

- 7.74 The identification of a possible gypsy or traveller site will take place through the Development Control Policies and Site Allocations DPD. If a new site is needed in the Borough in accordance with this policy it is likely that this will be within the Colnbrook or Poyle area. The siting and design of the site would have to minimise the impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Any proposals for a gypsy or traveller site in the Green Belt would be contrary to PPG2 and Circular 1/06 (ODPM) and would have to be treated as a departure from the plan.
- 7.79 Further employment growth in Slough will not redress the existing imbalance between the number of jobs and the labour supply in the area. This is, however, the inevitable result of national and regional policy. The Panel's report for the South East Plan (Doc.44) accepted that it was not necessary to redress this imbalance within the sub region. Nevertheless the Core Strategy seeks to at least partly address the problem by increasing the number of jobs that are taken by local people.

Employment

- 7.75 Slough is an important employment centre in the M4 corridor in close proximity to London and Heathrow. At present, there are an estimated 82,000ⁱ jobs in Slough. It is estimated 40,000 people commute into Slough each day for work, whilst 26,000 local residents commute outside the Borough for work (p.91, Doc.5)
- 7.76 One of the main aims of the Core Strategy is to ensure that Slough continues to fulfil its regional role in maintaining a competitive, sustainable and buoyant economy, whilst at the same time providing a diverse range of jobs for local people.
- 7.77 The council's Economic Assessment (Doc.5) shows that an additional 12,000 jobs could be created in the Borough between now and 2016. This will, however, depend upon a number of factors, such as the demand for new offices and the supply of labour. Longer term projections are less reliable but it is assumed that employment will continue to grow at a similar rate throughout the plan period. This, together with on-going improvements in competitiveness, should allow Slough to contribute towards the 3% gross value added (GVA) growth target in the Regional Economic Strategy (Doc.13)
- 7.78 It is not considered that any new land needs to be allocated in order to facilitate any employment growth since this can be accommodated by the redevelopment and intensification of use of existing sites.
- 7.80 The loss of traditional manufacturing and the emergence of knowledge-based industries have meant that there is a skills gap amongst some of the resident work force. In order to reduce this gap, the Economic Development Strategy (Doc.17) identifies the need for better education and training in order to equip the resident work force with the skills necessary to gain access to the new knowledge-based jobs that will be created in Slough.
- 7.81 Whilst progress is being made it is likely that there will be a continuing need for a range of employment opportunities in the Borough to meet local needs. As a result it is proposed to adopt the principle of retaining the Existing Business Areas (See Appendix 4) in order to maintain a diverse economic base which will offer local residents a variety of job opportunities.
- 7.82 In order to ensure that the retention of the Existing Business Areas does not result in an unacceptable level of in commuting by car it is proposed to continue to impose a parking cap whereby there will be no increase in the number of car parking spaces as a result of redevelopment. This will be accompanied by initiatives to encourage a modal shift away from the use of the private car. This policy is not intended to prevent the on going regeneration of the Borough's Existing Business Areas which is needed in order to improve the environment and to meet the needs of modern businesses.

- 7.83 One of the main roles of the Core Strategy is to ensure that jobs are located in the most appropriate locations. In order to implement the Spatial Strategy of "concentrating development and spreading the benefits" one of the over riding principles of the policy is that all intensive employment development should be located in the most accessible and sustainable locations. This means that new offices should be located in the town centre which is the most accessible place in the Borough and has the greatest potential for linked trips.
- 7.84 Office development in the town centre will also be subject to parking restraint which, together with improvements to public transport, should reduce the amount of commuting by the private car. This will help to tackle the problems of congestion and poor air quality in the town centre.
- 7.85 Slough Trading Estate is the largest Existing Business Area and provides around a quarter of all of the jobs in the Borough. As a result its continued success as an employment centre is of great importance to the local economy and the prosperity of the town as a whole. There has been a rolling program of refurbishment and redevelopment in the Trading Estate in recent years in order to ensure that it is able to accommodate modern business needs and continues to attract inward investment. This has been aided by the designation of the Trading Estate as a Simplified Planning Zone with its integrated transport strategy.
- 7.86 It is recognised that the Trading Estate will need to continue to evolve to serve the needs of knowledge-based industries. SEGRO are in the process of producing a Master Plan for the area which is intended to achieve this. The success of the Trading Estate is important to the Borough's sustainable development as it has the potential to retain and attract businesses, create jobs and offer opportunities for improving skills and training to local people. As a result it is proposed that Slough Trading Estate should be treated as a special case within the Core Strategy. This means that B1(a) offices may be allowed in the proposed new hub within the Trading Estate, as an exception to the Spatial Strategy, in order to facilitate the comprehensive regeneration of the Estate.
- 7.87 Whilst there is a general presumption against the loss of employment generating uses within the Existing Business Areas, there are some offices outside of these areas which are in less sustainable locations or which no longer meet modern standards which may therefore be redeveloped or converted to residential use.
- 7.88 Any employment-generating uses within the Borough which exacerbate the problems identified above will be expected to contribute towards appropriate training, childcare and/or transport measures as required.
- 7.89 It is recognised that retailing, leisure, education, health and other service industries are an important source of jobs. As a result they are all classed as "employment" uses for the purposes of this policy. Any proposals for any of these type of developments will also have to comply with the other specific policies within this document.



CORE POLICY 5 (EMPLOYMENT)

The location, scale and intensity of new employment development must reinforce the Spatial Strategy and transport strategy. This includes the application of a parking cap upon new developments unless additional parking is required for local road safety or operational reasons.

Intensive employment-generating uses such as B1(a) offices will be located in the town centre in accordance with the spatial strategy.

B1(a) offices may also be located on the Slough Trading Estate, as an exception, in order to facilitate the comprehensive regeneration of the estate. This will be subject to the production of a Master Plan and the provision of a package of public transport improvements. This will be partly delivered through a subsequent Local Development Order which will replace the Simplified Planning Zone.

Intensive employment generating uses which increase the level of in-commuting, increase skill shortages or reduce employment opportunities for local people will be expected to contribute toward appropriate mitigation measures, including new training, childcare and transport facilities.

Major warehousing and distribution developments will be located in the eastern part of the Borough and in Existing Business Areas that have good access to the strategic road and rail network.

There will be no loss of the defined Existing Business Areas to non-employment generating uses, especially where this would reduce the range of jobs available. Outside Existing Business Areas, the change of use or redevelopment of existing offices to residential will be encouraged where this is considered appropriate.

Target:

- No offices built outside of town centre or Slough Trading Estate Hub; and
- No increase in car parking within new employment development.

Indicators:

- Amount of land in Existing Business Areas lost due to residential development (COI 1f); and
- Percentage of completed non-residential development complying with car parking standards as set out in the Local Development Framework (COI 3b)

Implementation

- 7.90 This policy will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for commercial development and the preparation of the Development Control and Site Allocations DPD. Master Plans will be expected to be prepared by developers for the comprehensive redevelopment of specific areas. The Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for Slough Trading Estate will eventually be replaced by a Local Development Order.
- 7.91 The policy will be monitored through the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report) and the Annual Commitments Documents. It will also be informed by updated Economic Development Strategies, Economic Assessments, employment forecasts and office market reviews.
- 7.92 The main effects of the policy will be to encourage major employment development to take place in the town centre, facilitate the regeneration of Slough Trading Estate and allow for the gradual renewal of the other Existing Business Areas over the plan period. In order to deliver a significant improvement to the overall environmental quality and image of Slough, all of these schemes will be required to comply with the best practice in the design of sustainable buildings and take the opportunity to showcase innovative architecture where this is appropriate to the local context.

- 7.93 The employment forecasts reveal that significant growth is likely to occur in the professional services and banking sectors. There is sufficient capacity within the existing office stock along with proposed new developments in the town centre to accommodate around 10,000 jobs, which is most of the predicted growth up to 2016. Employment forecasts for the second half of the plan period are less reliable, particularly with the cyclical nature of the office market and uncertainty about future labour supply. It is, however likely that they will continue at a similar rate and it is considered that sufficient new sites will come forward to meet demand.
- 7.94 The major new office developments in Slough town centre will be focused around the Heart of Slough and the Windsor Road area. These will provide high quality modern headquarter type buildings which will help to boost the image of the centre, the level of inward investment and the vitality of the centre.
- 7.95 Slough Trading Estate has specifically been identified as an area for regeneration within the policy. This will be implemented through a Master Plan which is being prepared by SEGRO. This will identify the location of the proposed new offices within a new hub. Around 3,600 new jobs could be created on the Trading Estate over the plan period. The amount of new B1(a) offices, and the scale of other development will, however, be dependent upon a number of requirements being met. These will include capping the number of parking spaces at current levels and introducing a package of public transport improvements and other initiatives in order to ensure that there is no increase in the level of car commuting into the estate. This should also involve increasing the number of Slough residents working in the estate. Once the Master Plan has been approved it is proposed that key elements, such as the new hub, will be considered through a planning application and the rest of it will be implemented through a subsequent Local Development Order which will replace the existing SPZ.
- 7.96 In addition to Slough Trading Estate there are a number of other Existing Business Areas, which are likely to change over the plan period, within the scope of this policy.
- 7.97 Poyle Industrial Estate is the second largest estate in the Borough, but is in multiple ownership. As a result, its development has not been properly planned and it suffers from congestion and a poor environment. The development of the 5th terminal at Heathrow has moved the centre of gravity of the airport and means that Poyle Industrial Estate is likely to come under even more pressure for airport related developments, and will have an important role to play in responding. This will be dealt with in the short term by the Site Allocations and Development Control DPD, but in the longer term it may require an Area Action Plan.
- 7.98 Parts of the Existing Business Areas along the A4, at the western end of the Borough, were identified in the Employment Land Study (Doc.27) as having the potential to accommodate some alternative uses or mixed use development. The large car dealership is currently operating on a temporary planning permission and so it is proposed that these and other main road frontage sites be considered for a range of uses, including residential development in the Site Allocations DPD.
- 7.99 Stoke Road Area, north of town centre was identified in the Local Plan for Slough (Doc.24) as an area for comprehensive redevelopment, with a mixture of commercial and residential development. Major high density residential development and a hotel have been permitted in the area north of the station. Other areas of opportunity here and in Petersfield Avenue will be identified in the Site Allocations Document.
- 7.100 The Employment Land Study (Doc.27) also identified the Langley Business Centre as having some potential to accommodate alternative uses or mixed use development. This could be considered in the longer term either as a possible expansion of the District Shopping centres or in the context of the

- greatly improved accessibility it would have as a result of Crossrail.
- 7.101 The council is aware of major industrial firms in Slough that may wish to reorganise or consolidate their operations. In considering any proposals which are designed to retain an existing employer in the Borough, the disposal of any surplus land for other uses will be treated in a flexible manner, provided there is no overall loss in the number and range of jobs.
- 7.102 Any major development that could have an impact upon one of the nearby sites of "European" importance for nature conservation will be required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Habitat Regulations.
- 7.103 It is not anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of new jobs outside of the town centre and Slough Trading Estate. This is because the predicted gains in distribution jobs will be offset by a loss in manufacturing jobs.
- 7.104 It is envisaged that the current skills gap will be reduced over time as a result of the continuing success of students attending schools and colleges in Slough and through initiatives such as the Skills Development Centre which is being set up by Thames Valley University Skills on Slough Trading Estate.
- 7.106 Despite Slough town centre's appeal, it is facing increasing competition from surrounding centres. The current Berkshire Structure Plan (Doc.11) states that the main purpose of future development in Slough town centre is to consolidate and improve services, in order to retain the town's existing catchment rather than expand upon it significantly. There is, however, evidence to show that in order to prevent further loss of trade to surrounding centres, a significant improvement in the quality, scale and range of new retail, leisure and community facilities is required in the shopping centre.
- 7.107 As a result, it is proposed that in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 6 (Town Centres) all new major retail, leisure and community facilities will be located in Slough town centre. Not only is this the most accessible and sustainable location for major development to take place, it will also maximise the opportunities for improving the environment and the overall image of the town.
- 7.108 Within this context, development may also take place within selected district/ neighbourhood centres and the new hub within the Slough Trading Estate, but it will need to be appropriately located, scaled and designed to serve the needs of local residents, reducing the need to travel.

Retail, leisure and community facilities

- 7.105 The network of shopping facilities in the Borough consists of Slough town centre, two district centres at Farnham Road and Langley, and a series of neighbourhood centres and local parades (see Appendix 4). Slough's town centre is recognised as a Primary Regional Shopping Centre that draws shoppers from beyond the Borough's boundaries. The other centres have a more localised role. The implementation of the Spatial Strategy is intended to reinforce the existing hierarchy of centres by preventing out of centre development.
- 7.109 Any new out-of-centre and edge-of-centre retail development will be subject to the sequential test. Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for the development, that it is of an appropriate scale, that there are no sequentially preferable sites, the development would not have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres and it is accessible by a choice of means of transport. This will ensure that the new development is appropriately and sustainably located. In demonstrating that a development satisfies the sequential test, it will not be sufficient for developers to claim that the goods/services sold/offered cannot be sold/offered in a designated centre.