

- 7.20 The regeneration of Slough town centre will also be implemented through major environmental enhancement schemes such as the Heart of Slough, Art@the Centre and the central station forecourt improvements. It will also be implemented through local and national transport and infrastructure proposals projects, such as those set out in the Local Transport Plan (Doc.14) and for Crossrail.
- 7.21 The council has also been proactive in promoting the Heart of Slough regeneration scheme in conjunction with English Partnerships and other development partners. This involves the comprehensive redevelopment of 12.7 ha of land; including the Brunel bus station, the library, Thames Valley University and the area around St Etheberts Church. In addition to making major changes to the urban townscape and the quality of the public realm it will provide a new bus station, new library building, new university facilities as well as significant amounts of new residential and commercial floorspace.
- 7.22 The overall effect of the strategy of concentrating development in the town centre through regeneration schemes such as the Heart of Slough will be to transform it into a more pedestrian friendly and attractive centre, with improved facilities which will improve the vitality and viability of the centre and enhance the overall image of the town.
- 7.23 As part of the "spreading the benefits" part of the Spatial Strategy, there will also be other selected regeneration projects, which will include Britwell, Slough Trading Estate and parts of Chalvey. These will be expected to be comprehensively planned to meet the diverse needs of the local community. Other selected key locations and regeneration projects are discussed in more detail in the implementation sections of subsequent policies. Proposals for other areas for comprehensive regeneration will be considered in the subsequent Site Allocations DPD.

- 7.24 Whilst the Spatial Strategy provides a clear indication as to what should go where, it does allow for some relaxation of policy, in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that there will be social, economic and social benefits to the wider community. This will provide flexibility within the strategy and allow the council to manage any unforeseen circumstances that may occur in specific locations in the Borough. A further explanation as to how the Spatial Strategy will affect areas of the Borough is provided in the relevant sections below.

Green belt and open spaces

- 7.25 Whilst most of the Borough is built up, there is a significant area of open land around Colnbrook & Poyle and smaller areas to the north and south of Slough which are designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. It has been established in the Spatial Strategy that there is no need to review the Green Belt boundaries in Slough and so all of this land will continue to be subject to Green Belt policy. Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belts (PPG2) sets out a general presumption against all uses that would affect the openness of the land; apart from agriculture, forestry, some sport and recreational purposes or mineral workings.



The South East Plan (Doc.10) (Waste and Minerals) however, states that waste facilities may also be permitted in the Green Belt, under very special circumstances where there are no suitable alternative sites and where local conditions permit it.

7.26 The remaining open land in Colnbrook & Poyle, east of Langley/Brands Hill, is particularly important because it forms part of the Colne Valley Park and acts as the strategic gap between the eastern edge of Slough and Greater London. Additional restraint will therefore be applied to this fragmented and vulnerable part of the Green Belt which will mean that only essential development that cannot take place elsewhere will be permitted in this location.

7.27 Wexham Park Hospital and Slough Sewage Works will continue to be treated as Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt, where some infilling can take place there provided it has no greater impact upon the Green Belt.

7.28 In the past, land has been taken out of the Green Belt to allow for residential development at Wexham, Upton and Cippenham. Once the exact extent of the development in each area has been established, the opportunity will be taken to put back into the Green Belt any open land which has no further development potential.

7.29 Slough is surrounded by Green Belt in adjoining councils, which acts as a green lung and provides informal recreation opportunities for local residents. As a result it is important that accessibility to the surrounding countryside is improved.

7.30 Parks and open spaces have an important role in shaping the form of the individual urban areas within the town and these make a huge contribution to the quality of life. They also help to promote healthy living by providing opportunities for sport and other activities. The Open Space Study (Doc.25) showed that existing open spaces were well used and valued by local residents, but there was a need to improve the quality of many of them. There is an acknowledged

shortage of parks, playing fields and green spaces in Slough, which will be very difficult to make up, particularly since sporting facilities outside of the Borough are also under threat. As a result, all existing open spaces should be retained.

CORE POLICY 2 (GREEN BELT AND OPEN SPACES)

The existing areas of Metropolitan Green Belt will be maintained and Wexham Park Hospital and Slough Sewage Works will continue to be designated as Major Existing Developed Sites within the Green Belt.

Opportunities will be taken to enhance the quality and the size of the Green Belt by designating additional areas, which have no development potential, as Green Belt.

Development will only be permitted in the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London and the open areas of the Colne Valley Park if it is essential to be in that location.

Existing private and public open spaces will be preserved and enhanced. Where, exceptionally, it is agreed that an open space may be lost a new one, or suitable compensatory provision, will be required to be provided elsewhere.

Target:

- No loss of open space;
- Maintain the existing Green Belt.

Indicators:

- Number of inappropriate developments or uses granted permission in the Green Belt;
- Net change in the size of the Green Belt; and
- Net change in hectares of public open space lost to built development.

Implementation

- 7.31 This policy will be implemented through the development control and enforcement process. Proposals to include new areas within the Green Belt will be dealt with in the Development Control Policies and Site Allocations DPD. Access to the countryside and informal recreation facilities will be enhanced through the Cycling Strategy, Walking Strategy and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Improvements to the quality of land in the Green Belt will be sought in partnership with the Colne Valley Standing Conference, public bodies such as the Environment Agency and British Waterways and private land owners.
- 7.32 The implementation of this policy in conjunction with the Spatial Strategy will mean that there should be very little development in the Colnbrook and Poyle area apart from possible regeneration of the Poyle Trading Estate. The only exception will be any development that is allowed as a result of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework, which is being prepared separately as a joint document by the six Berkshire unitary authorities.



- 7.33 There will also be a presumption against inappropriate development on other areas of Green Belt land around Slough. The identification of Wexham Park Hospital and Slough sewage works as major developed sites which means that some infilling or redevelopment may take place. The council is aware of the fact that the Hospital Trust is reviewing the future of Wexham Park Hospital but no decision has yet been made. Any proposals for major redevelopment or replacement of the hospital will be managed through the preparation of an Action Area Plan for the site in conjunction with the Trust.
- 7.34 Any major development within the Green Belt 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.
- 7.35 Any open land on the edge of Slough which does not have any development potential will be put back into the Green Belt. This could include open space within proposed new developments at Cippenham, Wexham and Upton and land such as the verge on the south side of Farnham Lane, Britwell which is known as the Green Walk.
- 7.36 The Report of the Panel for the South East Plan (Doc.44) recommends that South Bucks Council should liaise with Slough to consider allocating the additional 80 dwellings allocated to South Bucks on the northern boundary of Slough. The council will work with South Bucks District on this issue, but it is not considered that this will have a significant impact upon the Green Belt in Slough.
- 7.37 Improvements to parks and public open spaces will be sought through the implementation of the Parks Strategy. The council will also continue to take advice from Sport England about proposals for the loss of playing fields in order to ensure that where this does occur proper compensatory facilities are provided. There is likely to be some rationalisation of the existing play areas in accordance with the council's emerging Play Strategy which has

- adopted a “quality not quantity” approach to where play equipment should be located. As a result it is proposed to improve play opportunities by investing money into maintaining and equipping fewer play areas to a much higher standard.
- 7.38 Many areas in the urban fringe of Slough have become degraded. As a result, steps will be taken to prevent the dereliction of such land and to improve its appearance. The council will also seek to improve access to the countryside by continuing to develop the Linear Park along the south of the Borough which includes the Jubilee river. It will also seek to further enhance and promote the Grand Union canal and the public rights of way network. The council is aware of long term plans to extend the canal to link it with the river Thames. This could provide a number of recreational, environmental and regeneration benefits. As a result the council would support this in principle provided it is technically feasible, economically viable and environmentally sustainable.
- 7.39 New development will be expected to contribute to the provision of, or improvements to, the quality and accessibility of open spaces, playing fields, play areas, allotments and green spaces in accordance with the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) and Core Strategy Policy 5 – Infrastructure.
- 7.40 Where, exceptionally, it is agreed that an existing open space may be lost, a new open space, or significant improvements to an existing area, will be required to be provided. This will have to be of an appropriate accessible location and be of a suitable size, quality and nature to compensate for the loss of the existing facility.
- Housing distribution***
- 7.41 The Core Strategy has to demonstrate how the housing allocation in the emerging Regional Plan can be accommodated within Slough.
- 7.42 The Draft South East Plan (Doc.10) prepared by SEERA proposed that a minimum of 235 new dwellings should be built in Slough each year up to 2026. The Panel that held the examination in public recommended, however, that this should be increased to 285 a year (Doc.44). In doing so the Panel acknowledged that there is a limited range of options open to Slough but considered that it should have this higher rate in view of the fact that it is a regional hub. There is also a requirement to make up the shortfall of around 550 dwellings from the previous plan period. As a result, it is proposed that a minimum of 6,250 dwellings should be built in the plan period.
- 7.43 The housing has been distributed in accordance with the principles of the Spatial Strategy of “concentrating development and spreading the benefit”. This means that a minimum of 3,000 dwellings will be built in the town centre and a reduced number of 30 a year will be built on small sites of less than 10 units in the existing residential neighbourhoods (see Appendix 2). The remainder of the housing will be made up from the urban extensions that have already been permitted at Wexham, Upton and Cippenham, plus other medium or major sites within the urban area. All of the major sites are identified in the housing trajectory (Appendix 1) and so it is possible to see from this exactly how the housing allocation will be distributed throughout the Borough. It is recognised that there may be some further capacity in the town centre in the longer term. This means that if there is a further increase in Slough’s housing allocation as a result of changes to the regional plan, the bulk of this will be expected to be met in the town centre. There will be no development outside of the existing urban area.
- 7.44 The housing trajectory in Appendix 1 shows that it is possible to identify both a five year supply of deliverable land for housing and a 15 year supply in accordance with the requirements of PPS3. Despite the ongoing supply, there is still a shortage of land for housing in Slough to meet local needs and so it is important that there should be no