

## CORE POLICY 9 (NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Development will not be permitted unless it:

- Enhances and protects the historic environment;
- Respects the character and distinctiveness of existing buildings, townscapes and landscapes and their local designations;
- Protects and enhances the water environment and its margins;
- Enhances and preserves natural habitats and the biodiversity of the Borough, including corridors between biodiversity rich features.

### Indicators:

- Number of listed buildings demolished or included in the Buildings at Risk Register and the number added to the statutory list; and
- Changes in area of Wildlife Heritage Sites or Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) (priority sites).

7.173 This policy, in conjunction with all of the other policies in the plan, will be implemented through the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the Development Control and Site Allocations DPD and Supplementary Planning Documents. It will also be implemented through measures such as the Berkshire Nature Conservation Strategy and the Strategy for the Colne Valley Park, in conjunction with the adjoining Boroughs.

7.174 The Sustainability appraisal (Doc.22) sets out a framework for monitoring and identifying unexpected significant environmental effects that may result over the plan period. The need for development to reflect the character and distinctiveness of existing buildings and townscapes should not prevent the application of sustainable design and technologies required under Core Policy 8.

7.175 Where appropriate, developers will be required to carry out or fund improvements to and the future maintenance of areas of environment importance.

7.176 The council will continue its programme of producing Character Assessments for the Conservation Areas. Any additions to the Locally Listed Buildings or the Areas of Exceptional Residential Character will be considered in the Development Control and Site Allocations DPD.

7.177 Wildlife Heritage Sites will continue to be surveyed in order to monitor their condition and ensure that they are properly managed.

7.178 The council will continue to carry out environmental improvements in partnership with organisations such as the Groundwork Trust and will also encourage the community to become involved in local environmental and wildlife projects.

7.179 The management of water courses and their margins will be carried out in conjunction with the Environment Agency. Buffer zones will also be required alongside water courses which allow for their maintenance.

## Infrastructure

7.180 The Spatial Strategy is dependent upon the necessary infrastructure being provided in the right place at the right time. All new development will, to varying degrees, create additional demands upon existing infrastructure, community services and public services. Developers will therefore need to demonstrate that existing, planned and/or committed infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate new development. Where existing infrastructure is insufficient to accommodate new development, developers will need to, either individually or collectively, ensure that all of the necessary infrastructure can be put in place.

7.181 The timing of infrastructure improvements will also be crucial. Where necessary, agreement will need to be reached between the council and developers on the programmed implementation of all on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements. These improvements should be put in place prior to the occupation of a new development and should serve both

individual and communal needs. In some instances, such as transport improvements, developers will be required to contribute towards a cumulative pot which will fund necessary improvements.

- 7.182 The provision of essential infrastructure will be secured through planning obligations or by conditions attached to planning permissions.

#### CORE POLICY 10 (INFRASTRUCTURE)

Development will only be allowed where there is sufficient existing, planned or committed infrastructure. All new infrastructure must be sustainable.

Where existing infrastructure is insufficient to serve the needs of new development, the developer will be required to supply all reasonable and necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements. These improvements must be completed prior to the occupation of a new development and should serve both individual and communal needs.

Infrastructure includes:

- Utilities (water, sewerage and drainage);
- Transportation;
- Education and skills;
- Health;
- Leisure, community and cultural services; and
- Other relevant services.

The provision of reasonable and necessary infrastructure will be secured through planning obligations or by conditions attached to planning permissions.

#### Indicators:

- Number of developments with legal agreements for infrastructure contributions.

#### Implementation

- 7.183 This policy will be implemented, in conjunction with the other policies in the plan, through the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the Development Control and Site Allocations DPD and a "Developers Guide" SPD. Where appropriate, planning applications will have to be accompanied by a relevant technical report which is capable of identifying the need for additional infrastructure or financial contributions as a result of the proposed development. This will also have to take account of the relevant strategies and programmes for the provision of infrastructure by the agencies and organisations concerned.
- 7.184 Work carried out by the Environment Agency (Doc.33) shows that the projected housing growth in Slough can be accommodated with only low cost works to Slough Sewage works, subject to stricter discharge consents being applied. As a result it is likely that the requirements for infrastructure contributions will be limited.
- 7.185 Work on the Strategic Flood Risk assessment (Doc.31) has shown that improvements to localised drainage systems may be required. Where Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) are provided in accordance with Core Policy 8, developers will be expected to pay for the ongoing maintenance of this infrastructure.
- 7.186 The Local Transport Plan (Doc.14) currently has an annual programme of £5m on transport improvements, in addition to major infrastructure projects such as the Heart of Slough. Financial contributions will be sought from all major trip generating developments for off site transport improvements.
- 7.187 The Slough Schools Places Plan 2007-2012 (Doc.34) shows that there is currently a 9% surplus of primary school places in Slough, but this is likely to fall to around 5% by 2011/12. These surplus places are not, however, spread evenly across the town and are not well located to accommodate

the proposed growth in the town centre. This situation will also change over the plan period. As a result all housing developments may have to make financial contributions towards primary educational provision in the local area.

- 7.188 There is currently a shortage of 217 secondary school places in Slough. Whilst this is predicted to fluctuate, there is still likely to be a shortage of 135 in 2011/12 (Doc.34). Major housing developments will therefore be expected to make a contribution towards secondary education provision.
- 7.189 The council may also seek the provision of training and skills facilities in order to increase the supply of labour and reduce the existing skills gap in Slough.
- 7.190 The council is aware of the proposals by the Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospital Trust and the Berkshire East Primary Care Trust (PCT) to reorganise healthcare provision which focuses upon making the best use of existing NHS sites in the Borough such as the Wexham Park and Upton Hospitals. The council will work in partnership with the Hospitals Trust and the PCT to ensure that the improvement of existing facilities and the location of any new facilities, such as health centres and GP surgeries, respond to the needs of the community. This could include the relocation or redevelopment of Wexham Park Hospital and the redevelopment of part of Upton Hospital. The council will continue to seek the provision of new surgeries, where the opportunities arise in appropriate areas and will seek financial contributions where there is an additional need as a result of development.
- 7.191 Financial contributions towards other forms of infrastructure or services may also be sought in order to implement other policies in the Core Strategy. Details of how the policy will be operated will be set out in the Development Control Policies DPD and the "Developers Guide" SPD.

### *Social cohesiveness*

- 7.192 One of the objectives of the Community Strategy (Doc.15) is to improve the quality of life for those individuals who face disadvantage and discrimination in order to eliminate social exclusion and make Slough a cohesive integrated community.
- 7.193 Slough has seen major social changes over the years that has resulted in it having one of the most culturally diverse populations in the country. The recent influx of people from Eastern Europe means that the make up of the town is changing again and is likely to continue to alter over the plan period.
- 7.194 It takes time for the physical fabric and range of facilities in the town to adapt to the changing needs of its residents but it is important that this is managed as quickly as possible so that the aims of the Community Strategy (Doc.15) to increase participation in cultural activity and increase the capacity of local communities can be achieved. As a result it is important that the application of planning policy in Slough recognises the diverse needs and values of residents. Specific consideration will therefore be given to proposals which meet the recognised needs of ethnic and religious groups, those with special needs and other relevant minority groups.

