

Local Plan for Slough Borough Council

The Proposed Spatial Strategy

Regulation 18 Consultation

2nd November -14th December

Foreword: to be inserted

Contents Page: to be inserted

1 About this Consultation

- 1.1 We are consulting people about the proposed Spatial Strategy that has been produced as part of the Local Plan for Slough. As a result we would like your views about where development should go in the Borough over the 20 year plan period.
- 1.2 The consultation runs for 6 weeks from 2nd November to 14th December 2020. All responses must be received before the close of consultation at 5pm.
- 1.3 We request that responses are submitted using the online form. The questions are also available in Word and PDF documents, and can be accessed from the following link: www.slough.gov.uk/localplan.
- 1.4 Those not using the online form should submit representations.
 - via email to: planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk
 - via post to: Planning Policy, Slough Borough Council, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Rd, Slough SL1 2EL.
- 1.5 If you have any queries in relation to the Local Plan Spatial Strategy consultation, please contact the Planning Policy team using the contact details above.
- 1.6 We will publish a consultation report after the consultation process has finished. This will detail all of the feedback we have received on this proposed Spatial Strategy consultation document.

2 What is the Proposed Spatial Strategy?

- 2.1 All Councils have a duty to produce a Local Plan for their area which contains proposals and policies for the future planning of their area.
- 2.2 The Proposed Spatial Strategy forms part of this. It sets out a vision and objectives along with proposals for what the pattern, scale and quality of development will be in Slough. This involves making sufficient provision to meet housing, employment and other needs whilst at the same time conserving the natural, built and historic environment. The overall aim is to decide “what goes

where” in the most sustainable way.

- 2.3 The proposed Spatial Strategy does not allocate any individual sites for development. This will be done at a later stage in the Local Plan process. It also does not contain any specific planning policies at this stage. Slough has an existing planning policy framework which will remain in force until replaced by new Local Plan policies in the future. The current planning policy framework will continue to deliver the Spatial Strategy in the short term.
- 2.4 How the proposed Spatial Strategy fits in with the preparation of the Local Plan for Slough is shown in. **Diagram X** below which sets out all of the stages of consultation and where we are now.

Insert diagram showing stages of consultation.

3 What's changed since the Issues and Options consultation?

- 3.1 The starting point for the development of the proposed Spatial Strategy is the Issues and Options consultation which took place in 2017. This identified a number of options for development but concluded that there are no reasonable options, or combinations of options which could accommodate all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough. An “emerging” proposed Spatial Strategy was agreed in 2018.
- 3.2 The Spatial Strategy has been revised to reflect a number of changes which have taken place since 2018.
- 3.3 The main difference is that it is now assumed that there will not be any expansion of Heathrow Airport in the short to medium term. This means that the Spatial Strategy does not have to plan to accommodate the proposed third runway. Any future proposals for the expansion of the airport can be considered in a review of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 We have also carried out further technical work. The Protecting the Suburbs Strategy (2020) concluded that it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing in the suburban residential areas to be lost to redevelopment
- 3.5 Part 1 of the Wider Area Growth Study has also been completed. This was jointly commissioned with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the former Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils. This has shown that Slough's unmet housing needs can only be met in a narrow area of search within southern Buckinghamshire south of the M40. Part 2 of the Study is underway and, will identify more precisely where unmet housing needs can best be accommodated..

- 3.6 We have also now produced the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework which contains a Master Plan and sets out the Council's corporate vision and spatial aspirations for the development and regeneration in the centre of the town over the next 15 years.
- 3.7 To read more detailed information about how the proposed Spatial Strategy has been prepared, please visit <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>
- 3.8 The Spatial Strategy cannot be prepared in isolation. **Diagram X** below, shows all of the other Strategies that it has to take account of in providing the land use planning delivery framework for all of the Council's ambitions.

Insert honeycomb diagram of Local Plan and its link to Councils plans and strategies

- 3.9 How these, and other factors, have influenced the preparation of the Spatial Strategy which is explained below

4 Local Plan Vision

- 4.1 The proposed Spatial Strategy supports our vision for Slough to be a place where people want to "work, rest, play and stay."
- 4.2 The Issues and Options consultation document (2017) put forward a draft Vision and Objectives. This has been updated to take into account the latest Council's strategies and plans and to reflect changes in circumstances. As a result it now states:

By 2036 Slough will have a high profile image which recognises its important role in the region as a prosperous, confident, dynamic, attractive, metropolitan place where people are proud to work, rest, play and stay.

The centre of Slough will be an attractive, vibrant hub providing high quality offices, retail and 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 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 to celebrate our diversity and cohesion; we live in greener, safe and distinct neighbourhoods where people have all that they need to be able to “live locally.”

With lifelong access to excellent education and job opportunities, and the facilities and services they need residents will be able to live happy, healthy and successful 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 businesses and residents to help themselves to a better quality of life.

The promotion of inclusive economic growth will ensure that the benefits from the regeneration and investment that takes place in Slough are shared by all residents.

- 4.3 In order to help to deliver this vision we have developed a set of 14 Objectives which set out in more detail the Council’s priorities. These are available to read in [Appendix X](#).

5 Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.1 The Local Plan has to be informed throughout its preparation by a Sustainability Appraisal. This demonstrates how the plan has relevant economic, social and environmental objectives and considered alternative options which reduce significant adverse impacts upon these objectives.
- 5.2 The ongoing findings of the Sustainability Appraisal have been fed into the production of the Spatial Strategy. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Spatial Strategy for Slough Local Plan Report assesses the extent to which the Spatial Strategy will help to achieve a set of environmental, economic and social objectives. The Sustainability Appraisal Report is available to view and comment on at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>. The consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal will run for 6 weeks, please visit the website for more details.

6 Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 6.1 Slough does not have any national significant environmental sites. The Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening (2017, Lepus Consulting) assessed all Natura 2000 sites within a 15 mile radius of Slough. This concluded that development of the scale proposed in the Issues and Options consultation would not have an impact upon 14 of these important environmental areas.
- 6.2 The only likely significant effect which could not be ruled out was that upon Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The preparation of the proposed Spatial Strategy has taken into account the need to protect the Burnham Beeches SAC. The Strategy seeks to limit large scale development in the part of Slough nearest Burnham Beeches. And proposals to retain and enhance open spaces to provide informal recreation space with more natural habitat for local residents will limit demand from future new homes on Burnham Beeches visits. Future detail policies will implement this mitigation proposal and it will be implemented within the Borough. To read the Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening report please visit our website <https://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>.

7 Setting the Scene/Slough Today

TO BE INSERTED

Diagram of wider context areas

Diagram of Slough's Neighbours

8 Key Facts

- 8.1 Below are the key facts about Slough. They demonstrate what a unique place it is within the UK, and picks out some of its key strengths, challenges and opportunities for now and the future.
- Slough is one of the smallest Councils and one of the most densely built up areas in the country. There is shortage of land for new development.
 - Slough has one of the youngest populations in the country with a high proportion of children and families who will need new homes in the future.
 - Slough has some of the highest levels of overcrowding with each person having on average 27.2 m² of space compared to an average of 36.5m² in other towns and cities.

- Slough is one of the most diverse places in Britain. It is estimated that 150 different languages are spoken in its schools.
- Slough has less greenery than other areas with only 80% of the tree cover of London. This and other environmental issues contributes to the poor image of the town.
- Slough is an economic powerhouse. It is the second most productive place in the country after London but it is not as prosperous as it should be.
- Slough is one of the best connected places in the country by road rail and air.
- Slough has a failing shopping centre and the lowest proportion of leisure and cultural attractions compared to any other town.
- Slough has some serious environmental problems which affect the health and well being of its residents. Many of these are related to high levels of traffic congestion.

Infographics to be inserted

9 The Big Issues

9.1 Slough has huge opportunities and potential but faces some big issues, many of which are a result of its success. The Spatial Strategy needs to consider what the land use planning implications are of the following big issues.

Housing

9.2 The Government puts particular emphasis upon meeting housing needs and has produced a “standard” methodology for calculating the number of homes needed in each Council area. This methodology shows an overall need for 17,860 new houses in Slough from 2016 to 2036. Taking account of completions over the first four years of the plan period, there is a need for 15,460 additional homes over the remaining 16 years equivalent to an average of 966 completions a year.

9.3 There is a shortage of land for housing in Slough which means our proposed Spatial Strategy will have a shortfall of 5,000 homes compared to our housing needs.

9.4 There is a viability problem that means that despite the demand for new homes, the housing market is not delivering all the housing that the Borough needs.

9.5 There is a significant need for affordable housing and for a range of house types including family housing.

Wealth creation and Employment

- 9.6 Slough is recognised as being an economic powerhouse but it doesn't always benefit as much as it should from all of this economic activity.
- 9.7 Slough's residents have lower paid salaries when compared to those who are commuting into the Borough who have higher paid salaries.
- 9.8 Without the expansion of Heathrow Airport which would have provided a significant boost to employment, the only major opportunity for employment growth is new offices in the town centre.
- 9.9 We are unable to quantify the number of jobs that are required to support the Slough economy but will continue to aim to provide an additional 15,000 jobs in order to meet the needs of the growing resident workforce. This should not be regarded as a maximum figure.
- 9.10 There is a general demand for land for warehousing in the Slough and the surrounding area.

Retail and Leisure

- 9.11 Slough has a failing shopping centre and the future of the shopping centre is uncertain. It is recognised that Slough will no longer be a sub-regional shopping centre and there will be a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace in the town centre.
- 9.12 Slough has no real night time economy and a lack of cultural facilities. This is one of the reasons why there isn't the expenditure in the Borough that there should be.
- 9.13 The Council has provided an excellent range of formal leisure facilities but this has not been matched by the private sector.
- 9.14 Research by the Centre for Cities found that Slough had the least number of amenities per person of all of the major towns and cities in the country. The main reason for the lack of bars, restaurants and arts facilities is thought to be due to commuting patterns, the concentration of jobs in the Trading Estate away from the centre and the proximity of Slough to other attractions.
- 9.15 In contrast to Slough town centre, the Farnham Road and Langley District centres are thriving. These need to be supported along with the smaller neighbourhood centres.

The Environment and Health and Wellbeing

- 9.16 Slough does not have any nationally significant environmental sites but there is a need to improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of the

environmental assets that we have.

- 9.17 Slough has some high quality parks but an overall a shortage of green infrastructure for the size of its population.
- 9.18 Slough has declared a 'Climate Change' Motion which recognises that there is a growing urgency to combat climate change, and has committed to developing a Local Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that will address the causes and consequences of climate change in Slough.'
- 9.19 We have the highest concentration of data centres in Europe which will make it harder to meet our climate change targets because of their large energy consumption.
- 9.20 Slough suffers from poor air quality. There are currently 5 Air Quality Management Areas which have been declared due to breaches of the national standard. These are clustered along the A4 in the middle of Slough and around the M4/A4 in the Brands Hill area.
- 9.21 Environmental issues such as the lack of the greenery, high levels of traffic congestion and limited number of appealing buildings contribute to the poor image of the town as well as having an impact on the health and wellbeing of residents.
- 9.22 There are some areas in the Borough that are prone to flooding, this has been taken into account in the Spatial Strategy but can limit some development opportunities.

Other issues

- 9.23 Slough has a shortage of land for development. Redevelopment of existing sites at higher densities is not always practical or viable.
- 9.24 All Local Plans also have to show that their proposals are viable and deliverable. There is evidence that the housing market in Slough does not always work properly and very few planning applications come forward with policy compliant levels of affordable housing and the necessary infrastructure contributions.
- 9.25 The proposed Spatial Strategy has used the work carried out for the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework which took account of landowner's intentions and tested the viability of key sites. This showed that the scale of development proposed in the centre should be viable and deliverable.

10 Developing the Spatial Strategy

10.1 There are three important themes for the Spatial Strategy which can be derived from the Local Plan Vision and analysis of the big issues that are facing Slough.

Theme 1 – A Place to Enjoy

10.2 This is about being proud of Slough and making it a place where people want to “work, rest, play and stay”. One of the most important elements of this is making sure that people who have prospered in Slough have the opportunity to “stay” in the Borough.

Theme 2 – Inclusive Growth

10.3 This focuses on “inclusive growth” in Slough which means making sure that more of the wealth that is generated in Slough stays in Slough. This can be achieved by residents taking more of the well paid jobs in the town and providing more facilities in the Borough for people to use and enjoy.

Theme 3 – Living Locally

10.4 This is about making Slough a place where residents can meet most of their needs nearby and be able to “live locally” in their own community if they want to. This will help to develop local communities and reduce the need for people to travel.

11 Spatial Strategy Guiding Principles

11.1 The overall guiding principle for the proposed Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.

11.2 By ensuring that development is located in the most accessible locations possible, this will reduce the need to travel and encourage more sustainable modes of travel. It will reduce our carbon footprint and help to reduce the impact upon the environment and air quality.

11.3 We have identified the accessibility of different parts of the Borough taking into account both rail and bus services. The results show that the centre of Slough is by far the most accessible location in the Borough and that many of the outlying residential areas and the Poyle Trading Estate are poorly served by public transport.

- 11.4 In addition to being an important transport hub, the centre of Slough contains most of the town's major facilities. This means that people living or working in the centre can make use of these without the need for additional trips. Both of these factors make the centre of Slough the most sustainable location for development.
- 11.5 The other guiding principle is to make the most effective use of resources by using previously developed land. This is especially important as Slough has a shortage of land suitable for development. The centre of Slough contains the majority of the brownfield sites with development potential in the Borough. These should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact. The centre of Slough has the most demand for new development and so should be the area most likely to be able to deliver this.
- 11.6 All of these factors suggest that the proposed Spatial Strategy should be based upon the fact that the centre of Slough is the most suitable location for major development.
- 11.7 It is recognised that there is some scope for new development elsewhere in the Borough but this needs to be targeted in locations which will have the least impact and produce the most benefits.
- 11.8 We can only have sustainable development if, in addition to meeting our economic and social objectives, we are able to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, including addressing climate change and health issues. By planning to meet as many of our needs as we can in Slough we can make a significant contribution to minimising the overall environmental footprint of new development in a regional context.
- 11.9 The overall aim is to meet as many of our needs within the Borough and to make Slough a place where people want to "work, rest play and stay".

12 The Proposed Spatial Strategy

- 12.1 In order to produce the Spatial Strategy we have divided the Borough up into different geographical areas . These are the Centre of Slough, an area falling within the "square mile" shown on the key diagram , the residential suburban areas, the Colnbrook and Poyle area and the rest of the Borough.
- 12.2 We have then produced proposals for each of these components plus a more general proposal to meet some of Slough's un-met housing needs elsewhere.
- 12.3 The 5 key components of the proposed Spatial Strategy can then be summarised as follows:

- ***Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;***
- ***Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;***
- ***Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;***
- ***Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;***
- ***Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.***

12.4 Details of each of these are explained below.

13 Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”

- 13.1 The overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 13.2 One of the other core principles is to make the most effective use of land by using that which has been previously developed. The Centre of Slough contains a lot of these brownfield sites which should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact. The Centre of Slough is also the area with the most demand for new development and so should be the area most likely to be able to deliver this.
- 13.3 As a result concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is at the heart of the Spatial Strategy. It will provide the bulk of housing that will be built in the Borough. The proposed expansion of the Central Business District with new office development provides the main opportunity for employment growth in Slough.
- 13.4 The Centre of Slough encompasses the town centre plus some areas beyond it which are in need of regeneration, have scope for redevelopment and are not settled, stable residential areas. These areas of potential change are generally walking distance to the station or High Street. This area falls within the “Square Mile”, as marked on the associated diagram and plans as way of labelling the proposal.
- 13.5 The centre’s role as a transport hub will make it the focus for the Council’s forthcoming Transport Strategy. Although it is currently failing as a shopping centre it has the potential to provide a smaller but more attractive and better quality retail offer. There is a lack of leisure and cultural facilities in Slough and so there is the opportunity to create a range of these throughout the centre. There is also a need to improve the image and quality of the built and green environment in the Centre of Slough.
- 13.6 The Spatial Strategy builds on the work done for the Centre of Slough

Regeneration Framework (2020) and sets out the following planning proposals for each of the key areas within the Centre of Slough.

Central Business District

- 13.7 The Spatial Strategy promotes a “workplace led” form of regeneration which could create the footfall and spending power needed to support a wide range of facilities in the Centre of Slough.
- 13.8 The Central Business District to the south of the railway station provides the best opportunity for creating new employment.
- 13.9 The Regeneration Framework has shown how up to 90,000 m² of new office or workspace floorspace could be built in this area, including part of the North West Quadrant.
- 13.10 One of the attractions of this area, is its proximity to the railway station which is likely to be used by an increasing number of commuters, particularly when the Elizabeth Line service starts. It is also important that the Central Business District is fully integrated with the rest of the centre. As a result, the Spatial Strategy proposes the creation of a new pedestrian route from the station to the High Street. This will include improvements to Brunel Way and William Street and the creation of a new pedestrian crossing of Wellington Street.
- 13.11 All developments that face onto Brunel Way will be required to provide attractive active ground floor frontages and additional land may be required to provide more space for pedestrians.
- 13.12 A high standard of design for buildings and the public realm will be required throughout the Central Business District. The heights of buildings should comply with the principles set out in the Regeneration Framework. Roof top green areas should be provided which provide amenities for occupiers and exploit the views of the surrounding area.
- 13.13 It is recognised that some car parking will need to be provided for workers in order to make sure that office developments in Slough can compete with other locations in attracting tenants. It will be important that vehicular access points to car parks are limited and designed to minimise conflicts with proposed pedestrian routes.

North West Quadrant (NWQ)

- 13.14 It is proposed to redevelop the former Thames Valley University campus and car park, which is known as the North West Quadrant (NWQ), as a high density mixed use quarter.

- 13.15 Outline planning permission has previously been granted for this as part of the Heart of Slough regeneration scheme. It is currently proposed to have around 1,300 dwellings, between 35,000 and 50,000 m² of offices, 5,000 m² of education/innovation use and up to 4,000m² of retail. The following planning principles should be applied to any proposal that comes forward:
- 13.16 It is important that the site should have a range of mixed uses in order to create activity, but the scale of retail and leisure uses should complement the town centre. The office element should form an extension to the Central Business District, with improved linkages across William Street in order to better integrate it with the railway station and the rest of the centre. The potential for a new footpath cycleway link over the Windsor railway line should be accommodated by the design.
- 13.17 The architecture should be of a high quality which creates a sense of place that contributes to the image and identity of the centre. High quality public realm and new areas of public open space will be required. Car parking should be located where it is not very visible and doesn't impact upon pedestrian or cyclist movements.
- 13.18 The location of tall buildings on the site has to take account of the potential adverse impact upon the setting of Windsor Castle as seen from the Copper Horse at the end of the Long Walk.

Tesco

- 13.19 The Tesco's Extra superstore occupies an important site within the Centre of Slough. It provides for the needs of many Slough residents and people working in the centre. However, the large building with its inactive frontages does not contribute to the overall attractiveness of the centre.
- 13.20 It is not anticipated that the site will be redeveloped within the timeframe of the Local Plan. The Regeneration Framework recognises the long term potential to redevelop the site to create a more permeable pattern of development close to the station. It also identifies the potential for creating a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the railway line as part of the reconfiguration of the Tesco Site.
- 13.21 Although the Spatial Strategy is not proposing any development upon the site, it does affect one of the key proposals, which is the creation of a new pedestrian link between the railway station and the High Street. This would require the optimum use being made of available land in Brunel Way for pedestrians, including that controlled by Tesco. Land assembly could be required. It could also involve making the Tesco frontage along Brunel Way as active and attractive as possible.

13.22 The existing bridge over the A4 and stair tower is in a poor state of repair and has been closed. It is Tesco's responsibility to maintain and keep the bridge and lifts available for use by the public. As a result it should be repaired and reinstated in the short term. It is proposed that it should be removed in the longer term as part of the comprehensive proposal to improve the pedestrian crossing on Wellington Street.

Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres

13.23 The Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres currently perform many of the traditional town centre functions in Slough, but are outdated and, like many, have lost their attractiveness. As a result they provide the biggest opportunity for regeneration in the Centre of Slough.

13.24 In the absence of any detailed proposals the Spatial Strategy sets out general principles for the future of the Queensmere and Observatory centres based upon the work carried out for the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework, the site's owners and Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework.

13.25 The overall objective is to encourage the comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of the shopping centres which will transform the area into an attractive, vibrant, well connected place that can provide for some of the important shopping, leisure, cultural and business needs. It also has the opportunity to meet some of Slough's housing needs.

13.26 The Queensmere and Observatory centres are now owned by the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). Working on its behalf, British Land held a consultation in May 2020 inviting the local community to find out more about their proposal for "Slough Central". This involves the phased redevelopment of the site, replacing the existing shopping centres with a wide range of uses and activities including workspace, new homes, retail, food and beverage, and leisure and culture.

13.27 The indicative plan, which was included in the consultation, divided the site into four broad character areas. There would be a proposed Cultural and Civic quarter to the west next to The Curve and St Ethelbert's church. A Commercial District is proposed for the northern part fronting onto Wellington Street. There would be a proposed High Street Neighbourhood in the south, facing the High Street and a Residential quarter to the east.

13.28 The future of the shopping centres was considered in the Regeneration Framework. This took the principles from the Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework (2019) and "Slough Central" consultation material in order to devise an indicative layout for the comprehensive redevelopment of the sites. The Regeneration Framework includes a 3D model of what this layout could look

like.

- 13.29 Taking this into account, the following planning principles will be applied to the proposed comprehensive mixed use development of the Queensmere and Observatory sites.
- 13.30 It should be a comprehensive mixed use scheme which follows the broad principles set out in the Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework and the Regeneration Framework.
- 13.31 It is essential that it provides new retail and leisure facilities which will create an attractive and vibrant centre. This will include new food and beverage outlets and a cinema which will help to sustain an evening as well as day time economy. This could also include provision for new cultural facilities.
- 13.32 New office development can be provided as an expansion to the Central Business District to the north. As a result it is assumed that 50,000 m² of offices could be built along Wellington Street as part of the “workplace led” regeneration strategy. It is understood that British Land may have ambitions to build up to 200,000 m² of offices as yet another step change in the scale of regeneration in the area. As a result this is allowed for in the Spatial Strategy, but it will be necessary for the owners to show that this is viable and deliverable.
- 13.33 A substantial amount of housing should be provided throughout the redevelopment with a concentration at the eastern end, possibly in a new residential quarter. This should include a range of accommodation including the maximum reasonable provision of affordable housing.
- 13.34 A high standard of architecture will be required in order to deliver this dense city centre scale development. The tallest buildings should generally be to the north alongside Wellington Street, which should become a new “address street”. The height of buildings should step down towards the High Street in the south where they should generally be a maximum of 6 stories in order to retain its human scale.
- 13.35 The scale and nature of development at the western end of the sites needs to reflect and enhance the setting of St Ethelbert’s church and The Curve.
- 13.36 A new pedestrian route will be created which links the High Street to the railway station via an improved Brunel Way. This will have active frontages in order to encourage office workers, residents, shoppers and other visitors to use it. The whole site will need to be permeable with convenient and attractive links to the rest of the town centre.
- 13.37 There is a need to improve the environment and create more greenery. Buildings should be set in a high quality public realm that includes areas of

planting and semi-mature tree planting. New areas of public open space will have to be provided including a “civic square” adjacent to, or part of, the new pedestrian link from the High Street to the railway station.

- 13.38 The shortage of public open space means that opportunities should be taken to provide landscaped roof gardens on the tops of buildings. The views of the surrounding area should be optimised, particularly those of Windsor Castle to the south. A public viewing area could be provided to create an attraction and enhance the appreciation of the area.
- 13.39 The southern side of the site facing onto the High Street should be the prime retail area with active frontages which help to deliver the “rediscovered High Street” aim of the Spatial Strategy. There is the possibility to create a secondary “neighbourhood” of shops and leisure uses behind the High Street frontage which would be a more tightly drawn area with its own distinctive character.
- 13.40 The layout of the development as a whole should be permeable with new south to north links extending Church Street, Park Street and Alpha Street. Pedestrian links should also be integrated with The Curve and St. Ethelbert’s church.
- 13.41 The layout should put pedestrians first. The impact of car parking and servicing on the streetscape must be minimised and provided either below ground or in multi-storey car parks or a combination of both. Vehicular access to the public car parks should be from Wellington Street.
- 13.42 The redevelopment should ensure that a minimum amount of car parking is provided to meet the needs of shoppers and visitors in as convenient a location as possible. This should be managed in such a way as to ensure it cannot be used for long stay parking by for example office workers. There should be some shared use of other parking so that sufficient space is available in the evenings and at weekends to ensure the retail/leisure/cultural uses are attractive and viable. It is recognised that the scale of parking provided for other uses, like offices and residential has to ensure those uses are viable and lettable. However it will be important that this does not undermine the overall need to encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport. The amount of parking allocated to these uses could reduce over time if modal shift is successful.
- 13.43 The preferred phasing would be to begin the redevelopment from the west in order to obtain maximum benefits from the new public facilities that can be provided in this area. It would also enable the new pedestrian link from the High Street to the railway station to be created at the earliest opportunity. It is important the core of retail and leisure facilities and suitable public car parking is retained during all phases of the redevelopment of the two shopping centres.

There will also be a need to provide some “meanwhile” uses to support the ongoing vitality of the centre.

13.44 In terms of the scale of development, the Regeneration Framework suggested some indicative estimates as to what could be provided. It states that there could be a minimum of 1,000 dwellings, 50,000 m² of offices, 10,000 m² of retail and 5,000 m² of leisure including food and beverage and a cinema.

13.45 In addition to stating a minimum, the Framework includes a range of offices up to 200,000 m². The range is included because it is understood that this is the quantum of development that British Land/ADIA consider is necessary to deliver a step change to the town centre.

13.46 The Spatial Strategy supports this scale of development but proposes that there should be a minimum of 50,000 m² of offices on the site. This could be increased up to 200,000 m² if the owners are able to bring forward a viable and deliverable scheme that meets all of the planning requirements.

The High Street

13.47 One of the key proposals of the Spatial Strategy is to “rediscover the High Street” and make it the focal point of the centre.

13.48 It is acknowledged that Slough will no longer be a sub regional shopping centre and there will be a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace as a result of the redevelopment of the Queensmere and Observatory centres.

13.49 This will create the opportunity for the High Street to become the busiest shopping street with its open air character making it an attractive place to visit. In addition to having the prime retail units, it will also provide a range of shops to meet all needs.

13.50 In order to reinforce the role of High Street, the Spatial Strategy proposes the creation of a new pedestrian street linking the High Street via Mackenzie Street and Brunel Way to the railway station. An improved pedestrian crossing of the A4 and creation of active frontages along this route would encourage more people to visit the reinvigorated High Street.

13.51 The major change that is likely to happen is the redevelopment of the northern side of the High Street which contains the Queensmere and Observatory Shopping centres as described above

13.52 The Regeneration Framework suggests that there could be a mixed-use quarter fronting onto High Street which would have retail uses at ground floor and with residential uses above. Building heights will need to step down towards the south in order to respond to heritage assets and the lower-scale

context on the High Street. It is therefore proposed that, in order to avoid unbalancing the High Street a maximum of 6 stories, with a set back at the top, should be allowed on the northern side.

- 13.53 The southern side of the High Street is composed of numerous small plots which have been built at different times. Some of these buildings have architectural merit and collectively they create the character and ambiance of the shopping street. With the comprehensive redevelopment of the northern side of the High Street expected in the coming years, it is important that some form of continuity and familiarity is retained. A limited amount of redevelopment has taken place and there are long term vacant plots at the corners of Church Street and Alpha Street. New developments on vacant plots have the opportunity to provide residential apartments above.
- 13.54 The Regeneration Framework suggests that further redevelopments of plots may be acceptable so long as they deliver active ground floors and that the scale of buildings responds to the context. This means that there would typically be four storey developments with the potential for up to two additional set back storeys.
- 13.55 In addition to being a shopping street that is human in scale, one of the key characteristics of the High Street is its openness. One of the critical tests for any development scheme on the southern side will be whether it continues to allow the same amount of sunshine onto the Street as existing. The scale and design of any development will have to take account of its impact upon Chapel Street, Herschel Street and the relevant side street.
- 13.56 One of the most important sites on the southern side of the High Street is the temporary car park on the corner of Church Street which is known as Buckingham Gateway. The Regeneration Framework recognises that there is the opportunity for a higher density mixed use development, reflecting its location in the heart of the town centre. Modern retail / leisure space uses would be attracted to the space fronting the High Street, with scope for residential or other accommodation forms to be stacked above on the southern part of the site
- 13.57 There is a need to improve the public realm and enhance the distinctiveness of the different parts of the High Street.
- 13.58 The Regeneration Framework noted that the eastern end of High Street has already developed a differentiated offer with a high proportion of independent shops, cafes and restaurants. This part of town is more reflective of the multi-cultural makeup of Slough's population and improvements to the public realm in this area, could help to strengthen its draw and benefit local businesses. As a result it proposes removing some parking spaces on the northern side to widen the footway to enable more trees to be planted, produce to be displayed, and

tables and chairs to be introduced.

- 13.59 The western end of the High Street still contains some older buildings which contribute to its character. The Regeneration Framework proposed that the area west of Windsor Road could be made traffic free by removing the gyratory system and making William Street two way. This has not been tested and is something that would have to be considered in the Transport Strategy and so is not being promoted in the Spatial Strategy at this stage.
- 13.60 Overall it is considered that the proposals outlined above should enable the Spatial Strategy to realise one of its key aims which is to revitalise the High Street as the primary shopping area in the Centre of Slough.

Cultural Facilities

- 13.61 The main part of the High Street was comprehensively refurbished as part of the Council's Art@Centre scheme which was inspired by the town's art, historic and cultural background. This introduced high quality natural stone paving materials, bespoke granite benches, new lighting, art work, open spaces, public plazas and semi mature tree planting to drastically change the High Street's physical appearance and open it up to pedestrians. It is considered that this refurbishment has passed the "test of time" although it continues to require ongoing maintenance and there could be better interpretation of the historical references and art work.
- 13.62 Research by the Centre for Cities has shown that Slough has fewer amenities, including cultural facilities, than any other town or city in the UK.
- 13.63 The Heart of Slough scheme sought to redress this through the provision of The Curve which has space for events, exhibitions and museum exhibits. Both the Interim Planning Framework and British Land's "Slough Central" consultation document identified the possibility of having a Cultural and Civic Quarter in the area around or near The Curve.
- 13.64 Whilst this is supported, the Spatial Strategy proposes that cultural facilities should be provided through out the Centre of Slough as part of an "activity led" regeneration strategy. This would involve maximising the use of The Curve, the former Adelphi Cinema and a replacement cinema within the Queensmere redevelopment. It would also mean providing for smaller uses, such as Home Slough on the High Street (a small community space for local activities and exhibitions) . Cultural activities should be included in the proposed "Meanwhile" uses that are to be provided in the centre and integrated in the future Public Realm Strategy. As a result of Covid-19, it is particularly important that more outdoor spaces are created for cultural and leisure uses.
- 13.65 Proposals for the future use of facilities such as the former Adelphi Cinema

will be set out in the Council's Cultural Strategy.

Area north of the Railway Station including the Stoke Road Corridor

- 13.66 Over the last 15 years, some new residential development has occurred in the area north of the railway station and there is scope for more to take place. This should improve the image of the area and provide homes in a very sustainable location close to the town centre and next to the railway station.
- 13.67 The Regeneration Framework identifies a Stoke Road Corridor character area. It proposes retaining mixed uses alongside Stoke Road and next to the station with Mill Street proposed primarily for residential use. The aim is to replace the fragmented pattern of existing development and yards with a coherent pattern of residential streets providing a new residential quarter linked with the railway station's northern entrance. This is alongside public realm improvements to enhance the streetscape inclusive of the north forecourt of the Station and improved pedestrian links.
- 13.68 The Regeneration Framework has identified the Mill Street area as one of its key development opportunity areas. As a result it has produced outline design principles and assessed the potential development capacity and the delivery approach for the area. It proposes primarily flats, up to five/seven storey, to line the street with some town houses adjacent to existing homes to the north for the area north of Mill St. Similar flats are proposed for a small site south of the street that incorporates a currently derelict property. Proposals for a site at Stanley Cottages are similar.
- 13.69 Where sites face Stoke Road, commercial uses are possible at ground floor of new buildings. Comprehensive development is promoted but if brought forward incrementally development on each site must be co-ordinated to deliver a coherent development. Inclusive of adjacent sites on Stoke Road, the estimated capacity is over 450 homes. The timescale for delivery is dependent upon when sites become available and could be up to 15 years.
- 13.70 The Regeneration Framework incorporates current Council transport improvements such as enhancements to the north forecourt of the Station and better pedestrian/cycle links to the station from the north in particular a cycle link to the proposed canal basin redevelopment area. It also identifies a new pedestrian/cycle link over the railway, immediately east of the station, to provide easy access to the town centre from the growing and proposed residential areas north of the station such as on Petersfield Avenue and the Akzo Nobel site.
- 13.71 More railway passengers are using the northern entrance to the station partly as a result of recent nearby housing development. This is expected to increase

in the future when Elizabeth Line and, hopefully Heathrow train services commence (Western Rail Link to Heathrow). The northern forecourt of the railway station does not present a good image for the town nor for its ambitions to be a transport hub. The forecourt enhancement includes moving parking spaces to the main station car park and creating space for pedestrian flows and station related traffic to spread the load from the south side forecourt.

13.72 The Spatial Strategy supports this overall approach to the Stoke Road corridor which encourages development but also ensures it is coordinated and of a good quality so that the benefits of regeneration can be achieved. There is also a need to ensure that all the infrastructure that is necessary to support the schemes is provided.

Existing Residential Areas

13.73 Not all of the areas within the Centre of Slough are suitable for redevelopment. The Protecting the Suburbs Strategy (2020) concluded that it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost. As a result the Enhancing our Distinct Suburbs component of the Spatial Strategy proposes that there should be no loss of family housing within existing residential areas.

13.74 There are pockets of low density residential development within the Centre of Slough area which have a consistent character and provide family housing. The Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework concluded that there was no specific regeneration benefit in redeveloping these “stable residential areas” and it is impractical to do so because of multiple ownerships.

13.75 The Spatial Strategy therefore proposes there will be no significant change within these existing residential areas and will apply the same restraint to them as the other suburban areas of Slough. This means that there will be no loss of family housing as a result of redevelopment or change of use. The change of use to Houses in Multiple Occupation will also not be allowed where this would result in the loss of a family house and have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of a residential area.

13.76 Any development that does take place will be expected to enhance the character of the area.

13.77 The area south of the High Street known as “Herschel Village” was identified in the Regeneration Framework as a special area with a distinctive character. It concluded that the blocks of modest scaled residential terraces should be retained and enhanced through public realm improvements. Any vacant plots should be developed at a scale that is contextual with the terraces and the links to Herschel Park to the south.

13.78 The Upton Hospital site is located within this area and it is proposed that surplus buildings of no architectural or historic value should be redeveloped for family housing and the Listed Buildings converted to residential in a way which transforms the quality of the whole site.

Other Key Sites

13.79 There are a number of other key sites within the Centre of Slough which are important for delivering the Spatial Strategy.

13.80 Planning permission has already been given for the redevelopment of the Horlicks site for 1,300 dwellings. This retains the core of the iconic factory and refurbishes the existing clock tower and chimney creating a high quality and distinctive new residential quarter. It also provides the opportunity to reconnect the site with the town centre with a new pedestrian route along Stoke Gardens. The Regeneration Framework has identified the opportunity to redevelop the Stoke Gardens area which will help to make this area more attractive with significant townscape improvements.

13.81 The Akzo Nobel site on Wexham Road and the National Grid/Cadent site on Uxbridge Road was identified in the Issues and Options consultation (2017) as a possible new residential neighbourhood. Proposals have now been brought forward by Panattoni, the new owners of the Akzo Nobel site for a mixed commercial and residential scheme. Outline planning permission has been agreed for up to 1,000 houses on the site with around 40,000m² of warehousing to the north. It is proposed that this should deliver some family accommodation as well as new employment. Provision will be made for a new bus link through the site which would be completed through to Uxbridge Road when the National Grid/Cadent site is redeveloped.

13.82 The Site Allocations DPD (2010) agreed the principle of allowing some residential development within Bowyer playing field in order to deliver comprehensive regeneration of the Stoke Road canal basin site.

13.83 The Regeneration Framework identifies Stoke Wharf, as it is now called, as having the potential to provide new residential development with enhancement to the basin, the canal waterway, associated towpath and neighbouring playing field.

13.84 The Council is in the process of bringing forward proposals for Stoke Wharf in partnership with the Canal and Rivers Trust and a private developer.

13.85 In total, there could be around 9,000 houses in the Centre of Slough over the Local Plan period which is a very important part of the delivery of the Spatial Strategy.

Open Space

- 13.86 There is only a limited amount of public open space within the Centre of Slough. The only green areas of any size are the pocket park on Yew Tree Road and St Mary's church yard. There are, however, a number of parks around the centre. These include Herschel Park, Lascelles Park, Upton Court Park, Salt Hill Park and Bowyer playing fields. These perform a number of functions. Herschel Park is a Grade II Listed ornamental park. Upton Park is the largest in the Borough where major events can be held. Salt Hill Park contains sports and major children's play facilities.
- 13.87 It is a basic principle of the Spatial Strategy, that there should be no loss of open space. The only exception to this will be at Bowyer playing fields where it was agreed in the Site Allocations DPD, that a limited amount of this could be developed as part of the comprehensive regeneration of the Canal Basin subject to enhancement of the retained area.
- 13.88 The Regeneration Framework noted that Covid-19 has shed new light on the value of open space in peoples' lives with the benefits of access to open spaces, gardens and even balconies increasingly recognised and the inequalities for people who lack this fundamental human need sharply defined.
- 13.89 New developments will be required to prioritise providing open space where this is feasible. Major redevelopment sites in the town centre will be required to provide open spaces and "civic squares", whilst the more peripheral housing sites will be expected to provide usable green open spaces with play areas. Green roof gardens should be provided within residential blocks and commercial buildings where ever possible.
- 13.90 Given the lack of recreational green spaces, contributions will be sought for improving the routes to parks, open spaces and facilities such as the canal and Jubilee River. Where additional mitigation is required, Upton Court Park will be the focus for new tree planting, ecological enhancements and the creation of new outdoor facilities.
- 13.91 The lack of green spaces makes it all the more important that vegetation is included within new development and improvements to the public realm. Tree planting can have multiple benefits in providing both physical and visual amenity, improving biodiversity, and enhancing sense of place, helping to reduce air pollution and creating shade in hotter weather patterns.

Connections

- 13.92 The Regeneration Framework highlights that improving connections and overcoming severance is fundamental to the vision for the Centre of Slough. This is to create an environment that is more attractive to pedestrians and

cyclists. It will enable residents in nearby suburbs to more easily access the centre and to feel more connected with the town centre. It also allows town centre residents to easily access nearby open spaces enhancing the attractiveness of living in the centre where most homes will be flats.

13.93 A network of new and improved routes in the centre is associated with proposals to create new public spaces in the centre making Slough a more pleasant and healthy place to live and work in. The spaces could include station forecourt, a new Civic Square within the Queensmere redevelopment and, within the North West Quadrant development. The area around St. Mary's Church could be enhanced to become a more usable space. Connections might take the form of traffic free routes or enhancing existing streets to turn these from imposing highways into civilised, tree lined streets that have a more human-scale environment.

13.94 Within the centre the most important connection proposed is a street from the Station to the High Street and formed in a way to minimise the severance effect of traffic on Wellington Street. Also proposed are complimentary links, to the east, from High Street to Wellington Street reintroducing street links lost when the shopping centre was built.

13.95 Other proposals include:

- Enhanced connections to and from the railway station in particular to the canal basin redevelopment, the canal towpath, and beyond but avoiding Stoke Rd.
- A link over the railway east of the station.
- A bridge over the Windsor branch railway to link the centre, North West Quadrant, to Salt Hill Park and suburbs beyond without using the A4.
- Links from the centre to Herschel Park and potentially beyond to Jubilee River and to Lascelles Park.
- Routes from the centre to the proposed Akzo Nobel residential development.

13.96 The creation of these new connections or associated public realm enhancements will need new developer contributions and in some cases the Council may use its powers to acquire the necessary land.

13.97 The details of future connections in the Centre of Slough will be determined in the Transport Strategy. The design of the connections will be informed by a Public Realm Strategy.

14 Selecting other key location for appropriate sustainable development

- 14.1 The Spatial Strategy proposes that the bulk of the new development will go in the Centre of Slough in accordance with the guiding principle that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 14.2 There is a limit as to how much housing can be accommodated within the Centre of Slough and there is likely to be a significant shortfall in the number of houses that can be provided in Slough compared to its needs.
- 14.3 In order to sustain Slough as an “economic power house” and create more job opportunities for the growing workforce, the Spatial Strategy is also proposing that there should be no more loss of Existing Business Areas to housing or any other non employment generating uses.
- 14.4 At the same time one of the aims of the Strategy is to ensure that more of the wealth generated in Slough stays in Slough.
- 14.5 One of the other key principles of the Spatial Strategy is that that there should be no further loss of parks or open spaces.
- 14.6 There is scope for more development in Slough but this is limited by the lack of suitable land. There are also environmental constraints, air quality problems, flooding issues and the need to tackle climate change. Slough also suffers from traffic congestion and there are viability issues that can prevent development coming forward.
- 14.7 It is against this background that the Spatial Strategy has sought to identify some “Selected Key Locations” that are suitable for large scale regeneration or development (but these are not new ‘site allocations’; such allocations are made at the next stage of the Local Plan).
- 14.8 It has also seeks to identified a number of other “Key Locations” which have an important role in the Borough but are unlikely to be able to provide many opportunities for largescale development.
- 14.9 It should be noted that proposals for the Poyle Trading Estate, which has been identified as a Selected Key Location, are set out in the Protecting the Strategic Gap component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 14.10 Proposals for how the other Selected Key Locations can contribute to the Spatial Strategy are set out below.

Slough Trading Estate

- 14.11 Slough is unusual because the largest employment area is not in the town centre but the Slough Trading Estate, making it an important part of the Spatial Strategy.

- 14.12 The Trading Estate used to be famous for being one of the largest in Europe in single ownership. The offices along the Bath Road have now been acquired by AEW and the Bath Road retail park sold off, but the rest is still owned by SEGRO.
- 14.13 Slough Trading Estate has the largest concentration of data centres in Europe. This is an indication as to how it has changed from its industrial past, but it is still home to some manufacturers, such as Mars, plus a variety of other commercial premises including some warehousing.
- 14.14 The Trading Estate underpins Slough's role as an economic powerhouse. It is estimated that each data centre contributes £622m to the national economy. They do not, however, create many jobs and their huge energy consumption will make it very hard for Slough to meet its carbon emissions reduction targets.
- 14.15 At the same time a lot of the wealth created on the Trading Estate does not stay in Slough. This is because many of the well paid jobs are taken by people from outside of the Borough who do not spend much money in Slough.
- 14.16 There is currently a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for the Trading Estate. This helps existing and potential new occupiers plan for the future with more certainty by allowing certain types of development to take place without the need for planning permission provided they meet all of the specified conditions.
- 14.17 The SPZ will run out in 2024 and so it is anticipated that a new one will be produced for the area of the Estate that is owned by SEGRO. This will be the main way in which proposals for this Selected Key Location will be brought forward.
- 14.18 It is important that the Trading Estate retains a balance of employment generating uses. This will involve providing for a range of types and sizes of businesses which support the local economy.
- 14.19 One of the problems with the redevelopment of large parts of the Trading Estate to create new data centres is that there tends to be a loss of employment. Data centres also use a huge amount of energy. It will be important to ensure that data centres minimise waste heat or make productive use of the heat such as feeding it into a local heat network. Where this is not practical appropriate mitigation will be sought for the impact upon climate change.
- 14.20 As part of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, it will be important that support is given to training in order to ensure that the local workforce has access to the new types of jobs that are being created.
- 14.21 The Trading Estate is currently the subject of a parking cap which is enforced through the SPZ. It will be important that this is retained in order to encourage

more modal shift away from the private car and reduce congestion and air quality problems. Continued support for public transport will be required including both the MRT which runs along the Bath Road and the Hoppa bus which serves the centre of the Estate.

14.22 The Buckingham Centre has been enhanced in recent years as a local shopping area and has a new hotel. It is now recognised that there is a need for more amenities to serve employees on the Estate. This includes food and beverage outlets which can cater for early evening as well as day time trade.

14.23 Bath Road Central contains all of the offices along the northern side of the A4, it is very important to the town both visually and economically. Although the Spatial Strategy proposes that major new offices should be located in the town centre, it is envisaged that some refurbishment or redevelopment will take place upon a similar scale to what is there at present.

14.24 In addition to maintaining the existing avenue of trees along the Bath Road further improvements to the landscaping and amenity of the frontage could be provided. The proposed hotel on the corner of Leigh Road would also add to the facilities on the Trading Estate.

Cippenham Bath Road – ‘Cippenham Central’

14.25 This site lies either side of the A4 Bath Road, a short distance east of Elmshott Lane/Station Road Junction. It currently comprises various large businesses buildings (e.g. Halfords, Sports Direct) and vacant former business sites including the former Trade Sales car sales operation. Part of the site has been cleared on the northern side and for two of the sites on the south side, there has been recent interest in redevelopment. Part of the site is restricted by being in a flood zone.

14.26 The site is not far from Burnham station (650m walking distance), is on a major bus route and has retail and community facilities nearby such as Elmshott Lane shopping parade, a library combined with community hub, church halls, Cippenham recreation ground and a doctors surgery . The location means it's a reasonably sustainable site in terms of local travel and travel to some nearby towns and London.

14.27 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.

14.28 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. And there is scope to re-provide some employment uses at ground floor level.

- 14.29 Further assessment work is underway regarding constraints, opportunities, ownerships, viability and capacity. Recently some of the existing buildings have been re-occupied so redevelopment of the entire site may not happen or it may happen over a long period of time when redevelopment of recently refurbished buildings becomes viable. As a consequence a strategy is needed that allows for redevelopment of some plots without hindering adjacent future redevelopment.
- 14.30 The aim of the proposal is to regenerate this area of Cippenham, provide new housing and provide space for some employment uses. This would be achieved through redevelopment of either all or most of the existing buildings/vacant sites to provide primarily new residential accommodation. This, combined with public realm improvements would improve the environment for this part of the A4 corridor. Some mixed use or incorporation of appropriate small scale commercial or community uses is possible.
- 14.31 Comprehensively planned or comprehensively coordinated redevelopment is required to deliver regeneration and to optimise the capacity of the site for new homes and for highway/transportation improvement in particular safe access and traffic flow. A Council strategy or brief for the site will guide this coordination.
- 14.32 Optimising capacity is intended to assist with development viability to provide an incentive for land owners to redevelop bearing in mind some plots have existing commercial uses and to ensure the quality of development is sufficient to provide a step change to the image of the area. As part of that optimisation a balance needs to be struck between the scale of development and the impact on nearby existing homes and the effect on the character of Cippenham as indicated below.
- 14.33 It is expected that most of the homes would be flats but to limit the adverse effect of large scale buildings on living conditions of residents in adjoining existing suburban housing, certain parts at the rear of the site will need a form of development appropriate to its setting. This could take the form of family houses.
- 14.34 Furthermore it is not proposed for the site to have a cluster of tall buildings. This would not be suitable for the character of Cippenham and such scale of development is only appropriate for the Centre of Slough. It is recognised that quite high density development might be needed to achieve the redevelopment aim and this would be part of the character of the A4 frontage of this part of Cippenham in contrast to the typical suburban character and established stable residential areas away from the A4.
- 14.35 To ensure the new housing provides for both local and town wide needs, a mix of housing accommodation is required in terms of form, size and tenure

and to attract a range of households to the area. Employment or community uses should be incorporated in order to help make it a sustainable development and help provide jobs to help compensate for any lost from existing business premises. Such uses at ground floor level of new buildings, may be more suitable than residential property being located so close to the Bath Road with its associated poor environment.

- 14.36 High quality public realm is needed for new development and existing highway areas to improve the appearance of the area for residents and the image of the town. The site has a frontage on the A4 and has an important entry point to the town. Part of that public realm enhancement should include where practical, major landscaping including street trees. Contributions to off site public realm improvements may be needed.
- 14.37 There may be the opportunity to include other adjoining sites along the Bath Road within comprehensive redevelopment proposals. Proposals will need to be in accordance with any development brief issued by the Council.
- 14.38 There are a number of constraints to development. Part of the site is liable to flood and so the design and layout of any development would have to take account of this. It may mean no new buildings on part of the site. The layout, scale and design of new development will have to take account of the juxtaposition of adjoining residential properties. Development near the road frontage would have to take account of noise and air quality issues from traffic along the A4. There are also road widening proposals within the vicinity of this area.
- 14.39 Redevelopment of any plot must not hinder reasonable redevelopment of adjacent plots. Rationalisation of site access points will be needed to minimise the number of accesses onto Bath Road and to improve road safety and traffic flow. This is likely to mean some sites allowing for access to adjacent or nearby plots when redeveloped.
- 14.40 Where redevelopment of one plot takes place next to any other plot where redevelopment is not expected soon and has unneighbourly activity the new development will have to ensure acceptable living conditions can be provided.
- 14.41 The two plots on the north side next to the culverted brook will need to provide land for a pedestrian/cycle link to Cippenham Recreation Ground. Improved cycle/pedestrian links to Burnham Station and Cippenham Recreation Ground will be required to make the site more sustainable.
- 14.42 In summary, this site is proposed for redevelopment to provide primarily new residential accommodation and an improved environment for this part of the A4 corridor. Comprehensively planned or comprehensively coordinated redevelopment is required. Some mixed use or incorporation of appropriate

small scale commercial or community uses is possible.

Chalvey Regeneration

- 14.43 The regeneration of Chalvey has been going on for a while with recent developments including the new Grove Academy School and Chalvey Community Hub. This regeneration needs to be continued in order to address local problems related to the image of the area and provide new facilities for the neighbourhood.
- 14.44 New residential accommodation can play its part in providing new homes for local people and more choice in the type homes. New development can provide a better appearance in the street scene than some of the existing property or sites. This combined with public realm and associated enhancements and new public facilities can assist regeneration. Co-ordination with the emerging Chalvey Community Plan will be essential.
- 14.45 The sites identified below will contribute to the regeneration of the area. Most will provide family housing and for the elderly. The other two sites relate to health care and, potentially, transport.
- 14.46 Small scale development can, collectively, play its part in regeneration if suitably designed for the neighbourhood. This might include redevelopment or refurbishment or changes of use. Which sites might be involved will be dependent upon individual site owners and developers etc. so it is not possible to identify them all at this stage. It is hoped that recent and proposed development identified below plus public realm enhancements will 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.
- 14.47 In addition to the identified development sites listed below the Council is progressing with or has identified potential enhancements in the area. These are mostly physical measures in the public realm intended to benefit the neighbourhood as a whole. Some are in preparation now others dependent upon funding or further studies. Examples are in the 3 paragraphs below.
- 14.48 Public realm enhancements including strategic tree planting, improving the watercourse Salt Hill stream to make it a pleasant feature in the neighbourhood. This can be combined with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's town wide water quality initiative and flood alleviation measures.
- 14.49 The appearance of the A4 Bath Road opposite Ice Arena could be improved and a direct pedestrian / cycle crossing into Salt Hill Park provided.
- 14.50 North – south pedestrian / cycle route could be improved which would include

making the link to the Jubilee River more attractive in order to encourage active travel and recreation with all of its health benefits.

14.51 There may be opportunities for enhancements or renewal of the Council Housing Estates in the future dependent upon the outcome of further studies by the Council's Housing Section.

14.52 Some constraints will limit the opportunity for new development that has not been identified such as the need to avoid flood zones and air quality management areas which cover part of the neighbourhood. Town wide measures to minimise the effect of new development on air quality will benefit Chalvey in the long term. Traffic congestion is also a local problem within the area as a result it will be necessary to control the amount of car parking associated with new development and will require measures that will encourage non car modes of travel. Enhancements to public transport, including possible new bus links may be required.

14.53 It may also be necessary to consider using Compulsory Purchase powers to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment where a development or transport initiative is important for regeneration of the area.

14.54 Identified development sites in Chalvey

I. Greenwatt Way – Health hub and extra care home.

II. Montem (former leisure centre and car park site) – 160 or more homes; streamside and woodland enhancements, bus link to improve operation of Chalvey bus service. The Montem Leisure Centre site will become a new residential neighbourhood of flats plus family homes. It will include 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.

III. Tower and Ashbourne House – redevelopment to provide 77 net additional homes and new public realm plus potential community use on ground floor.

IV. Tuns Lane (east side) redevelopment for residential development and possibly renewed fire station. This is a medium to long term redevelopment opportunity. Comprehensive or coordinated redevelopment is required to achieve benefits. Substantial benefits are needed to compensate for the loss of some family homes.

V. St. Martins Place - new residential accommodation through change of use from offices; including possible extension or complete redevelopment.

VI. Site east of St. Martins Place (33 Bath Rd (Lego)) - new residential accommodation through change of use from offices or comprehensive redevelopment of the area.

VII. Chalvey Halt proposal - New railway station on the Slough to Windsor branch line at the south end of Alexandra Road and east of Primary Road. Much of Chalvey would be within a 10 minute walk of this station. The provision of a Chalvey railway halt in the future would enhance accessibility for the local community and reduce reliance on the car at peak times.

14.55 In summary the Chalvey area is proposed for regeneration through the development of identified large sites for residential and health uses combined with public realm and travel enhancements.

District Shopping Centres - Enhancement Proposals

14.56 Outside the town centre, Farnham Road and Langley are the most important shopping areas. In addition to these two “District Centres” there are a range of neighbourhood centres and small parades. All of these have a role to play in supporting the Spatial Strategy concept of enhancing the neighbourhoods to encourage people to “living locally” if they want to. The two District centres are important enough to feature as Selected Key Locations for enhancement which could include small scale development.

14.57 Both Farnham Road and Langley centres appear to be busy and thriving. They support a wide residential area and the Farnham Road in particular benefits from passing trade. In order to ensure that they remain attractive, it is important to tackle any problems they have and see if they can improve their offer for residents and boost local trade. The provision of new retail and leisure space could provide a greater range of facilities, but a balance needs to be struck between improving local retail space and avoiding competition with the town centre. No major retail or leisure facilities will be allowed outside of the defined shopping centres.

14.58 The Spatial Strategy has not identified the District Centres and their immediate surroundings as areas for major new development in terms of meeting a significant portion of housing or employment need. New small scale development or changes of use can contribute to meeting housing needs. New development, renewal and refurbishment will contribute to enhancement of the centres in terms of appearance, new facilities or services. Allowing some new development can also be an incentive to owners to carry out enhancement of existing buildings.

14.59 Further study is needed to assess the extent and form of enhancement, possible locations and form of any new development. Enhancements might

take the form of new or temporary uses in vacant retail or business space, small scale redevelopment or infill at rear of retail property to improve retail space or provide small business or community space. And in addition residential use might go above any existing or new ground floor retail/business space.

14.60 A key part of the enhancement is improvements to the public realm and the functioning of the shopping centres such as parking, access for all, servicing, waste disposal, cleansing, and security. Further assessment is needed to establish what changes would be beneficial and how they might be achieved. Some are beyond the scope of Planning but might be tackled as part of local partnerships and multi agency working coordinated with planning and highway authority initiatives. One obvious issue is the poor appearance of the rear of some retail premises. New development could provide the opportunity to enhance these areas and the living environment for residents adjacent or above shops.

Greenfield/Green Belt releases for housing

14.61 Sites have been released from the Green Belt in previous Local Plans. Given the shortage of housing in Slough, consideration has to be given to whether further Green Belt releases should take place on the edge of the town.

14.62 The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that Green Belt boundaries can only be altered in Local Plans where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified. This was considered in the Issues and Options Consultation in 2017 which carried out a broad brush assessment of the Green Belt areas in Slough to see if they were suitable for residential development.

14.63 This identified ten sites that could possibly be released from the Green Belt for family housing. These sites were:

- St Anthony's Field Farnham Road
- Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street
- Land to rear of Opal Court Wexham Street
- Land east of Wexham Park Hospital
- North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane
- Land east of Rochford Gardens
- Bloom Park, Middlegreen Road
- Land east of Market Lane
- Upton Court Farm
- Land south of Castleview Road

14.64 The National Planning Policy Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

The sites will have to be assessed against this and other Green Belt criteria.

- 14.65 It is also important to assess them against other aspects not covered by Green Belt issues. These include what the harm would be to the intrinsic quality of the site is such as landscape character, ecological value, historic importance and agricultural land quality. It should also involve assessing the accessibility and sustainability of the proposed development and any benefits that it could produce in addition to meeting housing needs.
- 14.66 Consideration also needs to be given to strategic policies such as the protection of public open space, compliance with Regional Park designations and mineral sterilisation policies.
- 14.67 Finally site assessments have to take account of local designations which in Slough's case would include the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London.
- 14.68 It is recognised that sufficient work has not been carried out yet and that further consultation will have to take place before a proposal can be made to release any sites from the Green Belt in Slough. This will also have to take account of the results of Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth study which is assessing major sites which could adjoin some of the small ones identified in Slough.
- 14.69 The ten greenfield / Green Belt sites that have been identified as having potential for housing development are only being included as possible Selected Key Sites at this stage so that they can be the subject of initial public consultation.

15 Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets

Living Locally

- 15.1 One of the themes of the Spatial Strategy is to allow people to be able to 'live locally', if they want to, without the need to travel long distances. This means that their neighbourhood should provide all of the local services and facilities to meet their daily needs as conveniently as possible. It also means having access to local parks and open spaces which provide opportunities for recreation.
- 15.2 'Living locally' will have a range of positive benefits for residents such as improved health and wellbeing. It also helps the environment by reducing the need for private car use and therefore reducing local traffic congestion as residents will be able to walk and cycle to their local facilities and services.

Together this enable will residents in the suburbs to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives and support the Local Plan Vision and objectives.

- 15.3 This will be supported by Council's proposals to create community hubs where a range of public services will be provided in one building in the heart of a neighbourhood tailored to meet the local needs of individuals, families and communities. A hub has recently opened at Britwell and there are plans to open hubs at Cippenham, Chalvey and Langley. The Council's "locality model" prioritises wellbeing and enables behaviour change in communities that builds resilience and independence in communities.
- 15.4 Part of this approach will be to develop Community Plans for areas. The Draft Strong, Healthy and Attractive Chalvey Community Plan is currently being developed. It covers health and wellbeing, housing and regeneration, business skills and jobs, community safety, community cohesion and the environment with a detailed action plan for each theme.

Protecting the Suburbs

- 15.5 Most of Slough's residents live in the suburban areas of Slough which mainly consist of family housing which was built in the last century. These areas have adapted and absorbed a lot of growth and should be able to continue to do so.
- 15.6 The Spatial Strategy proposes to retain the stock of family homes in the suburban areas and the green spaces around them. In addition to making sure that there is a continuing supply of family houses to meet the community's needs, this will also help to maintain the distinctive character of the suburbs and protect the environment and ecology of the areas.
- 15.7 The "Protecting the Suburbs Strategy" (2020) identified five key reasons why we should retain and enhance the existing residential areas. Firstly this supports the guiding principles in the Spatial Strategy of locating development in the most accessible locations and regenerating previously developed land.
- 15.8 Secondly the vast majority of new residential development coming forward in the Centre of Slough and elsewhere will be flats. Protecting family housing in the suburbs will help to maintain a balanced housing market.
- 15.9 Thirdly the suburban areas of Slough have been able to absorb a lot of organic growth. Large numbers of extensions and outbuildings have been built in gardens in the suburbs of Slough. Household occupation is generally high and the use of garden space to accommodate extensions and outbuildings is already quite intensive. There is scope for the existing residential areas to be able to continue to do this without major redevelopment.
- 15.10 Fourthly, analysis has shown that, because of the tight layout of the areas,

there are very limited opportunities for infilling or backland development.

- 15.11 Finally practical issues, such as site assembly and multiple ownership, means it is often not viable or practical to redevelop existing residential areas. As a result intensifying the suburbs will not make a significant contribution towards meeting our significant need for new homes.
- 15.12 As a result the evidence shows that, despite the need for more housing in Slough, it is not practical or viable to redevelop the suburban residential areas and lose valuable family housing.
- 15.13 The Spatial Strategy therefore proposes that there will be no loss of existing family housing in the suburbs as a result of redevelopment or change of use to flats. They will continue to develop organically and will accommodate growth where feasible but this will not involve large scale new development upon what is currently “garden land”.
- 15.14 Protecting the residential areas of the suburbs from major development will not prevent the Council’s programme for estate renewal and delivery of new homes on Council land to support neighbourhood regeneration and increase the supply of affordable homes. Increasing the number of homes through the Council’s housing delivery programme can take place in a number of ways such as redeveloping surplus garage courts through to redeveloping Council owned housing which is not fit for purpose. There may be the capacity to build additional stories onto existing low rise blocks through a process known as “top-hatting”. Some development can also take place within the neighbourhood shopping centres.

Vibrant Neighbourhood Centres

- 15.15 The suburbs contain a series of neighbourhood centres and parades which form part of the network of shopping facilities in the Borough. Proposals for the Farnham Road and Langley District Centres are referred to above. The remaining smaller centres provide access to their immediate population for local services and facilities and generally reduce the need for residents to travel to obtain everyday basic goods and services. They also provide some community and employment opportunities.
- 15.16 Unlike the town centre most of the local shopping areas are thriving and are not reliant upon an increase in population to succeed. The recent Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in more people staying in and using their local area. The neighbourhood centres are able to provide for the specific tastes and needs of the communities that they serve. Enhancing the neighbourhood centres and local parades supports the Local Plan objectives to provide a vibrant network of facilities and reduce the need to travel for short journeys and

encourages walking and cycling.

15.17 In order to encourage the continued future success of the neighbourhood centres, complementary non-retail uses such as leisure activities maybe needed to diversify the range of uses, adding to neighbourhood centres vitality and viability. As a result some appropriate development may be encouraged within selected neighbourhood centres.

15.18 An example of this is the Council's proposal to redevelop part of the Trelawney Avenue neighbourhood centre to provide a new health centre and community hub.

15.19 Any enhancement taking place in a neighbourhood centre will need to be appropriately located, scaled and designed to serve the needs of local residents. They should be designed to reduce the need to travel and not increase traffic or congestion in the area.

Enhancing Environmental Assets

15.20 The term "environment asset" covers all elements of the natural, green, built and historic environment that are of value. Most of these are found within the suburban areas of Slough. The environmental assets, both the built and natural, have an important role in contributing towards the character and creating a sense of place in the suburbs.

15.21 Enhancing and protecting these environmental assets is an important part of the Spatial Strategy and this includes maintaining, improving and celebrating those elements that are of local value.

Heritage Assets

15.22 Slough does not have many historical or heritage assets. It is therefore important that we make the most of what we have.

15.23 The identity of some of the suburbs in Slough is partly derived by the Conservation Areas within them. The historic core of Langley St Mary's is a good example of this.

15.24 Elsewhere the character of Upton is enhanced by its association with the Upton and Sussex Place Conservation Areas.

15.25 There are a number of Listed Buildings and two Ancient Monuments in the Borough which need to be sustained and enhanced for the enjoyment of residents. The Local Plan also identifies Locally Listed Buildings which need to be retained, enhanced and, where appropriate, refurbished. The opportunity to identify more Locally Listed buildings will be explored.

15.26 It is also important that we retain buildings with group value which create a particular style, character and image for a locality.

Parks and Open Spaces

15.27 The suburbs contain a lot more greenery compared to the more urban parts of the Borough. The gardens, grass verges, trees, small green spaces, formal parks and open spaces are all vital for the environment and for creating a sense of place and belonging.

15.28 One of Slough's most important environmental assets is its parks and open spaces. In addition to their recreational and amenity value, they provide a landscape context for many of the suburban areas. Trees and vegetation in these spaces also contribute towards better air quality and addressing climate change through biodiversity, carbon reduction, flood prevention and air cooling.

15.29 Work on the Open Space Study has shown that not all residents have easy access to local green areas. These open spaces provide recreational space and are needed to support peoples well being and health (through active lifestyles), positive neighbourhood image, and a sense of place for the local communities living in the suburbs. Upton Court Park, has the potential for providing a wider range of recreation opportunities, being a large area and for biodiversity through creation of wildlife habitats. More locally accessible natural habitat can provide an alternative recreation space to Burnham Beeches, a very sensitive area for nature with National protection (Special Area of Conservation), which could be adversely affected by extra pressure from trips to it by Slough's expanding population.

15.30 In addition to being destinations in themselves, parks and open spaces provide attractive routes for walkers and cyclists. Slough is surrounded by attractive countryside and it is proposed to make it more convenient for residents to get 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.

15.31 A key principle of the Spatial Strategy is that there should be no loss of parks or public open space. Protecting the green spaces in Slough will deliver multiple environmental benefits such as helping address climate change and pollution levels. It will also contribute towards improving the health and well-being of communities living in suburban areas and contributing towards the amenity and attractiveness of neighbourhoods and streets.

16 Protecting the "Strategic Gap" between Slough and Greater London

16.1 The Colnbrook with Poyle ward is the largest area of undeveloped land in the

Borough and the only part which borders London and Heathrow. It has a distinct identity and an important role in stopping Slough from coalescing with London and losing some of its identity. It is also a vital part of the Colne Valley Regional Park with the open land providing a narrow link between the Chilterns to the north and river Thames to the south. In addition to the villages of Colnbrook and Poyle, it also contains the Poyle Trading Estate which is the second largest employment area in the Borough.

- 16.2 The area suffers from a large number of environmental quality problems due to its proximity to the airport and the motorway network and is acknowledged as being one of the most fragmented and vulnerable parts of the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 16.3 The Slough Core Strategy (2008) identified this part of the Borough as having an important role in retaining a “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London and so had a restraint policy which prevented development taking place unless it was “essential to be in that location”. Core Policy 2 has been upheld by the Court of Appeal as intended to impose a “stringent test over and above ordinary Green Belt policy” to development than the “very special circumstances” test applied to Green Belt.
- 16.4 As a result the Council has consistently refused commercial development or major infrastructure proposals, such as Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges, within the undeveloped areas, because of the adverse impacts that they would have.
- 16.5 Planning policy in the Colnbrook and Poyle area has been largely dictated by proposals for the expansion of Heathrow Airport. In June 2018, the “Airports National Policy Statement: new runway capacity and infrastructure at airports in the South East of England.” was published. This confirmed Government support for the construction of a north-west runway at Heathrow. The illustrative Masterplan showed where the runway should go and set out the requirements that would have to be met in order to get approval through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.
- 16.6 The Council supported the proposed expansion of the airport on the grounds that the economic benefits would outweigh the harm to the environment. As a result one of the key elements of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy (2018) was one of “Accommodating the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigating the impact”.
- 16.7 Heathrow Airport Limited is no longer bringing forward proposals for the proposed third runway. This is partly due to a successful challenge in the High Court to the Airports National Policy Statement which underpinned the proposal. This is now the subject of an appeal to the Supreme Court.

- 16.8 The main reason that proposals for the expansion of the airport are not coming forward is due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has severely affected Heathrow airport and the airline industry in general and is likely to have a far reaching impact upon the future demand for air travel. The Heathrow Chief Executive reported to the transport select committee in May 2020 that the third runway remains critical for the growth of the country but that it would be 10 to 15 years before it was needed, even if passenger numbers recover in the next few years.
- 16.9 As a result the Local Plan is now being prepared on the basis that there will not be any expansion of Heathrow. Any proposals that do come forward will have to be dealt with through a review of the Local Plan. This means that the Spatial Strategy now has to take a revised approach to the planning of the Colnbrook and Poyle area.
- 16.10 As part of its planning for the third runway, the Council produced an Emerging Spatial Strategy for Accommodating Growth at Heathrow in December 2018. This contained a spatial Master Plan showing how all the necessary infrastructure and airport related development could be accommodated in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. There is no need to plan for this now and no proven need for additional airport related development in the area.
- 16.11 Whilst it is recognised that there is considerable demand for warehousing to serve the needs of Slough and the wider area, it is not considered that this has to be provided in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. This issue is also being considered in the Wider Area Growth Study which is seeking to identify suitable locations for unmet employment needs within the Study area.
- 16.12 It is not considered that the Colnbrook and Poyle area is suitable for major residential development for a number of environmental and amenity reasons.
- 16.13 A particular problem is the high noise climate in the area due to proximity to Heathrow Airport. The latest available aviation noise contours for Heathrow Airport (2017) published by the UK Government show that all of Poyle and the majority of Colnbrook lie within the contour where averaged external daytime aircraft noise and aircraft ground noise exceeds the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) of 63 dB LAeq, 16h.
- 16.14 As a result, taking all of these factors into consideration, it is considered that there is now no justification for allowing development, including airport related development, in the open parts of the Colnbrook and Poyle area. Any proposals will therefore need to show how they comply with the policy test in the Core Strategy that any development in the Strategic Gap or Colne Valley Park was “essential to be in that location”. At the same time, it would have to demonstrate that there were “very special circumstances” to justify building in

the Green Belt. It would also have to show that there would not be any significant adverse environmental or other impacts. Where, exceptional, development is allowed suitable mitigation of any adverse effects will have to be provided.

- 16.15 Importantly, this would not rule out the expansion of Heathrow happening at some stage in the future. Any proposals could be considered through a review of the Local Plan. Applying a restraint policy now could actually help to facilitate this. The lack of any planning status for the proposed third runway means that it is not possible for the Local Plan to safeguard any land that may be needed for the expansion of the airport. Preventing any development in the wider Colnbrook and Poyle area should make it easier to bring forward proposals for the airport in the future if it was supported by Government policy.
- 16.16 The application of this policy will not prevent suitable development taking place upon brownfield land which is not in the Green Belt or prevent essential infrastructure coming forward.

Poyle Trading Estate

- 16.17 The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough. Unlike Slough Trading Estate, it is in multiple ownership, and has seen piecemeal redevelopment and intensification. This has resulted in a poor environment and the potential for unneighbourly activities to take place. There is a lack of parking for cars, vans and HGVs. There are also very few facilities or amenities for workers to use, including poor pedestrian and cycle permeability.
- 16.18 Although it is very well connected to the strategic road network, the Trading Estate is very poorly served by public transport. It suffers from noise, and part of the Estate is within an airport safety zone where only low density activities are allowed.
- 16.19 Poyle Trading Estate is, however, perfectly located and already has strong links with Heathrow Airport. It is able to provide for the sort of 24 hour operations that are needed to ensure that just in time deliveries can take place.
- 16.20 It is not proposed that there should be any enlargement of the Trading Estate. Because of its location its main function should be to serve Heathrow. In order to reduce the impact of cargo operations the opportunity to develop low emission innovations for the way that freight is delivered to the airport should be explored.
- 16.21 Whilst the comprehensive redevelopment of the Estate would be encouraged; this should be done in a way which provides a variety of high quality units which meet the specific needs of freight forwarders. There should not be any

large scale non airport related warehousing or distribution centres which would generate more traffic and potentially displace airport cargo operations which need to be close to Heathrow.

- 16.22 One of the proposals in the Council's "Emerging Spatial Strategy for Accommodating Growth at Heathrow" was to prevent HGV traffic from the Poyle Trading Estate being able to pass through the residential areas to the north. This would mean that access would be limited to junction 14 of the M25. There is a current proposal to install a bus gate on the Poyle Road just north of the Trading Estate which would limit HGVs from travelling south. The longer term ambition is still to prevent HGVs from using this road in both directions if a suitable scheme can be devised.
- 16.23 Working with the Poyle Business Forum, it may be possible to consider reconfiguring the internal road layout of the Estate to deliver better operational accessibility and safety. There is also a need to improve the facilities and amenities that are available to people working on the Trading Estate which are currently very limited.
- 16.24 Safe walking and cycling connections around the Estate should be created to connect it to neighbouring areas, bus routes and informal recreation areas. This would include investigating the ability to improve the footpath along the disused railway link to Poyle, and connecting with the Colne Valley Park routes.
- 16.25 Residential uses are not appropriate in this location because of the poor environment. They are not compatible with Poyle Trading Estate's function as a 24 hour cargo and distribution centre. As a result the introduction of an Article 4 Direction which prevents the change of use of buildings to residential will be considered.
- 16.26 The overall policy should be one of encouraging airport related development upon the Poyle Trading Estate, and improving its quality, road network and amenities to service employees.

Rail Uses

- 16.27 The area to the east of Lakeside Road, which contains the London Concrete and Aggregates Industries facilities, is safeguarded in the Minerals Local Plan as a rail depot. The adjoining Colnbrook Logistics Centre is also rail linked and there is a terminal in Poyle which supplies Heathrow with aviation fuel. It is considered that all of these rail facilities should be safeguarded either for the import of aggregates or for airport related operations.
- 16.28 The sites of the two of the proposed shafts and headhouses for the Western Rail Link to Heathrow, next to the Iver South sewage works and east of Gallymead Road also need to be safeguarded.

Park and Ride

16.29 The Council identified a possible location for a park and ride site at Brands Hill in the Emerging Strategy. This will be part of the forthcoming Transport Strategy for Slough. This could be allowed on the basis that it can be demonstrated that it is essential to be in this location and there are the necessary “very special circumstances” to comply with Green Belt policy.

Proposed Improvements to the Colnbrook and Poyle Area

16.30 The Colnbrook and Poyle area suffers from many problems associated with the urban fringe and because of activities related to the airport and the motorway network.

16.31 The Council’s “The Emerging Spatial Strategy for Accommodating Growth at Heathrow” identified a number of environmental and other improvements which could have been carried out to help mitigate the impact of the proposed third runway. These included:

- Protect Colnbrook and Poyle villages in a “Green Envelope” and enhance the Conservation and built realm”
- Prevent through traffic but provide good public transport and cycle routes to the airport
- Ensure that there are good public transport link into Heathrow from Slough
- Provide mitigation for the Colne Valley Park.
- Develop tangible measures to improve air quality in the Heathrow area.

16.32 It is considered that these measures should continue to be promoted because they are needed even if the expansion of the airport is not going to take place.

Green Envelope

16.33 The concept of having a “Green Envelope” of informal open space around the villages of Colnbrook and Poyle was developed as a way of trying to mitigate the impact of the construction and operation of a third runway at Heathrow and proposed new roads upon residents. The proposal was adopted as part of a wider green infrastructure strategy which integrated waterways and local biodiversity value, and connected with Colnbrook Village Conservation Area. It is considered that it remains a valid proposal even though there are no current proposals for development in the area.

16.34 The envelope would provide a buffer and an area for informal recreation for local people. It could contain things like heritage Cox’s Orange Pippin orchard.

It could also be a focus for improving and better connecting a network of cycling and walking routes from Colnbrook Village to Stanwell Road, and connect to existing areas such as Arthur Jacobs Nature Reserve. As a result, in addition to being protected from development, it would have to be actively managed. This could be funded as part of a mitigation package for any development that took place in the Colne Valley Park.

Colnbrook Conservation Area

16.35 The Conservation Area forms the heart of Colnbrook village. A review of the Conservation Area has recently been carried out along with an assessment of its Listed Buildings and other structures of historic interest. A number of proposals such as enhancing particular shop fronts, improvements to public realm and tree planting have come out of this which will have to be investigated in the future. The enhancement of both the historic and wider public realm in Colnbrook should be a priority.

16.36 The Conservation Area is affected by through traffic despite traffic calming measures and it is important that all through traffic should continue to be prevented from going through the village and additional enforcement applied.

Improving the Colne Valley Regional Park

16.37 The main functions of the part of the Colne Valley Regional Park in Slough are in maintaining the linkage between the other parts of the park, delivering a local recreation resource, and connecting and protecting biodiversity. This is especially true in the area of Colnbrook and Poyle. As such a key theme will need to be on reducing the severance and improving the Colne Valley Way/Trail which acts as the spine, giving local residents access for local amenity, and preserving and where possible enhancing biodiversity.

16.38 The Colne Valley Park has prepared a Green Infrastructure Strategy which highlights the unique green infrastructure assets of the Regional Park and sets out approaches to enhance and interconnect these to increase their value for both people and wildlife. This integrates with the Green Envelope and the Council is working with the Colne Valley Park and the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group on prioritising opportunities for enhancements in the area of Colnbrook and Poyle. As such work on the Green Infrastructure strategy needs to continue to refine proposals to allow the Council to identify specific (detailed and costed) environmental enhancement projects that can be funded as part of the mitigation from any development that comes forward.

16.39 There are a number of measures being explored including:

- Access improvements near Colnbrook to improve the safety and connectivity of Colne Valley Trail crossing the A4
- A new link to the Colne Valley Trail on the section of disused railway through Poyle
- Conserving & enhancing existing parks and open spaces adjacent to the settlements and links with Colnbrook Conservation Area.
- Creating connecting routes and biodiversity links between sites including Pippins Park, Albany Park, Colnbrook Recreation Ground and Crown Meadow.
- Create new access to the south of Crown Meadow to link with nearby public rights of way, bus stop and open spaces.
- Improved access to Poyle Poplars and Arthur Jacobs Nature reserve.

16.40 The prevention of through traffic along the High Street/ Bridge Street/ Park Street in Colnbrook Village is a key action on reducing the level of traffic emissions (and air quality levels) the community is exposed to. Higher levels are experienced on the main roads serving the Poyle Trading Estate, Poyle Industrial Estate and Lakeside Road. Low emission strategies and vehicle routing will need to be considered in any new developments and renewal of existing industrial areas.

16.41 Vehicle routing from Colnbrook and Poyle has implications for the Air Quality Management Areas declared at Brands Hill. In recent years, the highest levels of pollutants monitored in the Borough have been recorded in Brands Hill. The Council is currently engaged in further traffic and air quality modelling to test what measures could bring about compliance in the Borough's AQMAs. This will include testing of whether a Clean Air Zone is appropriate at Brands Hill.

16.42 The Council will also need to continue to work collaboratively with Heathrow Airport Limited to push forward with their sustainability agenda and measures to reduce emissions from airborne aircraft, aircraft on the ground, airfield plant and airport-related traffic emissions. The Council is currently engaging with the Heathrow Area Transport Forum on a surface access strategy for a two runway Heathrow that will aim to reduce the use of private cars to access the site for employees and passengers.

17 Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs

17.1 This key component of the Spatial Strategy focuses on promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

17.2 It is important to note that this is outside of the control of the Slough Local Plan area and any proposed development could only be delivered by the relevant

Local Planning Authority in its development plan. Exactly how this could be delivered will have to be decided through further joint working once the results of the Wider Area Growth have been agreed.

Wider Area Growth Study

- 17.3 The “Wider Area Growth Study” is a government funded study which is intended to address issues arising from growth that is anticipated across the area. The work has been jointly commissioned by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the former Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils and Slough Borough Council.
- 17.4 It recognises that Slough currently considers it will not be able to meet all of its existing and future housing needs within its boundary and so there is a need to identify “functional geographies” or areas where this ‘need’ can be accommodated regardless of administrative boundaries. The purpose of the study is to identify the potential locations that could accommodate the future housing need growth of the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead core, in line with national policy.
- 17.5 The purpose of Part 1 was to define a broad ‘study area’, in which new housing development could provide reasonable substitutes for homes in the core places. This was carried out by consultants PBA who published their report in June 2019.
- 17.6 This concluded that the future housing needs of Slough are best met as close to Slough as possible, in areas where house prices are, or house prices in new developments could be, no higher than in Slough and close to areas that Slough residents commute out to. As a result the Study had identified a very small narrow area of search consisting of the southern part of South Bucks south of the M40. It also included the London Borough of Hillingdon. This was not because it would necessarily be expected to take net migration from Slough but because the inter relationship is such that if more housing was built in Hillingdon the net migration outflow to Slough is likely to be reduced.
- 17.7 As part of the work on the Growth Study a Local Housing Needs Assessment for RBWM, Slough and South Bucks Local Authorities was commissioned from GL Hearn. This suggested that that as a result of the proposed distribution of housing in the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan there could be a shortfall of 4,300 houses in the southern part of South Bucks over the Plan period. This would be in addition to the unmet need from Slough. Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth Study is now being carried out by Stantec. This will look at housing needs, supply, capacity and constraints in the study area in order to identify specific locations where housing development could be deliverable and sustainable.

- 17.8 The report is due to be completed by the end of the 2020 and will then have to be agreed by the commissioning Councils.
- 17.9 The Council has previously promoted the “Northern Expansion of Slough” which remains its proposed option. However, in order not to prejudice the results of the Wider Growth Area Study, the Spatial Strategy is not promoting any particular form or preferred location for development as part of the cross border expansion of Slough to meet housing needs.

Housing Needs

- 17.10 Meeting housing needs in Local Plans is a priority for Government. The methodology for assessing housing need is evolving and focuses primarily on numbers, but the tensions identified in the Issues and Options consultation remain the same. Based on standard methodology Slough has an overall need to build 17,860 houses in the Local Plan period from 2016 to 2036. It is currently calculated that there will be a shortfall of around 5,000 housing. Whilst this is mainly due to a shortage of land it has to be recognised that the scale of unmet needs is also affected by decisions made about the proposed Spatial Strategy.
- 17.11 The overall guiding principle behind the Strategy is that that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits. This means that the bulk of the new housing is directed to the Centre of Slough. We have identified sites where around 9,000 dwellings could be built in the plan period. This involves having very high density development which will predominantly provide flats. The ability to deliver this scale of development within the Centre of Slough “square mile” hasn’t been fully tested. But it is considered to be the maximum that it is practical to deliver.
- 17.12 We have sought to find sites elsewhere in the Borough as part of the Selected Key Locations component of the Spatial Strategy. Although there are a number of individual sites, it has only been able to find one new area at Cippenham that is capable of being comprehensively redeveloped for housing. The search for sites was carried out on the basis that there would be no further loss of public open space or Existing Business Areas which are needed to support the Local economy.
- 17.13 We have identified 10 sites which could possibly be released from the Green Belt for housing. These will have to be the subject of a separate consultation exercise once the results of the Wider Area Growth Study have been agreed.
- 17.14 Because of the need to retain the stock of existing family housing, the Spatial Strategy has decided that there should be no loss of these in the Enhancing the

Suburbs component of the plan. There will, however, continue to be an ongoing supply of new housing from small sites.

17.15 It is not considered that the Colnbrook and Poyle area is suitable for housing because of environmental issues including noise from the nearby Heathrow airport. This is one of the reasons why one of the components of the Spatial Strategy is protecting the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London. Whether this area is suitable for development will be tested in the Wider Area Growth Study.

17.16 One of the principles of the Spatial Strategy is that unmet needs should be met as close as possible to where they arise. As explained above, it has not been possible to find sites to accommodate all of Slough's housing needs within the Borough in a way that would not risk compromising the existing residential and business communities and environment. There is already a shortfall of housing in southern Buckinghamshire. There is also a need to rebalance the housing market in Slough in order to provide more family and affordable housing. It is for these reasons that the Cross Border Expansion of Slough is being promoted as a component of the Spatial Strategy.