

Slough Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

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November 2022

Slough
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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Annual Monitoring Report covers the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. No AMR was produced for the last two years due to limited resources.

1.1.2 The Annual Monitoring Report reports on key information relating to planning policy issues in Slough, both in terms of the progress of new policy documents, and the effects of Adopted policies. It provides monitoring information on Housing, employment, retail and town centres and build and natural environment. The report also relates to our emerging Local Plan.

1.1.3 The production of a single Annual Monitoring Report containing a range of planning monitoring information is no longer a statutory requirement. However, there remains a statutory requirement for continuous reporting of important monitoring information, and therefore Slough Borough Council has continued to produce monitoring reports as it has proven a helpful format for reporting information both in terms of the progress of new policy documents, and the effects of the policies that already exist.

1.1.4 For further information on planning policy for Slough, please visit the Council's website www.slough.gov.uk.

1.2 Adopted and emerging Planning Policy

1.2.1 Slough has an adopted Core Strategy which will remain in force until the new Local Plan is adopted.

1.2.2 The new Local Plan is in preparation at present, with Regulation 18 stage effectively concluded with the Preferred Spatial Strategy consulted on in November 2020, and the proposed release of selected Green Belt sites for family housing in November 2021.

1.2.3 The 5 key components of the proposed Spatial Strategy can 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.***

1.2.4 Next stage is to prepare the draft Local Plan. Further details on the emerging Local Plan can be seen later in this document.

1.3 Theme

1.3.1 The document is set out in themed sections including housing, retail, employment, environment. Each section has some key facts, discusses key issues and then the relevant indicators that have been monitored.

1.4 Setting the Scene

1.4.1 Slough has a very small geographical area of just 32.5 km².

1.4.2 Slough's population at the time of the Census was 158,500 – an increase of 13.0%, from around 140,200 in 2011. This growth is markedly higher than the national average of 6.6%.

1.4.3 This confirms our assumption that there are a greater number of residents in the borough than has previously been included in recent ONS estimates (149,577 as of mid 2020).

1.4.4 Also large employment areas it is a densely built-up area which is more comparable with outer London than the surrounding Boroughs.

1.4.5 There are now 52,423 households in Slough containing at least one person – a growth of only 3.3% on 2011, compared to 6.1% in England and Wales.

1.4.6 Slough is the third most densely populated LA in the Southeast, with 4,871 usual residents per square kilometre (48.7 per hectare compared to 45.8 in 2011).

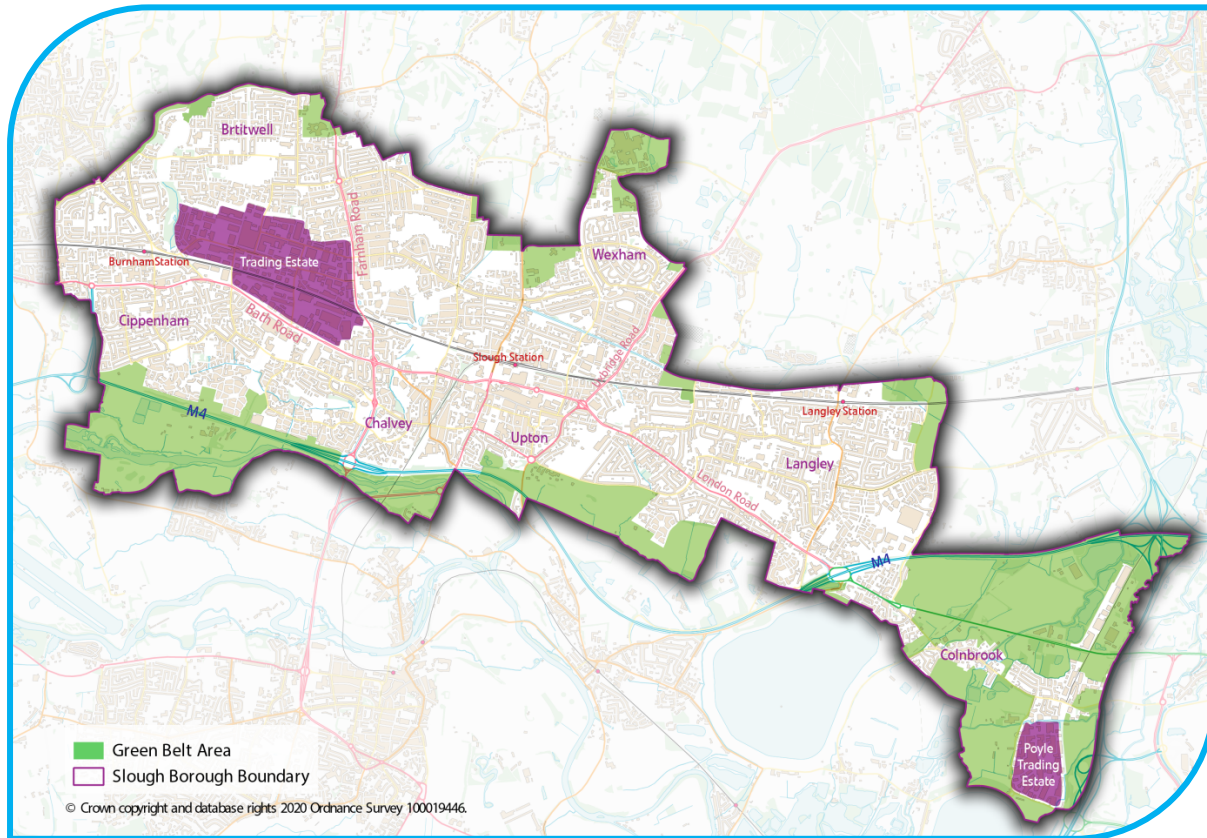
1.4.7 In addition to the town centre, there are two District centres at Farnham Road and Langley. These are augmented by a network of neighbourhood centres. There are four superstores and three retail parks which are concentrated in the west and centre of the Borough.

1.4.8 Outside of the centre there are two railway stations at Burnham and Langley (Figure 1 below).

1.4.9 The M4 motorway runs along the southern boundary of Slough acting as an east west bypass. It creates a barrier to the land to the south. The A4 is the main spine road through the town but is so congested at times that it does not cater for through traffic. The main north south route through Slough is the A355 which goes towards Windsor in the south and Beaconsfield/M40 in the north. The A412 leads towards Uxbridge.

1.4.10 One of Slough's biggest advantages is its proximity to Heathrow airport. This not only provides a lot of employment on site but is a big boost to the local economy. The airport also creates some environmental problems and can add to congestion, particularly in the eastern part of the Borough.

Figure1: A map of Slough



2 Housing

2.1 Key facts

- Slough is one of the smallest Councils by area and one of the most densely built-up areas in the country. There is shortage of land for new development (Centre for Cities, 2020)
- Slough has one of the youngest populations in the country (average age 34) with a high proportion of children (29% children aged 0-17) and families who will need new homes in the future (only 10% 65 or over).
- Slough has some of the highest levels of overcrowding with each person having on average 27.2 m² of space in a home compared to an average of 36.5m² in other towns and cities.

2.2 Housing issues

2.2.1 There is a shortage of land for housing. Evidence to date shows that Slough will have at least a 5,000 housing shortfall compared to housing need figures measured over the next 19 years. As part of the initial stage of Local Plan preparation further work will be undertaken to confirm the shortfall figure.

2.2.2 Sites with potential for redevelopment for residential use do not always come forward as expected and approved developments do not always build out at the rate expected. Despite the strong demand for new homes the supply does not meet the Borough needs in terms of numbers

and type. Economic viability issues usually arise in connection with redevelopment sites i.e. those on previously developed land (brownfield sites). Measured over several years and on average the number of homes granted consent has increased at a greater rate than completion of new homes.

2.2.3 There is a significant need for affordable housing and for a range of house types including in particular family housing and homes with gardens. The vast majority of housing completions in the recent past have been flatted developments.

2.3 Meeting housing need

2.3.1 Housing targets for the Local Plan and 5 year land supply purposes are now required to be calculated using the 2021 Standard Methodology published in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance. This takes account of household projections and affordability ratios published by the Government to establish a Local Housing Need figure. Every year new affordability ratios are produced and as a result the local housing need figure changes.

2.3.2 The latest Local Housing Need figure for Slough equates to 847 per annum (average) from April 2022. The previous figure, applied to 21/22 housing calculation, was 864. Using the latest figures the total housing need as of 1st April 2022 is 16,800 for the new Local Plan period which extends to 2040/41.

2.4 Housing delivery test

2.4.1 In 2018 the "Housing Delivery Test" (HDT) was introduced into the planning system as part of the new National Planning Policy Framework. The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measures net additional dwellings provided in a local authority area against the homes required. The methodology for calculating the Housing Delivery Test measurement is set out in the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book, and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities will publish the HDT result for each local planning authority in England annually in November.

2.4.2 The results of the 2021 Housing Delivery Test which were published in January 2022 show that over the previous three years housing delivered in Slough was 67% of the required level. This means that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies when deciding planning applications as 67% falls below the current Test threshold of 75%. Last year Slough was just above the threshold. Further implications of the test, but no different to last year, are the need to have a 20% rather than a 5% buffer added to the Borough housing need/requirement figure. And for a Housing Delivery Action Plan, prepared in line with national guidance, to be in place (see below section 2.9).

2.5 Housing completions

2.5.1 Table 1 below shows the rate of net housing completions during the Local Plan period since 2006. See table C in the Appendix for the relationship to housing targets.

2.5.2 In 2021/22 there were 532 net housing completions in Slough. This figure is broadly similar to the last 3 years and includes the first release of homes on the Horlicks Quarter. All except 32 were built on sites of 10 or more homes. The 32 figure is lower than average (over the past few years) but there are over 80 homes under construction on small sites.

2.5.3 Of the total 541 gross completions 8 homes were created by conversion of existing homes

and 205 (38%) where from a change of use. 9 homes were lost through conversion or demolition. A list of sites with completions is in the appendix (table A).

2.5.4 At the end of March 2022 there were 1184 dwellings under construction including over 400 on the Horlicks site. This is a bit less than last year but higher than average over the last 6 years. There were 2817 dwellings with planning consent (including outline permissions) but not yet started. Over 700 of that figure is phase 2 of the Horlicks Quarter development which is expected to start in 2024. The number of homes not started is a bit less than last year but higher than previous years. But it should be noted 1,000 of the 'not started' figure is the residential element of the former Akzo Nobel site which is now unlikely to progress.

Table 1: Housing net completions since 2006

Year	Past Completions	Cumulative completions
2006/07	409	409
2007/08	849	1,258
2008/09	595	1,853
2009/10	275	2128
2010/11	249	2,377
2011/12	246	2623
2012/13	182	2805
2013/14	396	3201
2014/15	507	3708
2015/16	789	4497
2016/17	521	5018
2017/18	846	5864
2018/19	534	6398
2019/20	501	6899
2020/21	503	7402
2021/22	532	7934

2.6 Housing trajectory

2.6.1 The Housing Trajectory (Table D in Appendix 1) sets out an estimate of housing supply in

the Borough over the period 2022/23-2040/41, reflecting the end date of the new Local Plan period. It also indicates the current Local Housing Need figure, which being greater than the expected future supply, results in a significant shortfall of new housing within the Borough in future years as referred to in para 2.2.1 above.

2.6.2 The trajectory estimate is based upon the 5-year housing land supply sites (see below), other developments with consent and sites the Council assess as likely to or have a reasonable prospect of coming forward taking account of the emerging Local Plan, existing planning policies and known landowner/developer interest. The Trajectory considers these principal sources of supply:

- Sites with Planning consent for residential units, taken from data in the Council's planning records (hard commitments). This includes full, outline and reserved matters consent plus permitted development and permission in principle.
- Sites allocated for development in the existing Local Plan or Site Allocations Development Plan.
- Sites likely to come forward for development having considered current undecided planning applications, pre apps, Council development/land proposals, the 'call for sites' exercise in 2016 and the Spatial Strategy.
- An estimate for new homes built on small sites (likely to have fewer than 10 homes).

2.6.3 The Trajectory figures take account of the likelihood that not all the developments/sites used to compile it will come forward - known as discounting. Before discounting the trajectory exercise listed sites that could accommodate over 12,500 homes. After discounting this figure reduces to about 9,500. Comparing the latter figure to the current Local Housing Need figure of 16,800 indicates a shortfall of well over 5,000 homes. For the latter years of the new Local Plan period some unidentified sites are expected to come forward but there is no evidence to suggest they would make up the estimated shortfall.

2.6.4 The inputs to the trajectory and housing need figure do vary over time. So the trajectory and associated calculations are reviewed each year at least.

2.6.5 The 'hard commitments' – new homes with planning consent are listed in the Appendix (table B). The list is also the basis of the 5 year land supply figure, see below, but certain sites are excluded to accord with Government guidelines.

2.7 Five-year housing land supply

2.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 68) requires Local Planning Authorities to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement or Local Housing Need (LHN) figure with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land." However the Housing Delivery Test result for Slough as outlined above requires a 20% buffer to be applied.

2.7.2 Slough's current Local Housing Need figure is equivalent to 847 net additional dwellings per year; this is derived from the standard methodology in the NPPF as stated above.

2.8 Five year Housing land supply calculations

5 year housing land supply	
Annual average Local Housing Need	847
Local Housing Need x 5 years	4235
5 year need figure inclusive of 20% buffer	5082
Annual Local Housing Need inclusive of 20 % buffer (5082/5)	1016.4
5 year identified supply	1994
Number of years supply (1994/1016.4)	2.0

2.8.1 The table above shows that Slough has 39% of the Local Housing Need figure (inclusive of buffer) which equates to a 2.0-year supply as of 1st April 2022. Consequently, Slough does not have a five year supply of new housing as defined by the Government. To strictly align with the definition this figure currently excludes applications with outline permission or waiting for planning obligations to be signed or sites allocated for development in the Local Plan.

2.8.2 Last year the 5 year supply figure was 2.2. The Council intends to review the way it calculates the figure taking account of best practice and what other local authorities do. This is expected to result in more sites being included. Furthermore as a result of permissions granted since the 1st of April being greater than completions the supply figure if calculated in November 2022 is expected to be above 2 years.

2.8.3 Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing the development plan policies are considered to be out of date. This means that the 'tilted balance' must be applied in determining planning applications for housing development. This requires local planning authorities to apply the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which is set out in paragraph 11d of the NPPF. This states that applications should be granted planning permission unless:

- i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or
- ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

2.9 Housing delivery action plan

2.9.1 A Housing Delivery Action Plan was produced in July 2019 and published on the Council's website. The Plan identifies that many of the reasons for under delivery are outside the control of the Council and it sets out various actions in order to try to improve housing delivery and meet the Housing Delivery Test in future years. These reasons and actions are still substantially relevant. An updated Plan will be produced in the near future when resources are available.

2.10 Type of housing - houses/flats

2.10.1 The results of monitoring for 2021/22 showed that 6% of housing completions were houses and 94% flats or maisonettes.

2.10.2 Table 2 below shows past trends.

Table 2: Percentage of Houses and Flats completed in 2021/22

Year	% Flats	% Houses
2015/16	66	34
2016/17	67	33
2017/18	75	25
2018/19	83	17
2019/20	90	10
2020/21	90	10
2021/22	94	6

2.10.3 The predominant dwelling type in Slough is traditional two or three bedroom houses. However, as indicated above, most new homes are flats and increasingly so in recent years. Most flatted schemes are a mixture of one and two bedroom properties with a few three bedroom homes.

2.10.4 The predominance of flats reflects, in part, the effectiveness of the policy in the Core Strategy that seeks to direct new development to the town centre and other urban areas, where flats are more acceptable, whilst ensuring that development in the suburban areas consists predominantly of family housing. But it also reflects the land and housing market, development economics and availability of offices that can be converted to residential use (change of use). The latter has been assisted by the relaxed planning regime under Permitted Development rules (also known as Prior Approvals) for change of use.

2.10.5 Last year 205 of total home completions were a change of use from offices with 86% of those via the Permitted Development rules. Whilst there is a need for all dwelling types the need for family homes is not being met as well as that for small homes. And the need for traditional family homes with gardens is met even less.

2.10.6 The predominance of flats is likely to continue as very few green field sites are likely to come forward for development in the near future. It is much easier to insist on houses for those sites. And viability issues around redevelopment of existing property will remain. Plus the relaxed Permitted Development (PD) rules, in a revised form, still exist. Change of use to offices under PD rules are not likely to be as high as the past but other uses can now change to residential use under the rules. Development via PD rules results in lost employment or retail space and prevents the Council controlling the mix of homes (number of bedrooms per flat) and seeking affordable housing.

2.11 Previously developed land completions

2.11.1 98% of the gross housing completions in 2021/22 were on previously developed sites (brownfield). This figure tends to fluctuate over the years depending upon which sites are coming

forward but last year's figure is consistent with the last 4 years.

2.11.2 Table 3 below shows that the trend is most housing completions are on previously developed land and this has never fallen below 50 percent. This trend is likely to continue as few greenfield sites are being developed now. And as highlighted under type of housing most development takes place in the centre of Slough.

Table 3: PDL completions in 2021/22

YEAR	Total Gross Completions	Total Gross PDL Completions	% PDL
2021/2022	541	508	98%
2020/2021	510	510	100%
2019/2020	514	511	99%
2018/2019	585	585	100%
2017/2018	861	804	93%
2016/2017	598	484	81%
2015/2016	782	536	68%
2014/2015	599	301	50%
2012/2013	190	95	50%
2011/2012	258	175	67%
2010/2011	262	201	77%
2009/2010	285	172	60%
2008/2009	632	198	69%
2007/2008	917	896	98%
2006/2007	475	466	98%
2005/2006	533	498	93%
2004/2005	867	500	58%

2.12 Housing mix

2.12.1 The breakdown by bedroom size for gross housing completions 2021/22 for developments granted planning permission is below. It excludes homes permitted under permitted development office to residential change of use:

*[*Nov'22 This information is still being finalised*

- xx% four bed
- xx% 3 bed,
- xx% 2 bed
- xx% 1 bed or bedsit.]

2.12.2 It should be noted that 33% of new home completions came via the Prior approval/permitted development process. The above figures do not reflect homes completed under this process as information on the housing mix is not always known; applicants do not have to provide it. It is likely that most of these homes would have been 1 or 2 bedroom homes including some bedsits.

2.12.3 The lack of new family sized housing coming forward in Slough provides further justification for the Local Plan Spatial Strategy of protecting the existing stock in the suburbs, seeking family homes within the town where feasible and promoting cross border development, such as the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a garden suburb to help rebalance the housing market.

2.13 Affordable housing

2.13.1 Affordable housing is essential in order to meet local housing needs. Affordable housing can be delivered by a combination of house building by the Council, registered providers (mostly housing associations) and private developers. For the latter affordable housing is provided through the planning process by securing a proportion of dwellings on private development sites as affordable housing under Sec. 106 planning obligations.

2.13.2 Core Policy 4 in the Core Strategy DPD 2006-2026 requires that 30-40% affordable housing on sites of 15 homes or more primarily on site or for smaller sites (14-24 homes) financial contributions for the Council to fund affordable homes elsewhere in the town.

2.13.3 63 new build dwellings were in the affordable category in 2021/22. This is more than the each of the last 3 years. 76% where secured via planning obligations. Of the rest most were built by the Council – 13 houses.

2.13.4 The supply of affordable homes is affected by a number of factors. Firstly the availability of Council or Housing Association land and funds to build themselves. Secondly, the scope to insist on affordable housing via planning obligations on private development sites. The latter is affected by whether or not large enough sites come forward in any one year and viability of redevelopment on brownfield sites. Applications now come forward with viability studies which usually show that it is not possible to provide the full policy compliant quota of affordable housing.

2.13.5 The second factor limiting supply is that the Council is unable to get contributions from change of use schemes that have come forward under the Prior Approval/Permitted Development process. Thirdly the ability of Housing Associations to buy homes, offered by private developers under planning obligations, is limited. Government grant funding for Housing Associations purchasing planning obligation housing is not now available. Homes England funding for affordable housing is also limited built is being used on the Horlicks Quarter development.

2.13.6 Regarding affordable housing via planning obligations some contributions are financial rather than homes built on site. Those contributions, for the Council to use on housing, are included in the Planning Obligations section below.

2.14 Self-build register

2.14.1 As required by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), since 1 April 2016 the Council keeps a custom and self-build homes register, details of which are publicised on the website.

2.14.2 The register holds information on individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land. The PPG encourages Local Planning Authorities to publish headline data in their AMR on the demand for self-build or custom housebuilding.

2.14.3 As of 31 October 2016, new regulations dealing with custom and self-build homes registers came into force ([Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016](#) and the [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding \(Time for Compliance and Fees\) Regulations 2016](#))

2.14.4 The Council has not set any local eligibility criteria or fees for going on to or staying on the register. As such anyone going on to the register would be on 'Part 1'. There are no financial checks completed at this stage to indicate whether or not people registering can realistically fund the property they are indicating they would like.

2.14.5 The number of individuals on the self- build register at October 2021 is 258.

2.14.6 For more information on how to join the register please visit Slough Borough Council website.

2.15 Brownfield land register

2.14.7 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 and the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 which came into force in mid April 2017, the Council is required to prepare and maintain a register of brownfield land that is suitable for residential development.

2.14.8 Regulation [17 of the Town and Country Planning \(Brownfield Land Register\) Regulations 2017](#) requires local planning authorities to update the information relating to existing entries in their registers at least once a year and that it may consist of two parts:

Part 1 - all sites which are 'suitable', 'available', and 'achievable' for residential development which could be delivered within 15 years; and

Part 2 - any sites which are given 'permission in principle'. Inclusion on part 2 would grant permission in principle for residential development (the scale to be determined by the Council) and the landowner/developer would have to apply for 'technical details consent' before any development could commence.

2.14.9 Brownfield sites that meet the relevant criteria must be entered in Part 1 of the Register. There are currently no sites classified as Part 2 on the register. The Register can be found on the Council's website www.slough.gov.uk.

3 S106 planning obligations

3.1.1 Details on Section 106 planning obligations for 2021/22:

- 11 new planning obligations signed (excludes variations)
- Affordable Housing via Planning obligations – 48 homes completed
- Affordable Housing financial contributions received £698,507
- Infrastructure financial contributions received £ 5,644,135

The above relates to all obligations not just those related to housing

4 Employment

4.1 Key facts

- Slough is an economic powerhouse.
- Slough hosts a number of corporate headquarters and has one of the highest business start-up rates in the country.
- One of the only Simplified Planning Zones in the country. This has helped with the success of Slough Trading Estate.

4.2 Employment issues

4.2.1 Slough is an economic powerhouse but it doesn't always benefit as much as it should from all of this economic activity. Slough's residents have lower paid salaries when compared to those who are commuting into the Borough who have higher paid salaries.

4.2.2 Without the expansion of Heathrow Airport, which would have provided a significant boost to the local economy, the only major opportunity for employment growth is new offices in the town centre. However the stock of office buildings in the town has reduced considerably in recent years primarily as a result of change of use to residential use. Also due to the covid pandemic the nature of how some companies are operating is changing. Combined with staff working remotely demand for office space is reduced.

4.2.3 Because of current uncertainty it is not possible to confidently predict number of jobs required to support the Slough economy. But the plan continues to aim to provide an additional 15,000 jobs in order to meet the needs of the growing resident workforce. Further evidence is required for employment need and this will be produced.

4.2.4 There is a significant demand for land for warehousing and data centres in Slough. This together with the need to plan for additional jobs means land is needed for new industrial/business floorspace – either redevelopment of existing employment/business use land or greenfield land. And as stated above there is also a shortage of land for much needed housing. Much new housing in recent years has been on former employment use land. Competition for land is high so land/property values have risen in recent years.

4.3 Completed Employment floorspace

4.3.1 The monitoring shows that there was a net gain of 6,010 square metres of employment floor space in 2021/22. 3,900 square metres of completed floorspace for Sui Generis use on

Slough Trading Estate was two data centres. Info to follow on 19/20, 20/21.

4.3.2 Although the figures show a net gain in employment floorspace it is estimated that there will have been a net loss of employment floorspace. This is because of the loss of offices to residential use. But detail of the losses has yet to be estimated; applicants for change of use via the prior approval process no longer have to provide that information.

4.3.3 The table below shows that the general trend is a net loss of employment floor space over the last five years. The only exception was 2017-18 when there was a net gain in employment floorspace of 11,312 sqm due to completion of two office buildings on Brunel Way.

Table 4: Employment Floorspace lost over the last five years (sqm)

2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
-13,080	11,312	-7080	-33308	-38929

4.3.4 The employment uses are defined by the planning use classes B2 general industry and B8 warehousing , E commercial, business and service, F1 learning and non-residential, F2 community uses and Sui Generis. These new use classes (F1, F2 and E) changed in September 2021 with the aim being to support the high street revival and allow greater flexibility to change uses within town centres without the need for express planning permission.

4.4 Simplified Planning Zone Slough Trading Estate

4.4.1 The Trading Estate used to be famous for being one of the largest in Europe in single ownership. The offices along the Bath Road were acquired by AEW and the Bath Road retail park was sold off a few years ago. SEGRO own the rest of the Estate and but have repurchased the Bath Road offices.

4.4.2 Slough Trading Estate has the largest concentration of data centres in Europe; more are under construction. 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 an increasing amount of new warehousing.

4.4.3 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.

4.4.4 The Slough Trading Estate SPZ is due to expire in November 2024 and due to its success preparations to renew it are expected to begin in January 2023..

4.4.5 Six SPZ schemes permitted in 2021/22 are listed below. In addition three data centres were completed on Slough Trading Estate in 2021/22 see below.

Table 5 SPZ schemes *completed* in 2021/22

Ref	Address	Description
T/145	204 Bedford Avenue	Development of a detached warehouse unit with (ancillary first floor office accommodation) B1 B2 B8 and Data Centre.
T/146	212 Bedford Avenue	Development of detached warehouse unit data centre.
T/148	1-7 Banbury Road	Phase 2 of the Equinix redevelopment of building 1. Construction of a 3 storey 86,701 sq. ft data centre for colocation uses with ancillary offices with a footprint of 49.8%. There is additionally open plant on the top of the building shielded behind louvred screens.

Table 6 SPZ schemes *permitted* in 2021/22

SPZ Number	Date of compliance letter sent	Address	Proposed description
T/148	05/05/20	1-7 Banbury Road	Phase 2 of the Equinix redevelopment of building 1. Construction of a 3 storey 86,701 sq. ft data centre for colocation uses with ancillary offices with a footprint of 49.8%. There is additionally open plant on the top of the building shielded behind louvred screens.
T/149	07/07/20	580 Ipswich Road	Construction of a three storey 11,176 sq. m data centre for colocation uses with a footprint of 49.8%.
T/150	13/07/20	8 Buckingham Avenue	An extension to building 8 by Equinix, the existing building is a previously approved SPZ building and the proposal is for a data hall extension to the side, 1307 m2 with a total footprint of 49%.
T/151	02/10/20	232, Berwick Avenue	Change of use to allow a fibre exchange/data centre (Sui Generis) in addition to the permitted Class B1(C), B2, B8 as well as the installation of two generators, air conditioning units, louvered screening, new fencing and a new gate with a total footprint of 33.8%. No change to the number of existing car parking spaces.
T/152	20/11/20	110 Buckingham Avenue	Proposed development: demolition of 110 Buckingham Avenue (6190 sq. m) and the construction of a new data centre facility of 24,878 sq. m over three floors and plant at ground floor level.
T/153	10/ 11/ 2021	650-660 Ajax Avenue	demolition of existing industrial buildings and construction of interlinked datacentres.

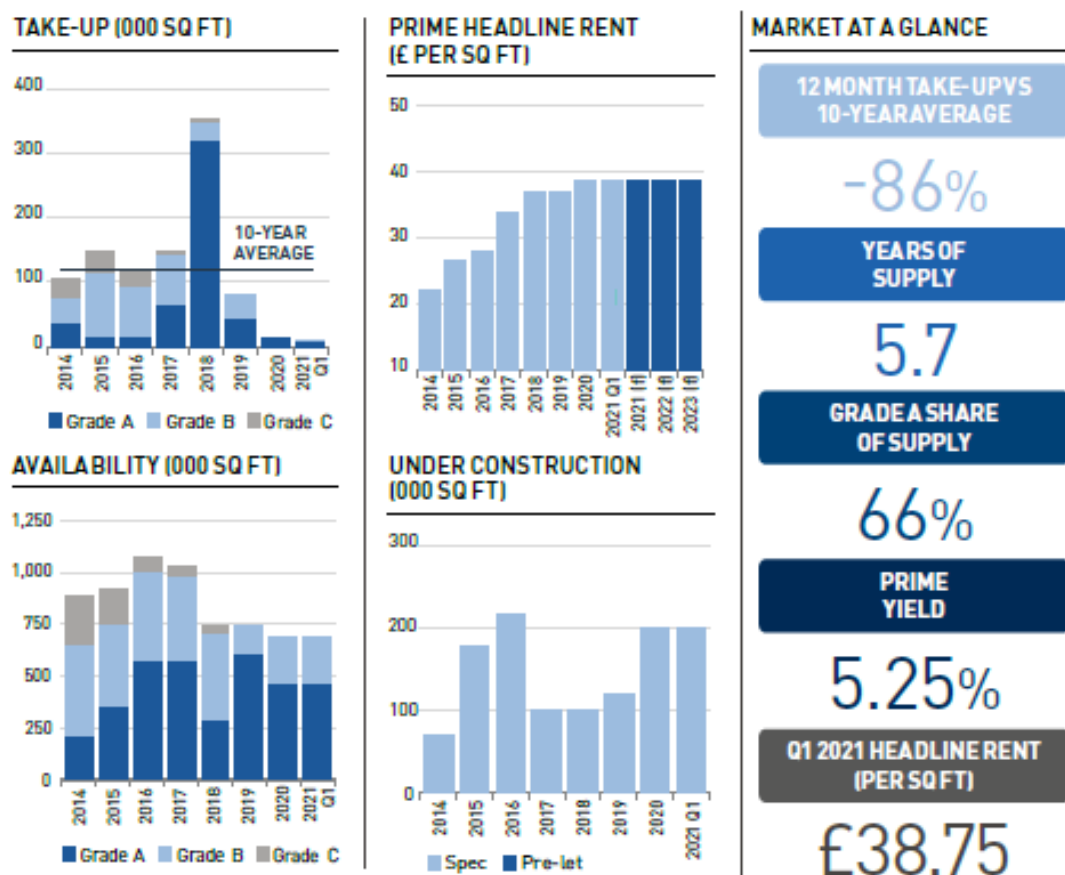
4.5 Office market and development

4.5.1 Slough has lost a number of offices in the town in recent years, particularly in the centre, due to the conversion of offices to residential. Last year's housing completion figures show that 4 office blocks were lost. No new office blocks were completed.

4.5.2 The Thames Valley and South-East Office Market Report (2021) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton shows that Slough has 5.7 years supply of offices

4.5.3 Slough office Market was one of the hardest impacted in the South East due to the pandemic. The snapshot below shows the low levels of office take up since 2018. Availability stands at 697,000 sq. ft of office space.

4.5.4 The majority of office space available in Slough is good quality Grade A or B. There is only a limited supply of grade C office space mainly because this has been converted to residential.



KEY SELECTED TRANSACTIONS

Quarter	Property	Size (sq ft)	Occupier	Rent (per sq ft)
2020 Q1	The Future Works	9,544	ByBox	£38.75
2021 Q1	The Curve, Langley	5,281	Jabra	£24.00
2020 Q3	The Urban Building	5,200	Logicalis	£32.50
2021 Q1	Beechwood House	4,500	Community Health Eyecare Ltd	£20.00
2020 Q2	Switch	2,064	Celerion	£27.00

Source: LSH Research

5 Retail and town centre

5.1 Key facts

- Slough Town Centre has a reduced retail and leisure offer.
- Thriving other retail centres in Langley and Farnham Road more specialised offer.
- Impact of covid affected the number of vacant units and activity in town centres and highstreets.

5.1.1 Slough has a declining retail offer 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. A planning application is

in the process of being approved for redevelopment of Queensmere shopping centre which will mean a decrease in the amount of retail floorspace.

5.1.2 Slough town centre's evening economy is limited with a lack of cultural facilities despite the Curve and Cinema. This is one of the reasons why there isn't the expenditure in the Borough that there should be for the population present.

5.1.3 In contrast to Slough town centre, the Farnham Road and Langley district centres are thriving which offer a more specialised offer. These along with the neighbourhood centres provides accessible local services for the community.

5.2 Retail Vacancy Survey 2022

5.2.1 Retail vacancies are a good measure of the health of a centre. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) still recognises town centres as the heart of the communities. Our policies direct retail development to the town centre to protect the vitality and viability of our high streets.

5.2.2 Retail vacancy survey in Slough Town Centre was last conducted in 2019 as a result of the pandemic and staff resources.

5.2.3 A retail survey was undertaken in February 2022. The results showed overall Slough Town Centre vacancy of 16.3%.

5.2.4 Slough high street is in decline. Even though the retail vacancy rate doesn't seem particularly high, this does not indicate the true health of Slough high street and the shopping centres.

5.2.5 Also the retail vacancy rate does not reflect the quality of the retail offer. Many of the units in the shopping centres have no signage or permeant shop fit out. These are pop ups which are temporary/short term lets.

5.3 Slough Town Centre

5.3.1 The Town Centre retail vacancy survey counts the number of vacant units in the designated primary and secondary retail frontages in Slough Town Centre. The most recent survey in 2022 showed overall Slough Town Centre vacancy of 16.3%.

- The Queensmere was 29% vacant.
- The Observatory was 30% vacant.
- The Highstreet was 8% vacant.

5.4 Slough Town Centre Business Improvement District (Slough BID)

5.4.1 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a geographical area in which the local businesses have voted to invest together to improve their environment.

5.4.2 A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business-funded limited company, created through a ballot process, to improve a defined area in which a levy is charged on all business rate payers in addition to their normal business rates bill. The BID is funded primarily through this levy but can also draw on other public and private funding streams, using its resources to develop projects that are intended to provide additional services or improvements to the local area.

5.4.3 Slough BID was established following a successful ballot in 2020. The Slough BID will be due for renewal in 2025. The BID is focused on delivering projects within the 5 themes prioritised by the businesses, with the team working closely with the Council:

- Safe and Secure: Helping to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour in the town Centre
- Environment: Creating a clean and pleasant environment
- Marketing and Events: Promoting Slough as a welcoming, vibrant town Centre with events for everyone.
- Business Support: Training and networking opportunities, cost reduction through joint procurement and customer loyalty schemes.
- Representation: Being the voice for business, representing business interests and working with other organisations to get the best for the town.

6 Appeals

6.1 Number of appeals

6.1.1 The AMR looks at whether there are any lessons to be learnt from appeal decisions. There were 25 appeals against the refusal of planning applications in Slough in the 12 months from April 2021. The majority of these Appeals were householder's applications for extensions.

6.2 Appeals Allowed

6.2.1 Of these 10 appeals (33%) were allowed by Inspectors (i.e. the Planning Application refusal overturned to an approval). It should be noted that nearly all of the appeals that were allowed related to design, character of the area or amenity which tend to be subjective judgements.

6.2.2 None of the appeal decisions are considered to indicate that there is a need to review any policies.

6.3 Appeals relating to Core Policy 4

6.3.1 The existing planning policy approach protects the suburbs from inappropriate intensification and protects family housing from conversion to flats.

6.3.2 Evidence in support of this was set out in the Protecting the Suburbs Strategy (2020) that concluded 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 This is due for example to the high demand for family housing in Slough compared to the small number of new builds that are family housing, and that the majority of new builds are flats.. Further information can be seen in Protection of the Suburbs Strategy (May 2019).

6.3.3 Appeal decision results that test Core Strategy Policy CP4 (Housing Type) have shown that

it is a robust and effective policy. A series of successful planning appeals won by the Council demonstrate that the policy is compliant with National Planning Policy Framework and provides the justification for the continued application of this policy in our emerging Local Plan.

6.3.4 There have been a number of recent planning appeal decisions on planning applications submitted on sites in the suburbs for redevelopment which the Council have won. These development proposals would have resulted in a loss of family accommodation or a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

6.3.5 Crucially these decisions show that, even in the absence of a five year housing land supply, the policy continues to be given weight in planning appeal decisions as PINS recognise for example the Planning issues and implications of losing family housing and poor design in Slough.

7 Natural and Built Environment

7.1 Key facts

- 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 already exist in the Borough.
- Parts of Slough fall within the requirement for Burnham Beeches Special Area of Protection under the Habitat Regulations.
- Slough has some high quality parks but an overall a shortage of green infrastructure for the size of its population.
- Salt Hill Park, Pippins Park, and Herschel Park have received Green Flag Awards
- Slough has 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 and associated carbon emissions.
- 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.
- 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

7.2 Climate Change

7.2.1 The Council declared a 'Climate Change' Motion in July 2019 which recognised the growing urgency to combat climate change. It then published and adopted a [Climate Change strategy and action plan](#) on 20 December 2021.

7.2.2 The Strategy and Action Plan has five key objectives that aim to address the causes and consequences of climate change in Slough:

1. reducing emissions from our estate and operations
2. reducing energy consumption and emissions by promoting energy efficiency measures, sustainable construction, renewable energy sources, and behaviour change
3. reducing emissions from transport by promoting sustainable transport, reducing car travel and traffic congestion, and encouraging behaviour change

4. reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste
5. supporting council services, residents and businesses to adapt to the impacts of climate change

7.2.3 Since the declaration, the council has set a target of borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2040, with an ambitious stretch target of 2030. This was outlined in [Slough's Climate Change strategy vision](#) in June 2021. This target complies with the UK's national target of net zero emissions by 2050 and a reduction of 78% of emissions by 2035 relative to 1990.

7.3 Burnham Beeches

7.3.1 Burnham Beeches is a Special Area of Conservation; a protected site under the Habitats Regulations (Habitats and Species Regulations 2017). Greater numbers of visitors to Burnham Beeches are causing damage to its sensitive habitat. New residential development in Slough can increase visitor numbers to the Beeches. When considering residential development planning applications the Council has a duty under the Habitats Regulations to address the impact on the Beeches.

7.3.2 A mitigation strategy can address the impact by :

- Treating selected public open spaces as 'suitable alternative natural green space' and
- implementing proposed natural habitat enhancement projects;

with the intention of attracting visitors who might have otherwise gone to Burnham Beeches

7.3.3 The enhancements would be funded by financial contributions from housing developers via Section 106 planning obligations. This would apply to residential development sites within 5.6 km of Burnham Beeches; that area covers the northern and western part of the town including the town centre.

7.3.4 An initial mitigation strategy has been agreed by Cabinet in October 2022 and it involves enhancements to Upton Court Park. A further strategy(s) is proposed to cover other open spaces such that necessary mitigation possibilities are outlined well in advance of expected residential development to which they would be linked.

7.3.5 Two advantages of having a mitigation strategy are :

- Natural England will normally object to planning applications if there is no mitigation strategy in place.
- The enhancements outlined in the strategy benefit Slough's residents and environment rather than fund projects at or around Burnham Beeches.

7.3.6 The principle of having a strategy and associated developer contributions was agreed at the June 2021 Planning Committee. The request for contributions and will be incorporated into supplementary planning guidance in the near future. And together with the strategies can form the basis of a supplementary document in the forthcoming new Local Plan.

7.4 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites

7.4.1 TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) calculates the number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Local Geological Sites (LGS) that have been in positive conservation management in the five year period from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2022.

7.4.2 Local authorities are required to report on this information to DEFRA each year as a measure of their success at protecting their local biodiversity. This reporting is known as SDL 160 (Single Data List).

7.4.3 The implementation of positive conservation management, defined as management that contributes to maintaining or enhancing the features of interest for which a site has been selected, has been assessed by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) across all six Berkshire Unitary Authorities using a standardised methodology which was approved and verified by Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum (now the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership) in 2009.

7.4.4 The figure for Slough for 2022 was 71%, an increase of 14.3% from the previous year. This was due to the number of qualifying sites for the 5 year period increasing from 4 to 5.

8 Existing Planning Policy Documents

8.1.1 Slough's Core Strategy was adopted in December 2008; Site Allocations adopted in 2010 and saved policies from the Local Plan 2004, Proposals Map 2010. There are also saved policies from the Minerals and Waste Plans. These will remain the statutory Development Plan until the new Local Plan reaches adoption.

8.1.2 More details are available at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-slough>

8.1.3 The Local Plan is accompanied by other non-development plan documents, primarily the following.

8.1.4 *Developers Guide* : a Developers Guide, originally adopted by the Council's Planning Committee for development control purposes in November 2008 has been partly updated in respect of affordable housing, drainage, refuse, education contributions, floorspace, viability studies, certain highway fees etc.

8.1.5 *Residential Extensions SPD*: The Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (RESPD) was adopted on 11th January 2010. The guidelines have been produced in light of increasing pressures for householders to build larger and more dominant extensions, and the impact of such extensions on both the general street scene and residential amenities within established residential areas of Slough.

9 Duty to Cooperate

9.1.1 The Duty to Cooperate (DtC) was created by the Localism Act 2011. It means that Slough Borough Council must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with other councils and agencies on strategic cross-boundary matters. The aim is to make sure that planning is joined up across the wider area and make local plans work well together.

9.1.2 In its Levelling Up Bill 2022 the Government signalled its intention to change the Duty to Cooperate. Until there is more clarity on the future of the Duty, the Council continues to act to sustain good conversations with other councils and agencies.

9.1.3 At present the Council responds to consultations with adjoining neighbours regarding housing, employment, transport and statutory service and infrastructure providers such as for Habitat Regulations, water, wastewater, electricity, and health services.

9.1.4 Regular meetings are held with Buckinghamshire to address the cross border housing land supply shortage, including the Wider Area Growth Study.

9.1.5 The Wider Area Growth Study was a joint study commissioned in two parts by RBWM and awarded to Stantec (formerly PBA). Part 1 was published in June 2019. The purpose of this was to define the geographic area of the study and the area of search for accommodating the future housing needs of the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead core areas. The report is available online. <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-slough-2016-2036/5>

9.1.6 The Study 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.

9.1.7 As a result the Study had identified a very small 'narrow area of search', restricted to parts of adjoining local authority areas plus Hillingdon Borough. The later was included, 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.

9.1.8 Part 2 summary will be published in the AMR for 22/23 as this is currently being finalised.

10 Slough Local Plan

10.1 Slough Local Plan

10.1.1 Slough's new Local Plan will set out the vision for the borough and the approach to development over a 20-year period. It will set targets for the delivery of different types of development, provide guidance on locations as to where this development will take place, and establish which areas should be protected. It will also set out policies by which future planning applications will be determined.

10.1.2 The Local Plan is recognised as a strategic and corporate priority and is a major statutory function of the Council. Progress on the plan has been consistent but impacted by matters outside of its scope such as the proposed 3rd Runway at Heathrow, and the challenges for sustainable development in accommodating demand for jobs and housing (particularly affordable and family homes) within the existing urbanised area. Funding and staff resources have also been a factor.

10.2 Local Development Scheme (LDS)

10.2.1 An LDS sets out a timetable for the production of new or revised planning documents (such as a Local Plan) by the Local Planning Authority. It is effectively a programme plan for the preparation of a local plan. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the

Planning Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011) requires a Local Planning Authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS).

10.2.2 As of 2021 the dates in Slough's LDS were out of date. Council budget issues, Covid and staff resources that prioritised progress on the Plan delayed its update. An updated LDS is currently being prepared and will be published on the Council website once available.

LDS Requirements:

The LDS should state:

- a. the local development documents that will be produced;
- b. the subject matter and geographical area to which each document is to relate;
- c. which documents are to have 'development plan' status;
- d. which documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
- e. any matter or area where there is, or is likely to be, a joint committee;
- f. the timetable for the preparation and revision of the documents

10.3 Progress on the Local Plan

10.3.1 Details of the Local Plan are published online at

<https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan-slough-2016-2036>

10.3.2 The work completed so far is as follows:

- [Regulation 18 Intention to Prepare a Local Plan January 2015.](#)
- [Consultation on the Call for Sites June 2016](#) (following a Call for Sites January-March 2016)
- [Proposed Spatial Strategy](#) Dec 2020 to Jan 2021
- [Consultation on Proposed release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing -November 2021](#)

10.4 The Proposed Spatial Strategy consultation: Regulation 18

10.4.1 An initial spatial strategy, referred to as the "emerging" Spatial sought to accommodate growth at Heathrow. (<https://www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/download/678/local-plan-review---committee-update-on-spatial-strategy---heathrow-5-dec-2018>)

10.4.2 After expansion paused the Proposed Spatial Strategy now plans for two runways but continues to safeguard for three – retaining the Strategic Gap . Any future proposals for the expansion of the airport can be considered in a review of the Local Plan.

10.4.3 The Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework (September 2020) has also been produced. This 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.

10.5 Regulation 18: proposed release of Green Belt sites for family housing

10.5.1 The consultation document was published in November 2021 and considered ten sites in the Green Belt and their suitability for family housing. A report was put to Planning Committee in

March 2022. The principle of releasing Green Belt was referred to in the Spatial Strategy that was consulted on in November 2020.

11 Monitoring of the 2010 site allocations

	Proposal Address	Proposed Use	Progress May 2022
SSA1	Lynch Hill and Bangle's Spinney	Non-statutory informal nature reserve	Some wildlife management works underway.
SSA2	Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Area	Mixed use: community, retail, residential and public open space	Complete
SSA3	Newbeech, Long Readings Lane, Elderly Persons Home and day centre	Residential (family housing) and or community use	Complete 12/13
SSA4	Slough Trading Estate (including Leigh Road Central Core Area)	Mixed use: Offices, Research and Development, Light Industrial, General Industrial, Storage and Distribution, Residential, Retail, Food and Drink, Hotels, Conference Facilities, Educational Facilities, Recreation and Leisure Uses.	Outline planning permission granted 18/06/12. Application lapsed
SSA5	149-153 Farnham Road and 415-426 Montrose Avenue	Retail (extension or redevelopment of existing supermarket with car parking)	Complete
SSA6	352-358 Farnham Road	Retail (extension to supermarket)	Complete in 2011/12
SSA7	Cippenham Phase 4	Residential (family housing)	Complete 2012/13
SSA8	Watercress Beds West of Keel Drive	Non-statutory informal nature reserve	Some tidying up and access work carried out.
SSA9	Thames Valley Community Centre	Mixed use: community and education	Complete. New school, community hub and nursery school on expanded site
SSA10	Chalvey Millennium Green	Non-statutory informal nature reserve	None. Trust land now under Council control. Enhancements proposed as part of adjacent Montem site residential development.
SSA11	Slough Town Hall	Mixed use: residential, community, education, commercial, non-residential institution	Completed school and residential complete.

	Proposal Address	Proposed Use	Progress May 2022
SSA12	Land South of Stranraer Gardens	Non-statutory informal nature reserve	None
SSA13	Heart of Slough	Comprehensive regeneration for residential, offices, hotel, bus station, library, retail, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments, education, leisure, associated changes to the road network, improvements to the public realm and parking.	Transport improvements completed and bus station complete 11/12. Library complete. One office building complete, a second one has permission. Hotel and residential on former Library site complete. Main site (former university/NW Quadrant) part demolished; Pre app discussions held for redevelopment.
SSA14	Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres	Mixed use: retail, leisure, residential	Outline application agreed by Planning Committee for Queensmere site. Demolition of western part likely in 2023.
SSA15	Upton Hospital, Albert Street	Medical and Healthcare uses	Occasional discussions with NHS.
SSA16	Post Office Sorting Office, Wellington Street	or mixed use: business and residential	No progress to date
SSA17	Slough Canal Basin, Stoke Road	Mixed use	Planning Application agreed by Planning Committee. Council may sell its part of site.
SSA18	Former Arbour Vale School, West Wing, St. Joseph's playing field, Stoke Road	– Development of secondary school and community sports stadium	Complete
SSA19	Play Area off Moray Drive	residential development	Complete
SSA20	Wexham Park Hospital, Wexham Road		Partial redevelopment scheme complete. Residential element may be introduced.
SSA21	Halkingcroft Wood, Middlegreen Road		No progress
SSA22	BT Site and 297 Langley Rd	Residential	Complete
SSA23	Part of Langley Business Centre,	Retail	Planning permission granted for data centre and some limited residential.

	Proposal Address	Proposed Use	Progress May 2022
	11/49 Station Rd, Langley		
SSA24	Land west of Hollow Hill Lane, Langley		No progress. Most of site needed for proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow – rail infrastructure plus flood mitigation land.
SSA25	Old Slade Lake, Orlits Lake and Colnbrook west, Lakeside Road, Colnbrook		No progress. Site affected by Heathrow third runway proposal.

12 Minerals and Waste

12.1.1 Slough's current view is that at present planning on minerals and waste issues can be addressed through the existing saved policies and preferred areas and liaison with the Berkshire and other Authorities on their strategies.

12.1.2 We have decided not to prepare a new Minerals Plan for Slough at this stage because there are very few remaining sites for gravel extraction left in the Borough. We have also decided not to prepare a Waste Plan because of the uncertainty

12.1.3 The Council is also a member of the South East Waste Planning Advisory Group (SEWPAG). That monitors sub-regional issues including potential impacts from London.

12.1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012, updated in 2018. This Council has incorporated Saved Minerals Local Plan policies into a Composite Local Plan published in July 2013. As a result the adopted Minerals Plan remains the Berkshire of 1995 (revised in 1997 and 2001) and the Waste Plan Minerals remains the Berkshire Plan of 1998.

12.1.5 Slough BC has historically had its extensive mineral extraction on green belt land. These have now been largely restored. The remaining parts of Slough are built up. There are no further large-scale reserves available in Slough. As a result Slough is at less risk compared with elsewhere in Berkshire to meet future needs of the region. In Waste Planning terms, Slough BC has a relatively small percentage of Municipal Solid Waste going to landfill and conversely a relatively high proportion of MSW going to Energy from Waste.

APPENDIX

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