended width of straight across crossings as set out in the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Note (LTN) 2/95. Para 5.2.3 refers to the crossing length, and states that

"if the road is greater than 15m width a stagger should be provided and for roads of width 11m or more a staggered crossing should be considered."

It is accepted that a staggered crossing is appropriate in this location. However it is

concern that the width of the staggered island is only 2.8m wide when the preferred width would be 4m for combined pedestrian/ cycle crossings (toucans). The crossing is shown with guard-rail, which would further reduce the usable space within the "sheep pen" and therefore the proposed width is considered insufficient taking account of the likely high volume of pedestrian/cycle movements at the beginning and end of the school day. Discussions have been undertaken with the project design team and they have indicated that they would be able to widen the island to 3.5m wide and potentially exclude the provision of guard-railing. The issue of whether the guard-railing is retained should be considered in the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit.

10.11 Impact on Cycle Movements and Cycle Facilities

The scheme in general proposes the removal of the existing cycleway adjacent to the carriageway edge on the north side of London Road. This is not considered to be a significant impact of the scheme for the following reasons:

- There is an existing 3m path through the parkland that is set circa 15m back from the edge of the existing carriageway. This is a very pleasant route that is currently used by both pedestrians and cyclists. School children from the nearby Langley Grammar and Langley Academy Schools have been observed to use this facility. The existing cycleway is from site observations is much less well used and from an user perspective is much less attractive as cyclists feel less safer when cycling adjacent to roads particularly those with speed limits of 40mph or above. The further away from the carriageway means that they experience less noise and air pollution and there is less glass and other road debris on the paths. Experienced cyclists who wish to cycle fast are much more likely to use the new bus lanes, as the surface will be better than the footway and they will not need to give way to vehicular traffic at side roads. Therefore the loss of the cycleway adjacent to the kerb edge is acceptable and is likely to lead to a better facility for cyclists using the set-back path through the parkland;
- From a pedestrian perspective there will be an increase in cycle movement on the set-back path and this will have a small detrimental impact on the user experience. However as the path is 3m wide and therefore consistent with the national cycle route standards for shared use and that width of path is considered acceptable elsewhere in the Borough I think it is an acceptable solution to designate the existing path through the parkland for shared cycle/pedestrian use. This is supported by paragraphs 6.7 to 6.9 of the DfT LTN 1/12: Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists. The guidance advises that:
  - *"6.7 - Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists is not a common occurrence [on shared use paths]. Nevertheless, perception of reduced safety is an important issue for consideration, because it has a bearing on user comfort, especially for older people and disabled people.*
  - *6.8 - Converting a footpath or footway to shared use will often result in less space for pedestrians to some extent (especially where the route is segregated). This aspect needs to be carefully managed to ensure that pedestrians have sufficient width after conversion.*
  - *6.9 - Pedestrians can benefit from shared use schemes by, for example, the introduction of better surfacing or upgraded lighting."*

  The existing set-back path is not lit and it is recommended that given that it will form the footway along the northern side of the A4 London Road it should be lit and the surface quality of the path should be reviewed and where it is in poor

condition it should be resurfaced;

- A new footway/cycleway is shown to be provided adjacent to the northern kerb line from the bus stop that is located 90m to the west of the junction with Cedar Way to the proposed toucan crossing serving Green Drive. As cyclists and pedestrians will already be using the set-back path it is considered that this new footway/cycleway is not required and therefore it should be deleted from the plans. This will help reduce the impact of the wider scheme on the parkland;
- To the east of the Cedar Way toucan crossing the existing footway/cycleway has been widened into the adopted verge to a width of 3m. The logic of the alignment of the path through this section does not correspond well with the rest of the scheme on the north side. The new shared use paths have predominately been aligned so that they are set back from the edge of the carriageway by circa 10m, but on this section it is aligned adjacent the kerb edge. As there is scope to re-align further into the adopted verge and away from the carriageway edge this option should be taken as this provides a more attractive and safer facility for the user particularly on roads where the speed limit is 40mph or over and where there are more than two traffic lanes;
    - The introduction of a verge between the shared use path and the carriageway allows for highway signage and other street furniture to be accommodated within this area. The verge will also capture glass and other fine road debris that accumulates on footways adjacent road edges and as it's a shared use path would therefore require greater routine sweeping;
- On the section of shared use footway/cycleway between Tobermory Close and Haynes Close the proposed new path is within close proximity to an existing lit pedestrian path that runs along the southern frontage of the Tobermory Close development. This path is not adopted and I am not clear as to whether it is maintained by the developer or by the SBC Parks department. If it is maintained by SBC Parks then consideration should be given to combining these paths together such that the paved area is reduced on the adopted verge. If the path is outside of the control of the Council then the current alignment should be considered acceptable, although where possible a bit more interest in terms of creating a meandering path is recommended through green spaces;
- The alignment of the footway/cycleway as it approaches Haynes Close from the west is along the edge of a close boarded fence, which means that there is no forward visibility for cyclists of pedestrians emerging from the footway on Haynes Close and this will create a potential conflict point. It is possible to design this out by re-aligning the existing footway on Haynes Close such that it does not run along the edge of the close boarded fence, but this would require the southern end of the Haynes Close footway to be dug out and re-aligned;
- The alignment of the informal crossing point of Haynes Close does not tie in well with the desire line across the junction and therefore this needs to be amended on the drawing. On the east side of the junction the proposed footway/cycleway passes in close proximity to the root protection zone of a mature tree. The alignment of the footway/cycleway could be changed such that it runs through the turning head which would help protect the tree.

10.12 Proposed Bus Stop Facilities

Changes to the existing bus stops should accord with the Council's Bus Stop Design guide (August 2013). Clarification is required as to which stops along the route will

benefit from new RTPI screens.

10.13 Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Off-Street Car Parking

It is understood that some objections have been received from local residents on the basis of the proposed widening of the carriageway into the adopted verge on the southern side of London Road between the Harvester public house and Ditton Park Road. This does not form part of the planning application as this widening is all within the adopted highway. However it should be noted that the residents have been parking on existing highway verges and they all have off-street parking within their reasonably extensive front driveways. Therefore on balance it is considered that this is an appropriate design.

11.0 **Drainage**

11.1 To carry out extensive works, on a major traffic route through the Borough, evidence is required that route is not susceptible to flooding or does not increase the risk of flooding to adjacent property.

11.2 Drainage drawings have been provided but further information has been requested from the Council's Drainage Officer to prove that the road scheme does not increase flood risk. The overall increase in paved area needs to be clearly identified together with how increased run off from it is not only drained but also how any increase in flood risk is to be mitigated. This could be achieved in a number of ways:

- Removing existing unnecessary paved surfaces
- Additional infiltration drainage for surfaces
- Attenuation

As such the drawings are required to show:

- catchment areas for gullies
- capacities of existing connections, carrier pipes and sewers
- the overall level of protection against flooding for the highway drainage system.

11.3 Should the above drawings be issued prior to Committee, these will be reported on the Amendment Sheet.

12.0 **Trees and Landscaping**

12.1 Existing Trees

12.2 There are a number of trees that have been removed as a result of the proposal. The removal of the trees was required prior to the determination of this application given the start of the nesting season in October. It is understood that works will commence soon as planning permission has been issued.

12.3 The Council's Tree Management Officer stated that overall effect on the trees can be kept to an acceptable level if tree sensitive construction and excavation methods are used, and if some planting is undertaken to mitigate the trees that have to be removed. To ensure the protection of the existing mature trees, a tree protection plan and Arboricultural Method Statement is required.

12.4 Turning to the proposed tree replacement plan, this has been issued as indicative purposes only, as such a condition has been recommended requiring submission of full details for replacement trees. It has been noted that an areas of hardstanding will be replaced with grass to offset the loss of some green areas for the creation of the footpath, this will mitigate the removal of soft landscaping and implement appropriate replacement planting.

12.5 Matters regarding trees and landscaping are therefore considered to be acceptable. The proposal would comply with Policy EN3 of The Adopted Local Plan for Slough 2004, Core Policy 8 of The Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, Development Plan Document, December 2008 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13.0 **Summary**

13.1 The proposal has been considered against relevant development plan policies, and regard has been had to the comments received from consultees and other interested parties, and all other relevant material considerations.

13.2 It is recommended that the application be delegated to the Planning Manager for formal determination following resolution of outstanding highway and transport matters and finalising of conditions.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

14.0 **Recommendation**

14.1 Delegated to the Planning Manager for formal determination following resolution of outstanding highway and transport matters and finalising of conditions.

14.2 **PART D: LIST OF CONDITIONS**

1. Time limit, 3 years
2. Approved plans
3. Protective fencing surrounding designated monument milestone
4. Detailed tree replacement landscaping plan
5. Arboricultural Method Statement and tree protection plan
6. Hand dig method for construction within root protection area of mature trees