



Slough
Borough Council

Draft Economic Growth Strategy

Prepared for Slough Borough Council

September 2026

Version 1.1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Slough's story is one of industry, movement and continual reinvention. For more than a century, the borough has adapted to successive waves of economic change, from manufacturing and industrial production to international headquarters, logistics, digital infrastructure and emerging AI-enabled industries. Today, Slough has a highly productive economy with nationally significant assets, strong connections to Heathrow, London and the Thames Valley, and a young and diverse population. Together, these strengths give Slough a powerful platform for its next phase of economic growth.

However, these strengths have **not consistently translated into opportunity and prosperity for all residents.** Employment growth has weakened, barriers to participation remain, and pressures around housing, health, connectivity and inequality continue to shape who benefits from growth.

The economy is also changing. Advances in artificial intelligence, automation and digital infrastructure are reshaping investment and employment, while national policy is placing greater emphasis on high-growth sectors and improving young people's ability to participate in work. Emerging Thames Valley devolution also creates an opportunity for Slough to strengthen its position within the wider regional economy and influence future investment in transport, infrastructure, skills and regeneration.

This Economic Growth Strategy provides a **shared framework for achieving a stronger and more resilient economy for Slough.** It brings together evidence on Slough's economy, people and places and translates this into a long-term direction for growth. It recognises that prosperity depends not only on attracting investment and supporting business growth, but also on ensuring residents can access opportunity, that places enable participation and more of the value created by growth is retained locally.

The strategy is organised around three connected priorities:

- **People:** enabling residents to access good work, develop their skills and progress, while addressing the wider barriers that limit economic participation.
- **Place:** delivering the homes, transport, infrastructure and regeneration needed to connect communities to opportunity and support sustainable investment.
- **Enterprise:** building on Slough's productive strengths, supporting businesses to grow and adapt, and creating stronger links between major economic activity, SMEs, skills and local supply chains.

OUR ECONOMIC VISION FOR SLOUGH 2050

By 2050, Slough will be a connected, caring, inclusive and sustainable town where current and future residents can access opportunity, prosper and live healthier lives, and where every neighbourhood shares in benefits from growth, helping to reduce inequality and poverty. It will be a place where people choose to live, work and build their future. Slough's economy will build on its nationally significant strengths to create more good jobs, clearer and more visible skills and progression pathways for young people, and greater opportunities for local businesses and residents. Employers and anchor institutions will play a strengthened role in creating local opportunity and securing a better deal for Slough. Investment, innovation and regeneration will improve wellbeing, strengthen places and ensure existing communities share fully in the benefits of growth.

INTRODUCTION

GETTING A BETTER DEAL FOR SLOUGH

The coming decades will bring significant economic, technological and social change in Slough. Advances in artificial intelligence, Automation and digital infrastructure are creating new patterns of investment and employment, reshaping how economies grow. Simultaneously, changing demographics, housing pressures, public finances, health outcomes and climate challenges are placing increasing demands on places and institutions. National policy is responding to this: the *Modern Industrial Strategy* is directing long-term investment towards high-growth sectors, while the *Milburn Review of Young People and Work* highlights the growing challenge of ensuring young people can participate in and progress through the labour market.

This strategy provides a shared framework for achieving a stronger and more resilient economy for Slough. It brings together evidence on Slough's economy, places and people and translates that understanding into a long-term vision for growth. It recognises that prosperity depends not only on continuing to attract investment and supporting business growth, but also on ensuring that residents can access opportunity, places enable participation and growth creates value that is retained locally. The strategy sets out priorities and actions to 2035, sits within Slough's wider 2040 framework, and looks ahead to the longer-term opportunities and challenges shaping the borough to 2050.

THAMES VALLEY DEVOLUTION

This strategy has been developed in a period of significant change across the wider Thames Valley. Emerging discussions around devolution, regional economic collaboration and future governance arrangements create opportunities for Slough to strengthen its role within one of the UK's most productive economic areas, while continuing to champion the interests of the borough and its communities.

A future Thames Valley strategic authority could strengthen coordination on transport, infrastructure, skills, regeneration and economic development, including with London's established mayoral strategic authority on shared cross-boundary opportunities. This economic growth strategy will therefore set a clear direction of travel for Slough's economy, shaping future investment and convening partners so that its nationally significant assets and local priorities are strongly represented within future regional decision-making.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

The strategy focuses on the Council's role in maximising external investment, making better use of existing assets and programmes, strengthening partnerships and prioritising activity that can generate wider economic and financial returns.

ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL STRATEGIES

Slough already has a clear long-term direction. *Slough 2040* sets the ambition for a globally connected town with a strong economy that enables people to prosper, while the *Corporate Plan* prioritises healthier communities, better homes, sustainable transport, town-centre renewal, employment and skills. The Economic Growth Strategy brings these ambitions together with the *Local Plan* and regeneration agenda into a focused economic programme across People, Place and Enterprise.

1. SLOUGH TODAY

A BOROUGH WITH EXTRAORDINARY STRENGTHS

Slough's story is one of industry, movement and continual reinvention. For more than a century, the borough has adapted to successive waves of economic change, from manufacturing and industrial production to international headquarters, logistics, digital infrastructure and emerging AI-enabled industries.

Success in Slough has never depended on a single industry. Instead, Slough's strength has been its ability to evolve, attracting investment, talent and enterprise generation after generation. Located at the intersection of London and the wider Thames Valley, Slough benefits from a unique concentration of businesses, infrastructure, skills and markets that few places in the UK can match. This meeting place of sectors brings together manufacturing, logistics, international headquarters, professional services and advanced digital infrastructure, while also supporting a diverse and growing foundational sector.

This is further strengthened by its position adjacent to Heathrow and its strategic road connectivity via the M4, M25 and M40, and improved rail connectivity through the Elizabeth Line and Great Western Railway Main Line. Meaning Slough is both a strategic port of entry for trade, investment and employment, and home to nationally significant infrastructure which drives investment in UK plc across sectors.

Slough's strength comes not only from individual businesses, but from their concentration, bringing together major employers, suppliers, infrastructure and skills, creating agglomeration benefits and with potential to strengthen local and national supply chains and business networks.

Stand out: Spanning 486 acres, the Slough Trading Estate is the largest industrial estate in private ownership in Europe and has been one of the country's defining industrial locations. A symbol of Britain's industrial modernisation and a long-standing home for enterprise, employment and innovation

A century of enterprise

Industry call out stats:

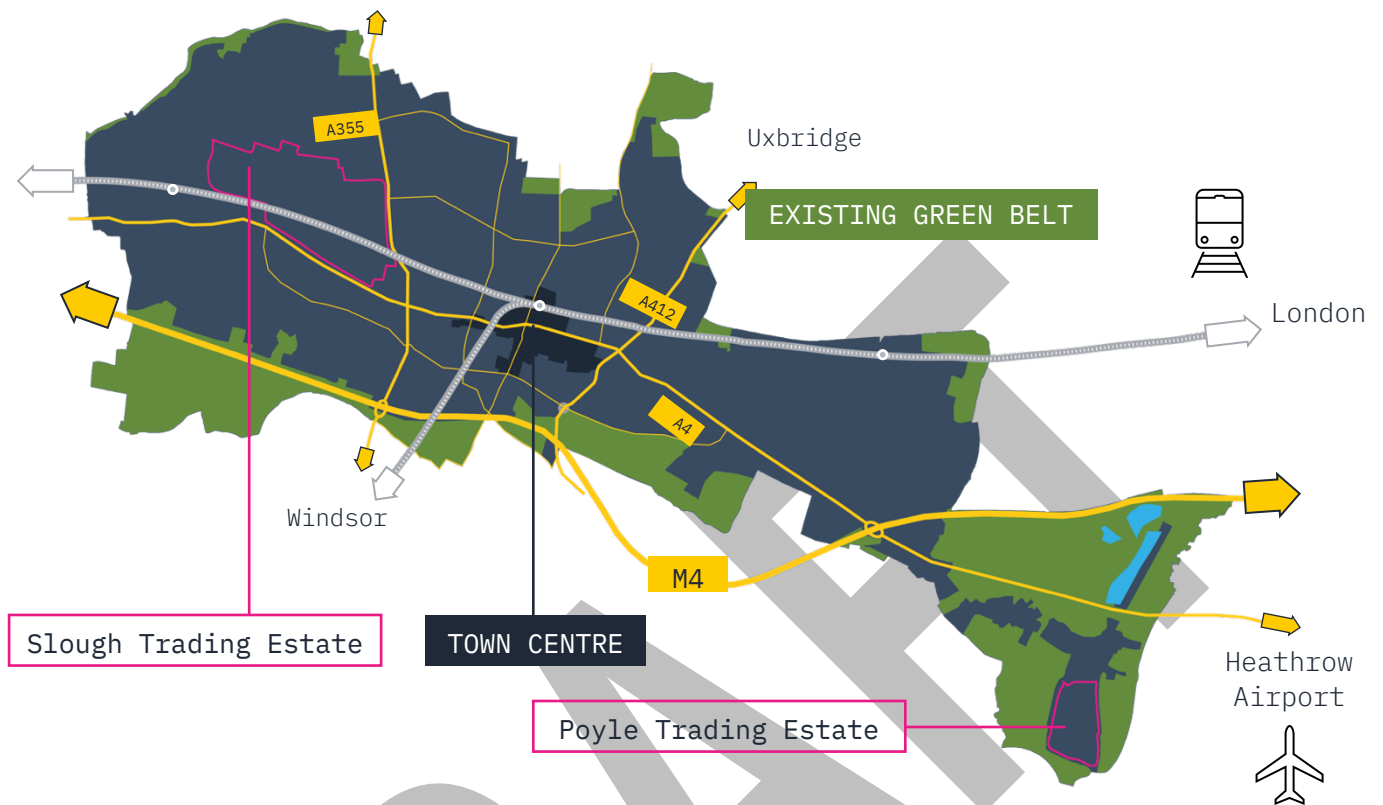
- **350 businesses | 15,000+ jobs¹:**
A nationally significant concentration of enterprise on the Slough Trading Estate.
- **+31.6% business-base growth²:**
A rapidly expanding and entrepreneurial business base.
- **30+ data centres | Europe's first 1GW zone³:** Digital infrastructure of national and international significance.

¹ Slough Borough Council, Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ), 2026

² ONS, Business Count. 2015-2025

³ KAO Data, New report reveals the positive contribution data centres have made to Slough, creating 14,000+ jobs and +£30m annual contribution, and recommends the UK follows the town's lead. January 2026

Beaconsfield | M40



For more than a century, Slough has been a place where businesses grow, scale and adapt. From the Trading Estate's industrial roots to today's diverse base of global firms, the borough has continually reinvented itself as industries, technologies and markets have changed.

Slough's concentration of digital infrastructure represents the latest chapter in its history of economic adaptation. The data-centre cluster is the UK's first de-facto AI Growth Zone, having helped set the blueprint through Slough's Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for the planning approach underpinning AI Growth Zones. The borough is now uniquely positioned to benefit from the growth of this critical nationally significant infrastructure which will support the next generation of innovation in emerging technologies from cloud computing, artificial intelligence, financial services and other data-intensive industries.

Slough's people are its greatest strength

People call out stats:

- **+64% from minority ethnic groups⁴:** A highly diverse community.
- **11.5% population growth⁵ (compared to 7% nationally):** A fast-growing population and expanding future workforce. – note faster growth than core cities
- **24.8% aged 0-15⁶ (compared to 18.4% nationally):** A particularly young population, creating a major future skills and employment opportunity.

⁴ ONS. Ethnic Groups. 2021

⁵ ONS. Population Estimates - local authority by age. 2015-24

⁶ ONS. Population Estimates - local authority by age. 2015-24

Successive generations have arrived from across the UK and the world, bringing skills, entrepreneurial ambition, cultural diversity and global connections. Combined with the borough's young and growing population, it represents a significant opportunity to support future industries, strengthen businesses and sustain economic growth for decades to come.

Locally this diversity is celebrated through a wide range of community-led cultural, creative and participatory initiatives, which bring residents together, support local groups and strengthen community connection, belonging and pride in place. Slough's scientific and industrial heritage, including the legacy of William Herschel, sits alongside its Windrush, refugee and wider migration stories. This has created a young, diverse and globally connected borough. The diversity and energy of Slough's communities is reflected in the strong pipeline of events and programmes across the borough. Creating opportunities to connect communities while supporting further investment in the town centre offer.

Slough's identity is shaped not only by its economy, but by its communities, culture and places. More than **60 parks, recreational grounds, green spaces and woodland areas** sit alongside The Curve, community libraries, neighbourhood venues, faith institutions and a broad network of cultural and voluntary organisations. These assets support learning, creativity, wellbeing and belonging, while contributing to a growing sense of pride in place.

Place call out stats:

- **Up to £41.5m Pride in Place investment:** Up to £40m across Britwell and Langley Foxborough, plus £1.5m for neighbourhood improvements, community projects and play areas across the borough.
- **4,500+ homes planned or progressing:** Across five major Town Centre schemes. These schemes give a total capacity of **4,551 homes**.
- **60+ parks and green spaces:** A substantial network of green and recreational assets across the borough.

Investments in Slough reflect a wider confidence in the borough's future. Major town centre regeneration, new homes, business space and improved digital infrastructure will shape the future of the borough. Combined with local initiatives such as *Pride in Place*, neighbourhood investments and the *emerging Work, Health and Skills Strategic Plan*, these investments provide a wider opportunity to improve quality of life, strengthen communities and create lasting prosperity.

These strengths provide Slough with an exceptional foundation. They explain why the borough remains one of the UK's most productive and connected economies and why it continues to attract businesses, investment and people.

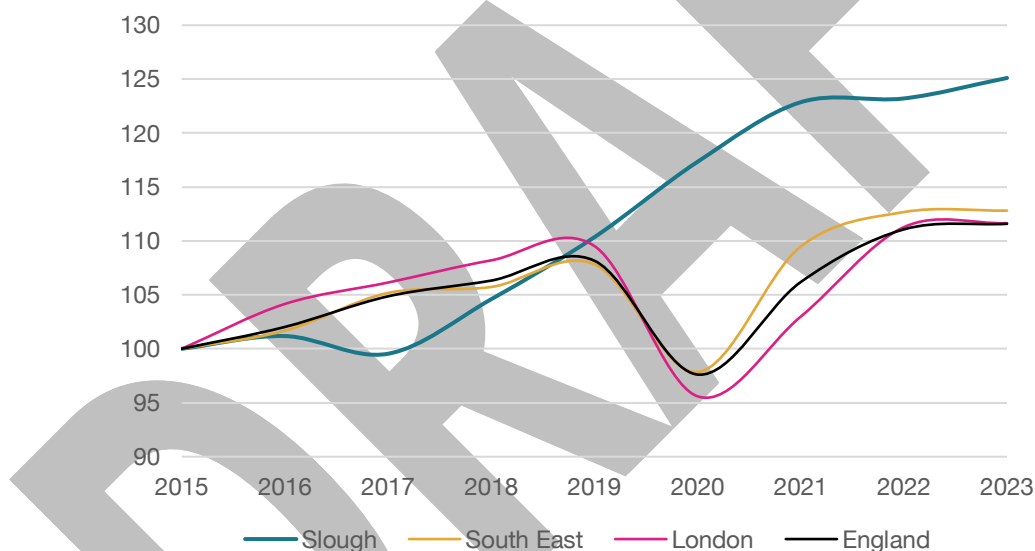
However, the economy and pressures facing communities are changing. Understanding how these trends are reshaping Slough's economy is critical to ensuring that future success translates into opportunity, wellbeing and prosperity that is shared more widely across the borough.

ECONOMY TODAY

£65.7	GVA per hour (2023)	6,560	Businesses (2025)	£10.1 billion	Real GVA (2023)	⁷
74.9%	Employment rate (2026)	167,359	Population (2024)	17,349	GDHI per capita (2023)	

Slough has the **sixth-highest productivity level in the UK**, with output per hour around **60.8% above the national average**. Between 2015 and 2023, its economy grew by approximately **25%, more than all of its comparators (Figure 1)**, while the business base expanded by around **31.6%**, almost three times the national rate. These figures demonstrate Slough's continuing strength as a location for enterprise, investment and high-value economic activity.

Figure 1: Indexed GVA growth, 2015 to 2023 (real terms, 2015 = 100)

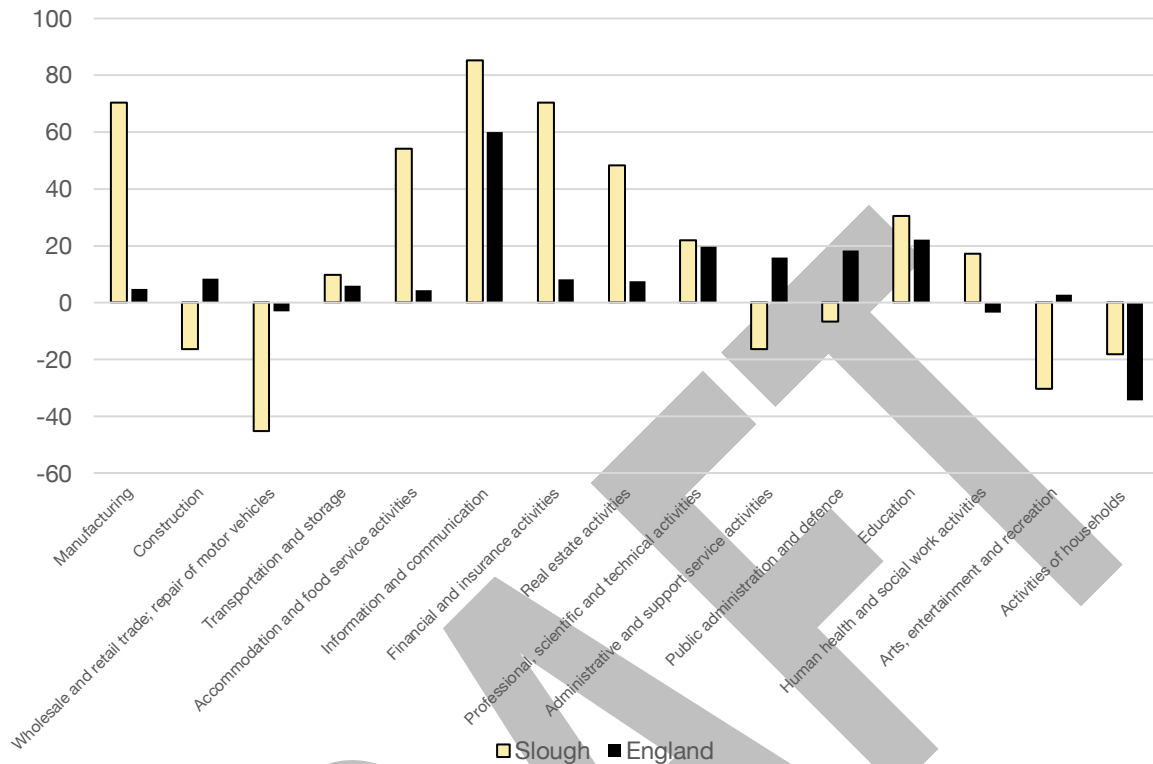


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Slough's economy continues to evolve through successive waves of industrial and technological change. Manufacturing and transport and storage remain important parts of the economy, supported by the Slough Trading Estate and Poyle's relationship with Heathrow and its wider supply chains. Digital technologies and professional and business services provide important opportunities for higher-value growth. This evolution is visible in sector output: **manufacturing GVA grew by around 70%** between 2015 and 2023, compared with around 5% across England, while **information and communication grew by around 85%**, compared with **60% nationally** (Figure 2).

⁷ GVA per hour: ONS. Subregional productivity. 2023 for Nominal GVA per hour; Businesses: ONS. Business Count. 2025; Real GVA: ONS Regional Gross Value Added by Industry (Table 2b); Employment rate: ONS. Employment rate (aged 16 to 64, seasonally adjusted). 2026); Population: ONS. Population Estimates - local authority by age. 2024; GDHI per capita: ONS. Regional gross disposable income, UK. 2023

⁸ ONS Regional Gross Value Added by Industry (Table 2b)

Figure 2: Percentage change in Sectoral GVA (2015-23)

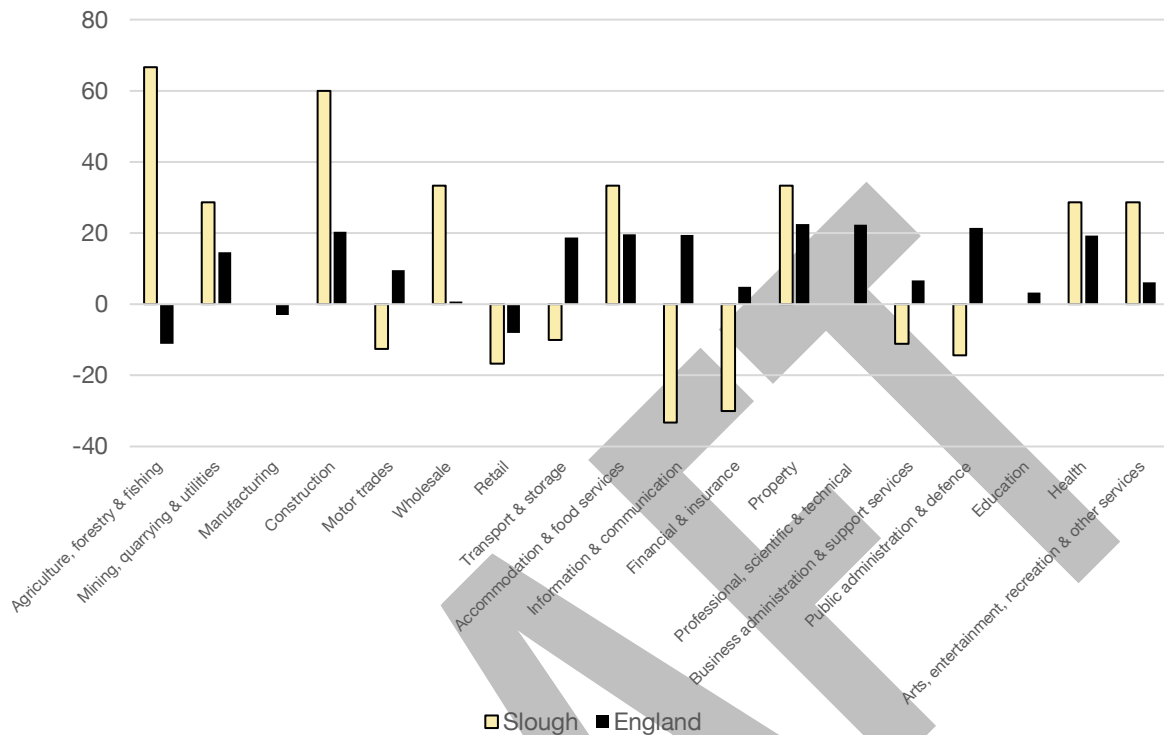
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However, strong output growth is increasingly not translating into employment growth. **Information and communication employment fell by 33.3%, from 9,000 to 6,000 jobs** between 2015 and 2024¹⁰, while employment in the sector increased by around 19% across England (Figure 3). This divergence could deepen as automation reshapes routine roles across the Trading Estate, Heathrow-linked logistics and professional services, increasing the need for workforce transition, technical skills and clearer progression pathways.

Elsewhere, **construction employment increased by 60%**, while health and visitor-facing services also expanded, reinforcing the importance of sectors that provide substantial employment alongside Slough's higher-value growth sectors.

⁹ ONS, Regional Gross Value added by Industry

¹⁰ Note: This decline relates to the broad sector rather than data centres alone. Data centres generate relatively few direct jobs compared with the scale of their output, capital investment, energy use and infrastructure footprint.

Figure 3: Percentage change in Sectoral employment (2015-24)

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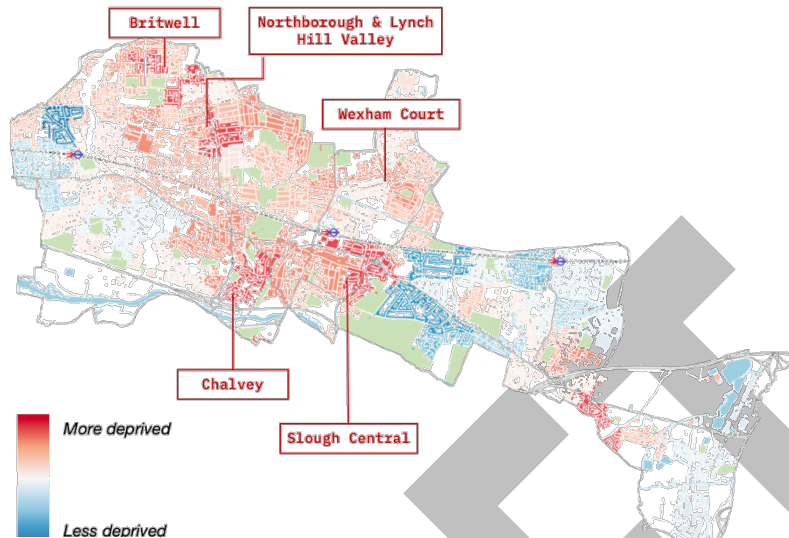
Slough's labour-market outcomes do not fully reflect the strength of its economic output. Higher-level skills are relatively strong, with **47.7% of working-age residents qualified to RQF4+**¹², yet unemployment remains around **7.4%, more than double the South East rate of 3.6%**.¹³ This suggests that the challenge is not skills alone, but the wider barriers that prevent some residents from accessing and progressing in work.

These weaker outcomes are also spatially concentrated. Slough is the **53rd most deprived of 153 local authorities**, with higher deprivation particularly visible across **Britwell, Chalvey, Elliman, Slough Central and Wexham Court**, alongside pockets elsewhere in the borough. This means that strong borough-wide economic performance sits alongside neighbourhoods experiencing significantly weaker outcomes.

¹¹ ONS. Business Register and Employment Survey. 2024

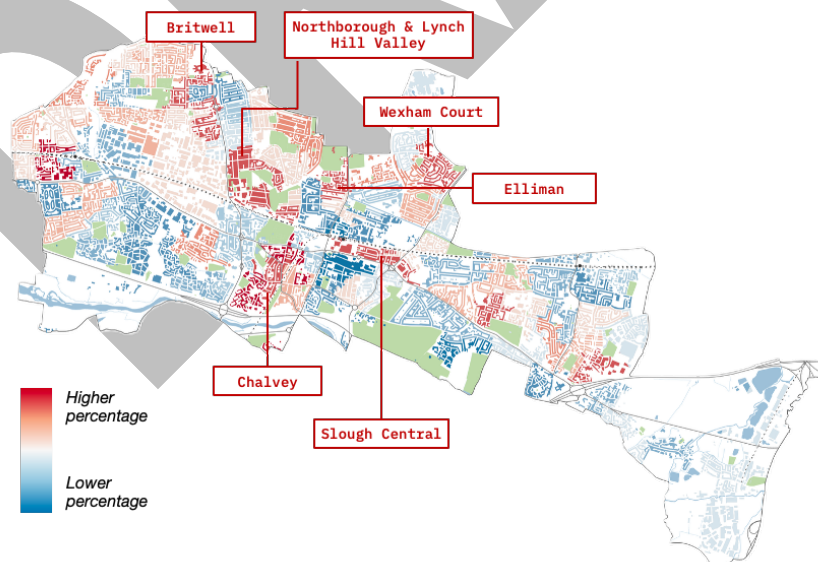
¹² ONS. Annual Population Survey. 2025

¹³ ONS. Annual Population Survey. April 2025-March 2026

Figure 4: Index of Multiple Deprivation across Slough, 2025

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Health shows a similar pattern. Higher levels of bad or very bad health are concentrated around **Britwell, Chalvey, Elliman and Wexham Court**, with further pockets in parts of Langley Foxborough. Healthy life expectancy is also below national levels, at around **58.1 years for men and 60.3 for women, compared with 63.1 and 63.9 years across England**.¹⁵ This suggests that health and other wider barriers continue to constrain participation in work and progression.

Figure 5: Percentage of people who assessed their health as bad or very bad across Slough, 2021

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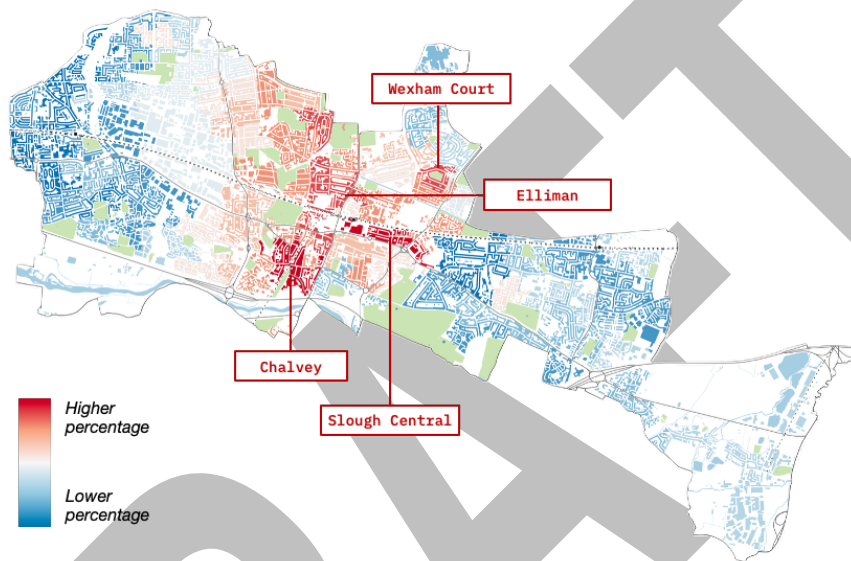
¹⁴ MHCLG, Indices of Multiple Deprivation

¹⁵ ONS. Life expectancy in the UK. 2022-24

¹⁶ ONS, Census 2021

Housing pressures are another barrier to inclusive growth. Slough's assessed homelessness **10.1 per 1,000 households**, above England (7.5) and the South East (5.3), although below London (11.5)¹⁷, while **only 85% of new dwellings achieve EPC C or above**, compared with 96.4% nationally.¹⁸ Alongside constrained housing delivery, these pressures are reflected in high levels of overcrowding, concentrated particularly across **Chalvey, Slough Central and Elliman**, with further pockets around **Wexham Court**.

Figure 6: Household overcrowding across Slough (occupancy rate per bedroom or +1 or above), 2021



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Slough has exceptional strategic connectivity with weaker local access to opportunity. Heathrow and the Elizabeth Line connect the borough nationally and internationally, but residents have highlighted infrequent and unreliable buses, poor local connectivity to major employment sites such as Heathrow and high fares as barriers to employment, education and accessing other opportunities.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SLOUGH

Slough has repeatedly adapted to economic change, from industrial production and manufacturing to logistics, international headquarters, digital infrastructure and emerging AI-enabled industries.

But Slough's future success cannot be measured by productivity alone. The central challenge is whether the borough's economic strength is translating consistently enough into better outcomes for the people, businesses and neighbourhoods that make up Slough.

As shown in the evidence, the relationship between growth and local prosperity is not as strong as it needs to be. The sectors generating the greatest output today and potentially in the future, create relatively limited direct employment. Major employers and infrastructure sit close to communities where residents do not always see clear routes into opportunity. Smaller locally owned businesses operate near significant corporate, infrastructure and

¹⁷ MHCLG. Table on homelessness. 2024/25

¹⁸ ONS. EPC Band C or above. March 2025

¹⁹ ONS. Census. 2021

regeneration investment, but do not always have the relationships, capacity, space or visibility to benefit from those supply chains. Strategic connectivity links Slough to London, Heathrow, the Thames Valley and the world, while some residents still face local barriers to accessing jobs, services and opportunity.

The consequences of this reality are visible not only in economic indicators, but in wider outcomes. Health, wellbeing, life expectancy, housing conditions, skills, confidence, safety and neighbourhood quality all shape whether people can participate in and benefit from growth.

A successful economy that does not improve these outcomes is not achieving its full potential. For Slough, growth must therefore mean more than attracting investment. It must mean better lives, improved wellbeing, stronger pathways into good work, successful local businesses, thriving neighbourhoods and a stronger sense that growth is creating and capturing benefit for the borough itself.

This matters for the council as well as for residents and businesses. Slough hosts assets of national economic importance, but too much of the value generated by those assets' risks flowing through or out of the borough rather than being retained locally. A more prosperous Slough depends on capturing more local value from growth: through better jobs and progression, stronger local supply chains, more successful SMEs, better use of development and regeneration, a stronger council tax base, business rate growth, community infrastructure and reinvestment in place.

Without action, Slough could continue to attract investment, generate nationally significant output and support infrastructure that matters to UK growth, while still seeing too little of that success translate into better health, stronger neighbourhoods, resident progression, local business growth or fiscal resilience. That is the counterfactual this strategy must avoid.

Future prosperity will depend on investing in the resilience of the economy through action today, enabling Slough to ensure that economic growth translates into healthier lives, more successful businesses, stronger communities and a place people actively choose to live, work and invest in.

The next phase of the borough's growth must be more intentional across partners: connecting residents to opportunity, enabling businesses to grow from the assets around them, ensuring regeneration improves everyday life, and retaining more value locally.

INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK OF PEOPLE, PLACE AND ENTERPRISE

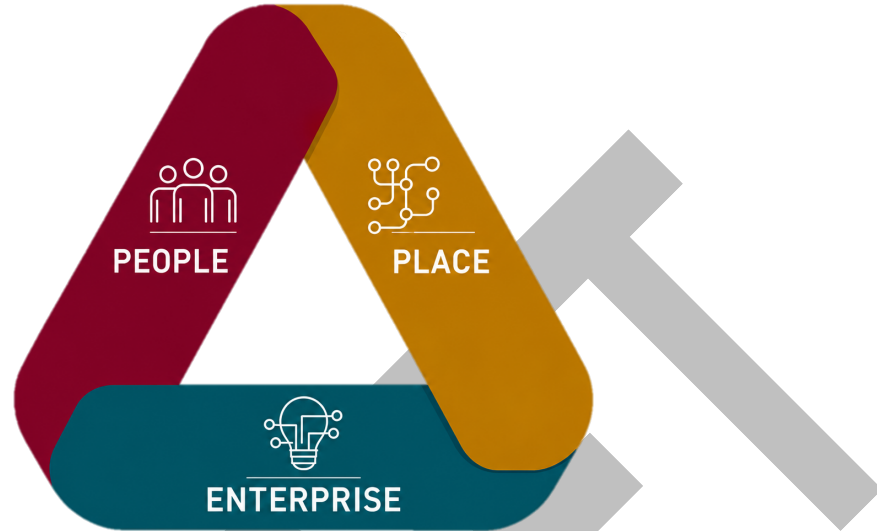
The strategy is designed across three connected areas.

People will focus on enabling residents to access good work, develop their skills and progress in employment, while addressing the health, housing, childcare, language and wider barriers that limit participation.

Place will focus on delivering the homes, transport, infrastructure, regeneration and cultural offer needed to connect communities to opportunity, retain talent and support sustainable investment.

Enterprise will focus on retaining Slough's productive strengths, supporting businesses to invest and adapt, and creating stronger links between major economic activity and local employment, skills pathways, SMEs and supply chains.

Figure 7: Pillars of Growth



2. SLOUGH 2050

ECONOMIC VISION

By 2050, Slough will be a connected, caring, inclusive and sustainable town where current and future residents can access opportunity, prosper and live healthier lives, and where every neighbourhood shares in benefits from growth, helping to reduce inequality and reduce poverty. It will be a place where people choose to live, work and build their future. Slough's economy will build on its nationally significant strengths to create more good jobs, clearer and more visible skills and progression pathways for young people, and greater opportunities for local businesses and residents. Employers and anchor institutions will play a stronger role in creating local opportunity and securing a better deal for Slough. Investment, innovation and regeneration will improve wellbeing, strengthen places and ensure existing communities share fully in the benefits of growth.

WHAT SUCCESS SHOULD LOOK LIKE

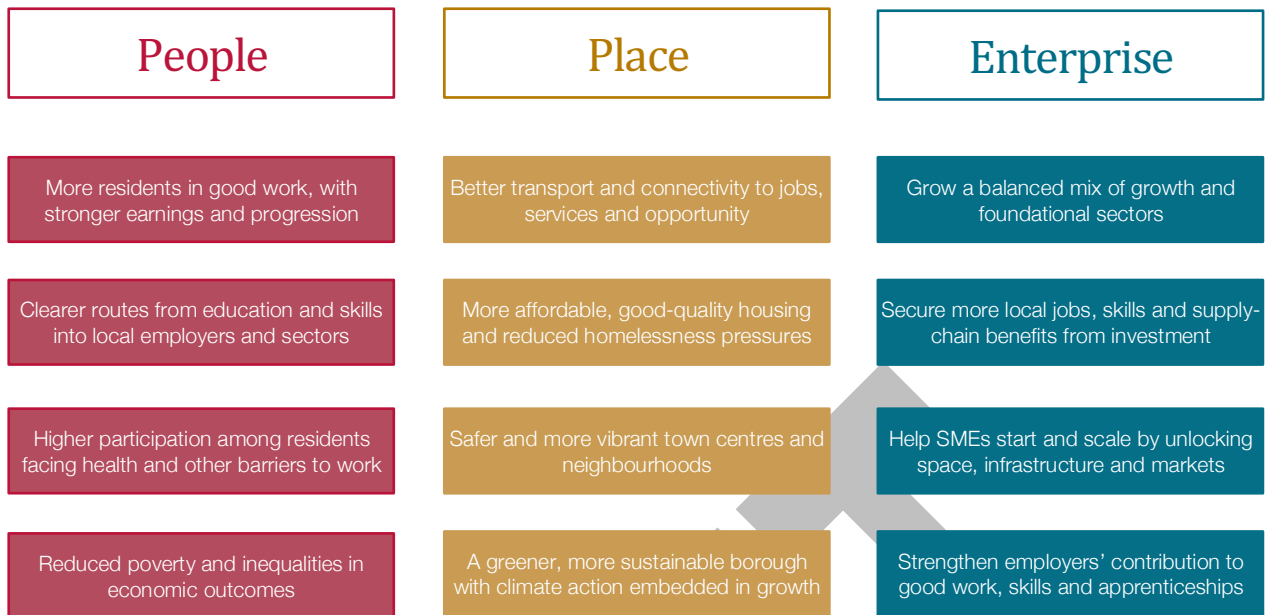
Success will mean that Slough's economic strengths translate more consistently into better outcomes for the people and communities who live here. More residents will be in good work, young people will have clearer routes into local careers, and fewer people will be prevented from participating by poor health, poverty or other barriers.

Good growth will be reflected not only in economic performance, but in healthier lives, stronger neighbourhoods and greater opportunity across the borough. It will also mean Slough retaining more of the value created by its businesses, investment and nationally significant assets.

Local businesses will be able to grow, major employers and anchor institutions will contribute more to local prosperity, and regeneration and investment will create visible benefits for residents. In this way, Slough's growth will be more inclusive, resilient and rooted locally.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To deliver the 2050 economic vision, the strategy is structured around twelve objectives across Connected People, Thriving Places and Productive Enterprise. Together, these address how more local people, particularly young people, can access and benefit from growth, how underlying barriers to economic growth and participation can be reduced, how places connect people to opportunity, and how Slough can retain more of the value generated by its economy. Delivery will be guided by a common set of principles to ensure growth is inclusive, connected and resilient.



PRINCIPLE TO DELIVER THE ECONOMIC VISION

To deliver this vision, the strategy will be guided by three principles that shape how the Council and its partners work together and ensure that growth delivers tangible benefits for Slough.

Engage and communicate by building trusted relationships with residents, communities and businesses, and making opportunities, support and routes to participation clear and visible.

Collaborate and connect by bringing together Council services, anchor institutions, businesses, the VCSE sector and other partners, while joining up activity across People, Place and Enterprise.

Secure local benefit and accountability by setting clear expectations of employers, investors and partners, using the Council's convening and influencing role to maximise local benefit and make commitments and outcomes visible.

3. THREE PILLARS OF THE STRATEGY

Slough's next phase of growth must turn economic strength into shared local prosperity, connecting people to opportunity, strengthening places and retaining more value locally.

Slough's 2050 vision will be delivered through coordinated action across People, Place and Enterprise. Each pillar responds to the same central challenge identified in Slough Today: the borough already has significant economic strengths, but the benefits of that success are not yet reaching all residents, communities and businesses consistently enough.

The strategy therefore focuses on strengthening the connections between economic growth and local prosperity, enabling more residents to access and progress through opportunity, ensuring places support participation and quality of life, and helping businesses and investment generate more value that is retained within Slough.

The pillars are deliberately interconnected. Stronger businesses create jobs and investment; people need the skills, health and support to access those opportunities; and places need the homes, infrastructure, connectivity and amenities that enable people and businesses to thrive. Progress across all three will be necessary to create a more inclusive, resilient and locally rooted economy.



Ambition: A better deal for Slough means that by 2035, the major employers, strategic assets and connections to Heathrow, London and the Thames Valley will generate greater local prosperity, helping more SMEs start, survive and scale, strengthening local supply chains and business clusters, and translating investment into better jobs, skills and innovation for Slough.

A PEOPLE-POWERED ECONOMY

Slough's people are fundamental to its long-term economic success. Growth only translates into lasting prosperity when residents can participate in it: accessing good work, developing their skills, progressing in their careers and having the health, security and support needed to build their future locally. For Slough, this is also a major economic opportunity. **Almost a quarter of residents are aged 0-15²⁰**, creating a substantial pipeline of future talent at a time when employers and industries are themselves adapting to technological and economic change.

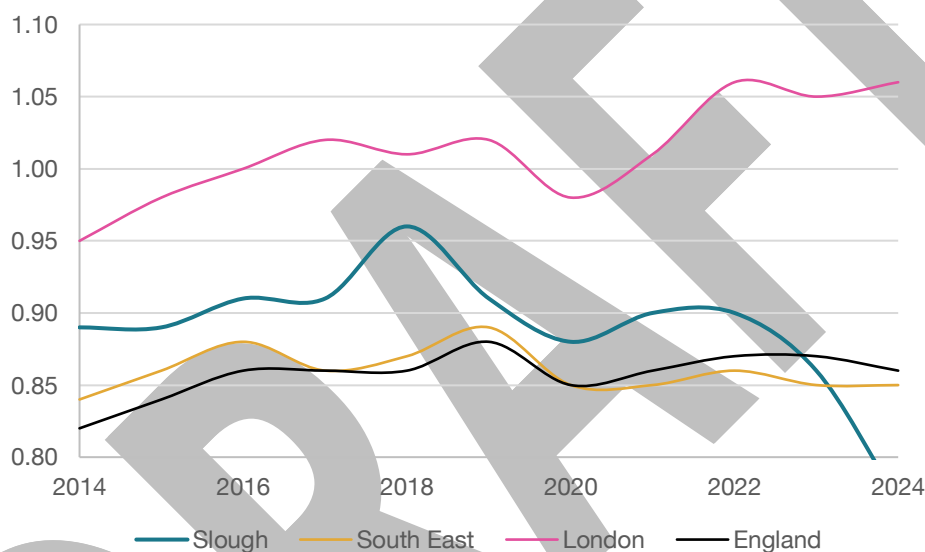
Realising that potential cannot be taken for granted. Slough is already a productive and successful economy, but too many residents are not yet participating in or benefiting fully from the prosperity being generated around them. As the economy has become more productive and capital-intensive, the connection between growth and employment has weakened. Job density has fallen by around **13.5% since 2014 (Figure 8)**, meaning growth in Slough's local jobs base has not kept pace with its working-age population. This may

²⁰ ONS. Population estimates by age. 2024

partly reflect the changing composition of Slough's economy towards more capital-intensive activity, although the decline cannot be attributed to any single sector. Young people also report difficulty seeing and accessing the opportunities around them: **57% of young people surveyed said access to employment opportunities was 'not going well'**²¹, reinforcing the need for clearer routes into work experience, apprenticeships and local career pathways.

The strategic challenge is therefore not simply to create more jobs, but to build stronger bridges between Slough's residents and the economy around them, connecting education and skills to employer demand and enabling young people to see and access the opportunities created locally.

Figure 8: Jobs Density



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ENABLING PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESSION

Creating clearer employment pathways is only part of the challenge. Whether residents can benefit from the economy is also shaped by their wider circumstances. Poverty, health, housing insecurity, caring responsibilities, childcare and language overlap and create complex barriers to participation, meaning opportunity is not experienced equally across Slough. For some residents, the foundations needed to enter, sustain and progress in work are not yet securely in place.

Housing pressures illustrate the scale of this challenge. Slough has the seventh-highest rate of households living in temporary accommodation nationally, and the highest outside London. This can directly affect people's ability to sustain employment: national research found that more than one in four parents living in temporary accommodation had reduced their working hours because relocation had made journeys to work, school or childcare impractical or too costly. Alongside this, **more than a quarter of economically inactive residents are looking after their families or homes**²³, while language barriers remain

²¹ DCMS. Community Life Survey. 2024/25

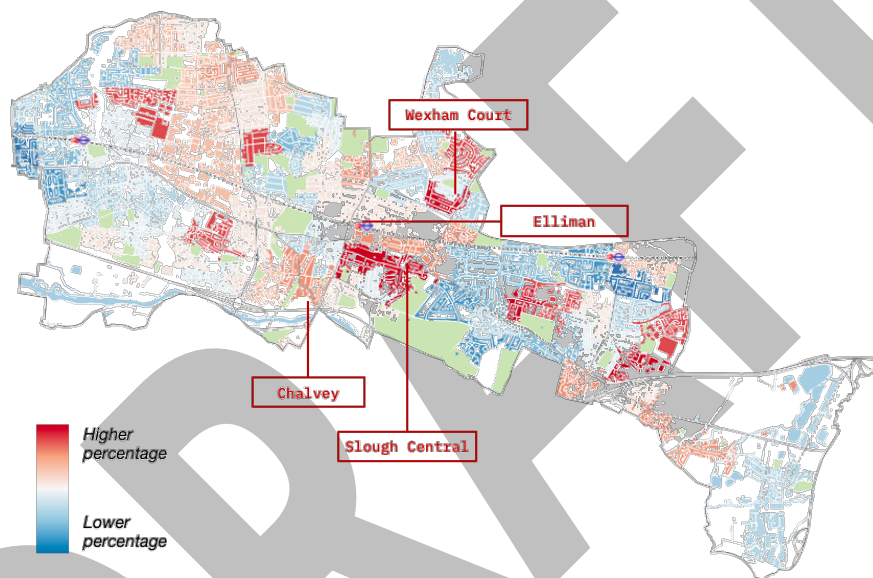
²² ONS. Jobs Density

²³ ONS. Annual Population Survey. Apr 2025-Mar 2026

more prevalent than the national average. Employment outcomes also vary across the borough, as shown in **Figure 9**, illustrating that the ability to participate in Slough's economy is not evenly distributed between communities and reinforcing the need for locally accessible pathways and support.

This implies skills and employment provision cannot work effectively in isolation. Slough needs a more connected system in which education, employers, health, employment and community support work together around residents, with targeted action to address barriers to inclusion and inequality. Learning and training must also connect more directly to the sectors and jobs growing locally. The emerging Work, Health and Skills Strategic Plan provides an important foundation for this approach.

Figure 9: Percentage of economically active people (excluding full-time students) who are unemployed across Slough, 2021



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WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE BY 2035

By 2035, progress across the People pillar should be visible in stronger participation, progression and more equal access to economic opportunity across Slough.

- **More residents in work, with stronger pay and progression**
- **More young people moving into apprenticeships, further learning and employment**
- **Fewer residents prevented from working by health and wider barriers**
- **Narrower gaps in income and economic outcomes across the borough**

PRIORITIES FOR A PEOPLE-POWERED ECONOMY

Delivering this ambition will require action across three connected priorities. These provide the strategic direction for the People interventions in the **Action Plan**, which sets out the specific activities, delivery responsibilities and role of the Council.

²⁴ ONS, Census 2021

Create clearer pathways into local opportunity

Connect young people and residents to work experience, apprenticeships, skills and local careers, while improving the visibility of opportunities across Slough.

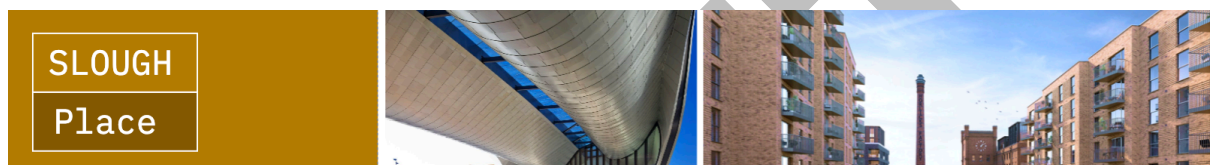
Join up support around residents facing barriers to participation

Bring health, skills, employment and community support together around residents, recognising that barriers to participation are often interconnected.

Strengthen the foundations for participation and progression

Recognise housing, childcare and early intervention as important foundations that enable residents to enter, remain in and progress through work.

Together, these priorities will help translate Slough's economic strength into greater participation, progression and prosperity for its residents.



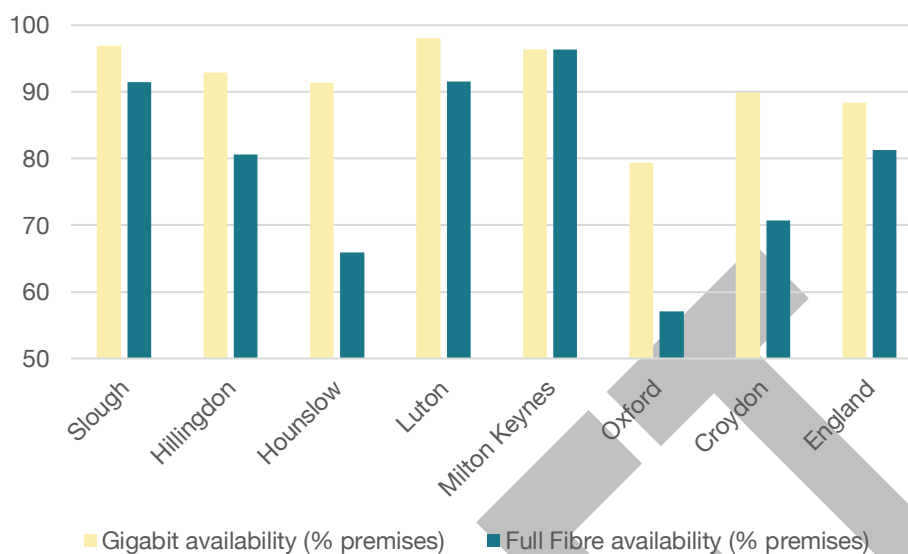
Ambition: A better deal for Slough means that by 2035, Slough will be a better connected, safer, greener and more vibrant place, with more affordable and good-quality homes, fewer families in temporary accommodations, fewer people facing homelessness, and neighbourhoods that inspire pride, connect people to opportunity and enable communities to share in the benefits of growth.

PLACES THAT ENABLE OPPORTUNITY

Slough's places shape how residents and businesses experience economic success. The quality of the places people see and use every day can build pride, confidence and aspiration, signalling that investment in Slough also means investment in its communities and the place they call home. For businesses, attractive and well-connected places help attract workers, support investment and create stronger local centres.

Slough starts from a position of significant strength. Its connections to London, Heathrow and the wider Thames Valley provide access to major employment markets and investment. Digital connectivity is also a clear strength, with gigabit-availability of around **96.9%** across the borough (**Figure 10**). Local transport connectivity is more uneven, however. **A journey from Cippenham to Heathrow can take around 90 minutes by public transport, compared with approximately 25 minutes by car**, illustrating how the quality of local connections can determine whether residents are able to access opportunities that are geographically close.

The strategic challenge is therefore to turn Slough's exceptional strategic location into stronger local connections, ensuring growth and investment are felt more visibly across its communities.

Figure 10: Digital connectivity, 2026

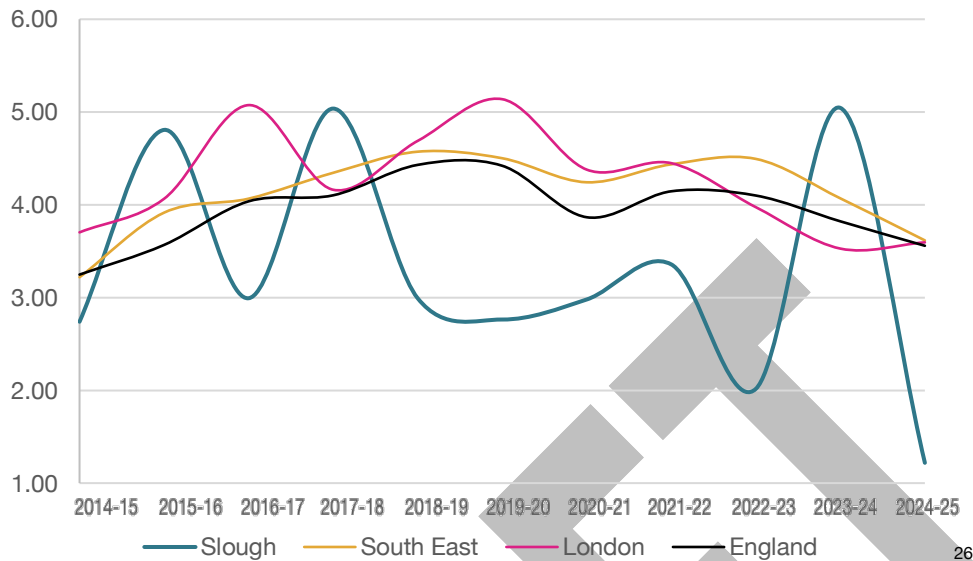
CREATING PLACES FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH

Connectivity is only part of creating places that enable opportunity. Economic growth and commercial investment are already taking place in and around Slough, but they need to be matched by investment in the foundations that allow communities and businesses to benefit from that growth. The quality and availability of homes, neighbourhoods and the wider environment influence whether residents can build their future locally, businesses can attract and retain workers, and investment generates lasting local value.

Housing pressures remain a particular constraint. Delivery has not kept pace with need, with the national rate of new housing delivery almost three times higher than Slough's, as seen in **Figure 11**. With limited developable land, future growth will depend increasingly on making effective use of brownfield and regeneration opportunities, while reducing homelessness and temporary accommodation pressures.

Environmental performance also remains a challenge: industrial and commercial emissions have fallen but remain above national and regional levels, reinforcing the importance of greener infrastructure, sustainable transport and lower-carbon development. Slough's regeneration pipeline provides an opportunity to embed these improvements alongside investment in homes, town centres and neighbourhoods. Better public realm, greener infrastructure, culture and leisure can also improve quality of life and pride in place, while creating more attractive conditions for businesses, workers and future investment. A place-led approach therefore means investing in the conditions that enable growth to benefit Slough locally: better-connected neighbourhoods, sufficient and good-quality housing, and a greener, more attractive environment that connects communities to opportunity and helps retain more of the value generated by growth.

²⁵ Ofcom, Spring update, 2026

Figure 11: Net additional homes per 1,000 residents

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE BY 2035

By 2035, progress across the Place pillar should be visible in better access to opportunity, improved housing outcomes and stronger, greener neighbourhoods across Slough.

- Shorter journey times to key jobs, services and opportunities
- More homes delivered, with fewer households in temporary accommodation
- More residents feeling safe and proud of their neighbourhoods and town centres
- Better air quality and lower carbon emissions across the borough

PRIORITIES FOR PLACES THAT ENABLE OPPORTUNITY

Delivering this ambition will require action across three connected priorities. These provide the strategic direction for the Place interventions in the **Action Plan**, which sets out the specific activities, delivery responsibilities and role of the Council.

Regenerate Slough's town centres and neighbourhoods

Create more attractive, connected and vibrant places where people want to live, work, visit and invest.

Strengthen culture, leisure and youth-friendly places

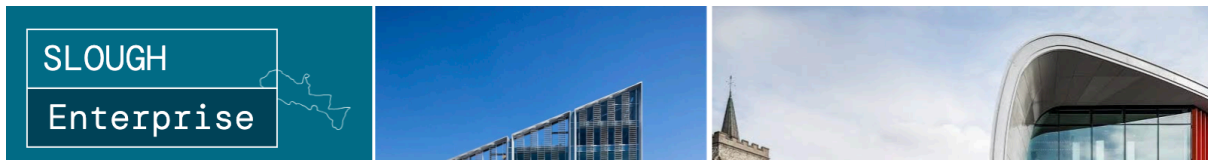
Use culture, leisure, the evening economy, design and activation to strengthen Slough's local offer, civic pride and quality of life.

Connect regeneration to local opportunity

Ensure investment and development generate visible benefits for residents through local jobs, apprenticeships, work experience and skills development.

²⁶ MHCLG, Net additional dwellings

Together, these priorities will help ensure investment in Slough's places strengthens quality of life and access to economic opportunity.



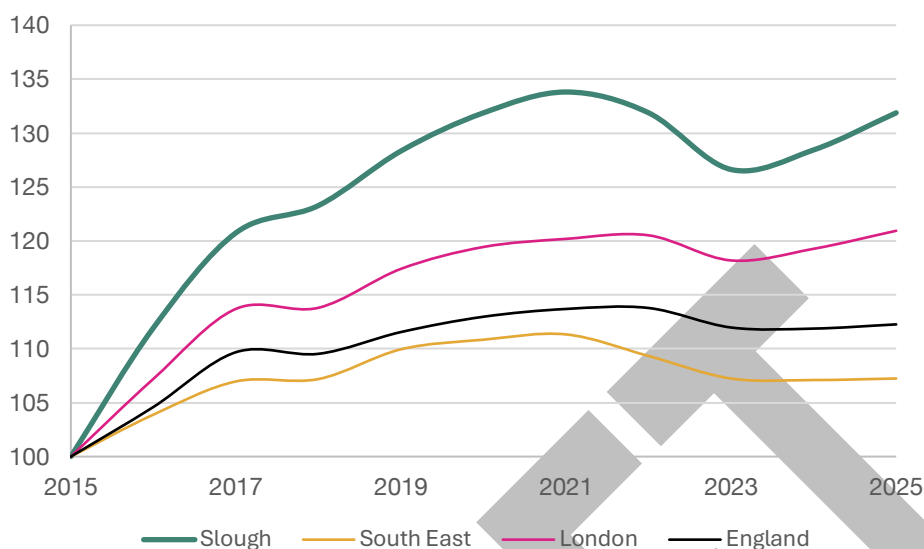
Ambition: A better deal for Slough means that by 2035, the major employers, strategic assets and connections to Heathrow, London and the Thames Valley will generate greater value locally, helping more SMEs to start, survive and scale, strengthening local supply chains and business clusters, and translating investment into more jobs, skills and innovation for Slough.

A PRODUCTIVE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY

Slough already has the foundations of a nationally significant enterprise economy. On the doorstep of Heathrow, one of the largest single employment sites nationally, the borough is home to the Slough Trading Estate, a major data-centre cluster and an exceptionally strong concentration of large employers. Alongside these assets, Slough's SME base has expanded rapidly, with the number of SMEs growing by around **31.9% over the last decade**, compared with 12.3% nationally (**Figure 12**). Together, these strengths provide a powerful platform for investment, innovation and cluster growth.

The opportunity is to make these strengths work harder for Slough. Major employers, strategic infrastructure and growing clusters can create wider spillover benefits by connecting to local supply chains, markets and procurement opportunities and strengthening links with local SMEs, residents and skills providers. However, those benefits are not automatic. Slough's constrained supply of developable employment land and premises can make it difficult for growing businesses to find affordable, flexible space and expand locally. Alongside wider challenges facing SMEs nationally, such as access to skills and finance, local businesses can also find it difficult to navigate procurement opportunities and connect into the supply chains of major employers and investment taking place in and around the borough.

Slough therefore needs a more connected enterprise ecosystem, linking businesses into stronger sector, employer and regional networks while helping more firms start, remain, scale and adapt. The Council can play an enabling and convening role, using investment, procurement and partnerships to strengthen local supply chains and retain more economic value locally.

Figure 12: Growth Index for SMEs

GROWING A DIVERSE AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

Building a deeper and more resilient business base also means strengthening the ecosystems around Slough's priority sectors. Its sector portfolio combines industries capable of **driving future output, innovation and investment** with sectors that provide significant employment and underpin the functioning of the wider economy.

These sectors will require different forms of support. For some, the priority is to accelerate growth and investment; for others, it is to strengthen productivity, workforce pathways and resilience. Across both, the opportunity is to secure greater local benefit through jobs, skills, supply chains and business opportunities.

Growth sectors

- **Digital Technologies:** Build on data-centre and digital strengths while managing employment transition and developing local skills pathways.
- **Professional and Business Services:** Grow higher-value employment and improve local access to skilled jobs.
- **Creative Industries:** Diversify the economy while strengthening Slough's cultural and town-centre offer.
- **Clean Energy:** Accelerate renewable generation and decarbonise Slough's energy-intensive economy.

Foundational sectors

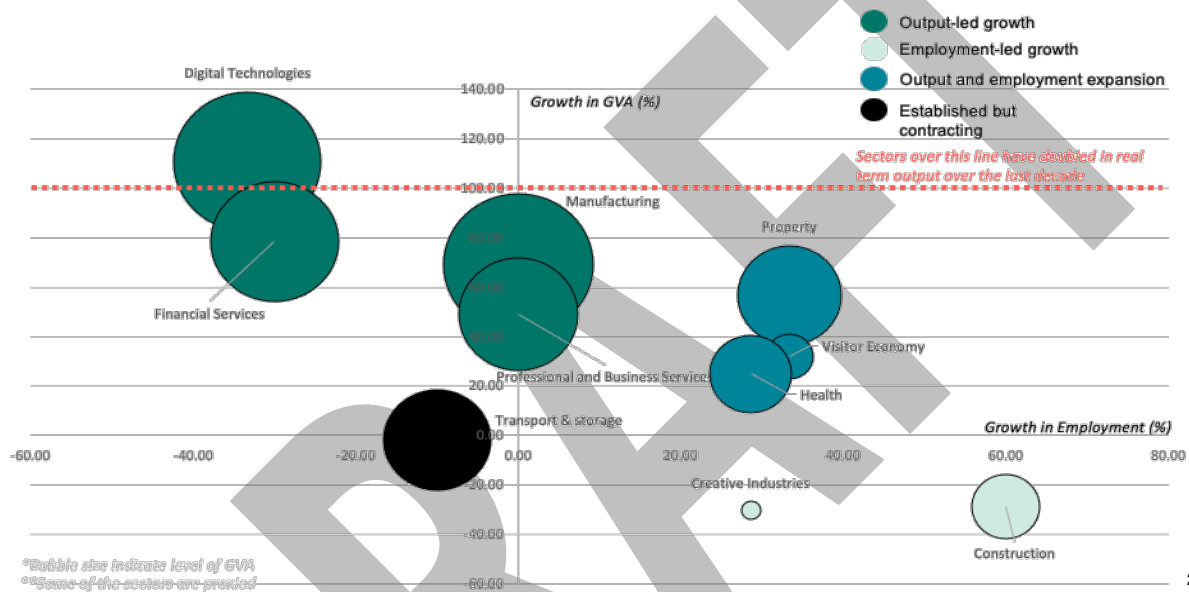
- **Manufacturing:** Build on Slough's industrial base through innovation, advanced manufacturing and decarbonisation.
- **Transport and Storage:** Capture more local benefit from Heathrow and logistics growth while supporting workforce transition.

²⁷ ONS, Business Count

- **Visitor Economy:** Strengthen hospitality, leisure and the visitor offer, capturing more value from Heathrow and regional activity.
- **Health:** Strengthen workforce pathways while supporting wellbeing and access to employment.
- **Construction:** Capture housing, regeneration and infrastructure opportunities through local skills, employment and supply chains.

The full sector assessment, including GVA, employment, growth, specialisation and strategic alignment, is set out in the Appendix. **Figure 13** provides a simplified view of sector momentum, comparing recent GVA and employment growth.

Figure 13: GVA growth against employment growth



28

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE BY 2035

By 2035, progress across the Enterprise pillar should be visible in a stronger and more diverse business base, with more of the value generated through growth retained within Slough.

- More SMEs starting, scaling and increasing their contribution to local turnover.
- More jobs created and sustained across Slough's growth and foundational sectors.
- Greater local supply-chain and procurement benefit from major employers and investment.
- More employers committing to good work, apprenticeships and local skills development.

²⁸ ONS, Regional Gross Value added by Industry and ONS, BRES

PRIORITIES FOR A PRODUCTIVE ENTERPRISE ECONOMY

Delivering this ambition will require coordinated action across four priorities. These provide the strategic direction for the Enterprise interventions set out in the Action Plan.

Grow and strengthen Slough's priority sectors

Strengthen sector, employer and partnership networks to support cluster growth, manage transition and better connect economic opportunities with local needs.

Strengthen employer commitments to local opportunity

Develop an employer compact covering good work, local recruitment, apprenticeships, skills, mentoring and wider community benefit.

Increase local procurement and supply-chain opportunities

Make it easier for SMEs to access Council, anchor institution and major-project spending, strengthening connections with major employers and retaining more economic value locally.

Maximise local benefit from strategic investment

Use Heathrow, Western Rail Link to Heathrow, the small-sites pipeline, data centres and wider infrastructure investment to generate more jobs, skills, innovation and supply-chain opportunities for Slough.



1. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

£453m	GVA	200	Businesses	4,930	Employees
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29

Slough is home to one of Europe's most significant digital infrastructure clusters, providing a nationally important platform for investment, innovation and higher-value technical employment.

Slough Trading Estate hosts Europe's largest data-centre hub, with more than **0.5GW of capacity operational or under construction**, supporting cloud services, AI and the wider digital economy. Its scale is underpinned by major fibre routes, access to power, concentrated land ownership and proximity to London and major markets.

The cluster continues to attract investment and support a wider ecosystem of specialist engineering, installation, maintenance and logistics businesses. The **Simplified Planning Zone 2024-2034** provides long-term planning certainty for digital infrastructure and other employment uses, helping Slough maintain its competitive position while creating opportunities to capture more value through specialist technical services and supply chains.

Slough also has a growing platform for connecting this economic strength to local talent. **Slough & Langley College's partnership, with Microsoft Datacenter Academy**, is creating routes into data-centre operations, networking, cyber security and digital infrastructure. Planning requirements around waste-heat capture and potential heat-network connections also provide opportunities to link digital growth with Slough's wider clean-energy ambitions.

Success will mean Slough retaining its position as a leading digital infrastructure location while more of the value created by the sector is retained locally, through stronger technical career pathways, deeper specialist supply chains and investment that supports lower-carbon infrastructure.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from continued digital growth will require that capital- and infrastructure-intensive investment generates greater local employment, skills and supply-chain benefits. This means stronger alignment between employers, skills providers and infrastructure partners, with the Council using its convening role to strengthen local career pathways, connect residents to sector opportunities and help ensure investment generates wider community benefit.

²⁹ Data City, 2026

CASE STUDY: SEGRO/SLOUGH TRADING ESTATE

SEGRO is expanding Slough Trading Estate's digital infrastructure offer through a new **30,000 sq. m powered-shell data-centre development with 50MVA of power capacity**. The investment will expand data-centre capacity on the Estate, reinforcing Slough's established position as a major digital infrastructure cluster. Planning is already secured through the **Simplified Planning Zone**, while the development is targeting BREEAM Excellent.

The scheme demonstrates how Slough can accommodate further high-value digital investment within its established employment base, supporting continued cluster growth and wider opportunities across specialist technical services and supply chains.

2. CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

£275m	GVA	372	Businesses	4,530	Employees
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30

Slough's young and diverse population, alongside its established creative organisations, provides a distinctive platform for creative enterprise, talent development and wider economic growth.

Slough has an emerging and increasingly connected creative ecosystem with significant potential for growth. Slough Arts Forum brings together **more than 50 professional arts organisations**, while four Slough organisations secured Arts Council England National Portfolio funding in 2021. Together, these organisations provide a strong foundation for a more visible and resilient creative sector.

Slough also has established routes into creative careers and a growing screen and digital offer, supported by organisations such as Creative Academy, Resource Productions and Screen Berkshire, and Salt Hill VR. Creative Academy provides industry-standard training in dance and musical theatre, Resource Productions and Screen Berkshire connect local talent into film and television, while Salt Hill VR extends the offer into VR, AR, AI and immersive technologies.

Slough's cultural assets provide a platform for further growth, with **The Curve** as the borough's principal publicly owned performance space alongside a wider network of community venues. There is scope to build on this offer through better use of existing assets, regeneration and new investment, creating more space for creative businesses, freelancers and programming while strengthening town-centre vitality and Slough's identity.

Success will mean more creative businesses and practitioners starting, growing and remaining in Slough, with more young residents progressing into paid creative careers, stronger spaces and networks for the sector, and deeper links between creativity, digital innovation and the wider economy.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from creative growth will require stronger connections between creative organisations, businesses, education providers and investors. The Council can use its convening and place-shaping role to strengthen

³⁰ Data City, 2026

collaboration, unlock suitable spaces and connect local talent to skills, funding and career opportunities.

CASE STUDY: RESOURCE PRODUCTIONS

Slough-based Resource Productions is an award-winning film, digital production and talent-development organisation with a strong local impact and growing national presence. It supports Slough-based community groups and creative practitioners through free workshops, commissions, networking and showcasing opportunities.

Working with local partners including Together As One and SWIPE, it engages **more than 25 local groups and around 2,500 young people** through free activity. Its work demonstrates how Slough's creative organisations can develop local talent, widen access to creative careers and connect residents to the wider screen economy.

3. CLEAN ENERGY



31

Slough's emerging clean-energy capabilities provide a strong platform for clean heat, green skills and lower-carbon infrastructure, supporting a more sustainable local economy.

Slough is developing a distinctive clean-energy offer around clean heat, retrofits and technical skills. **Octopus Energy's £10 million training and research centre on Slough Trading Estate** supports the roll-out of low-carbon technologies, including heat pumps and solar, while the **Green Skills Academy in Langley** provides training for heat pumps, retrofitting, electrical installation and ventilation.

Together, these assets give Slough a growing base for green technical employment and business activity. Major employers, specialist training provision and the borough's wider industrial base create strengths across engineering, installation, maintenance and retrofit, while giving local businesses opportunities to respond to growing demand for low-carbon technologies.

Slough's concentration of data centres and energy-intensive activity creates a further distinctive clean-energy opportunity. Planning requirements encourage waste-heat capture from data centres, while the borough's climate plans identify potential heat networks using waste heat from data centres and energy-from-waste facilities. This provides a platform to connect Slough's established economic strengths with cleaner and more efficient local energy systems.

Success will mean more clean-energy investment and green technical jobs in Slough, with more residents accessing emerging careers, businesses benefiting from low-carbon supply chains and more waste heat and clean-energy infrastructure supporting the borough's transition to net zero.

³¹ Data City, 2026

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from clean-energy growth will require stronger alignment between employers, skills providers and infrastructure partners. The Council can use its convening and strategic role to connect local talent and businesses to new opportunities and help align future investment with Slough's wider energy and sustainability ambitions.

CASE STUDY: GREEN SKILLS ACADEMY, LANGLEY

The Green Skills Academy at Slough & Langley College provides specialist training in low-carbon technologies, including heat pumps, solar, retrofit, ventilation and electrical installation. Its industry-standard facilities help residents and workers develop practical skills for emerging green careers, while supporting businesses to respond to changing technology and sustainability requirements.

The Academy demonstrates how Slough can connect clean-energy growth with local skills development, career progression and employer demand.

4. PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES

£1.09bn

GVA

1,240

Businesses

23,700

Employees

32

Slough's concentration of global headquarters and international businesses provides a strong platform for high-value professional services, business growth and wider economic opportunity.

Slough's corporate base provides a strong foundation for professional and business services. **The borough has one of the highest concentrations of global company headquarters outside London**, including Reckitt, creating strong demand for financial, legal, consultancy, engineering and other specialist services.

Professional and business services also play an important role in enabling Slough's wider economy. Growth across digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, construction and logistics depends on specialist commercial, technical and advisory expertise. Slough's proximity to **London, Heathrow and the wider Thames Valley economy** further strengthens its position as a location for firms serving both local and wider markets.

There is an opportunity to retain more of this value within Slough by strengthening connections between major employers, professional-services firms and local SMEs. Deeper local procurement and business-to-business relationships can support supply-chain growth, while greater adoption of AI and digital technologies can help smaller professional-services businesses improve productivity, innovate and compete.

Success will mean more high-value professional and business services firms starting, investing and growing in Slough, with more residents progressing into professional careers,

³² Data City, 2026

stronger local business-to-business activity and a deeper ecosystem of expertise supporting Slough's other priority sectors.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from professional-services growth will require stronger connections between major employers, local businesses and skills providers. The Council can use its convening and strategic role to strengthen local supply chains, connect residents to professional careers and help businesses access wider growth opportunities.

CASE STUDY: RECKITT – GLOBAL HQ, SLOUGH

Reckitt's global headquarters on Bath Road anchors high-value corporate activity in Slough while also generating wider local benefit. Through the **Healthier Slough Fund**, launched with Berkshire Community Foundation, Reckitt supports seven local charities through three-year grants, reaching **more than 16,000 Slough beneficiaries in 2025**.

Its long-standing headquarters presence also illustrates Slough's ability to attract and retain global businesses, supporting professional careers and demand for specialist business services. The example shows how major corporate anchors can combine high-value economic activity with a visible contribution to local communities.

5. MANUFACTURING

£1.53bn

GVA

230

Businesses

6,000

Employees

33

Slough's long-established manufacturing base and major new investment provide a strong platform for advanced production, technical employment and more resilient local supply chains.

Slough retains a major manufacturing anchor in **Mars**, which has produced in the borough since 1932. Its current **£190 million investment programme** is modernising the Slough site and demonstrates continued confidence in the borough as a location for advanced production.

This strength extends across a wider manufacturing and engineering ecosystem. Slough Trading Estate is home to businesses including **Oshkosh AeroTech, Allied Protek Engineering Solutions** and other specialist producers, while major investments create opportunities for local engineering, maintenance and supply-chain activity. Allied Protek's work delivering a new production line for Mars illustrates how anchor investment can generate demand across the wider business base.

As a foundational sector, manufacturing supports a broad range of production, engineering, technical and operational employment. Increasing adoption of automation, digital technologies and lower-carbon production can strengthen productivity while creating clearer progression into higher-skilled technical roles and connecting manufacturing more closely with Slough's digital, clean-energy and logistics strengths.

³³ GVA:ONS, Regional Gross Value added by Industry, 2023 (note is in Real terms); Businesses: ONS, Business Count, 2025; Employees: ONS, BRES, 2023

Success will mean Slough retaining manufacturing as a major employment anchor while becoming more productive, technologically advanced and sustainable, with more residents progressing into technical and engineering careers and more local businesses benefiting from manufacturing supply chains.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from manufacturing growth will require stronger links between employers, skills providers and local businesses. The Council can use its planning, convening and strategic role to support modernisation, strengthen local supply chains and connect residents to skills, careers and new investment opportunities.

CASE STUDY: MARS MANUFACTURING INVESTMENT

Mars has manufactured in Slough since 1932 and is investing **£190 million between 2023 and 2028** to modernise its historic chocolate factory. The programme includes robotics, AI, digital twins, upgraded machinery and more energy-efficient utilities, strengthening the site's advanced manufacturing capabilities.

The investment is also supporting workforce upskilling and creating demand across the wider engineering and supplier base, including Slough-based **Allied Protek**, which is delivering a new production line for the factory.

6. TRANSPORT AND STORAGE

£744m	GVA	840	Businesses	9,000	Employees
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34

Slough's position alongside Heathrow and its established logistics base provide a strong platform for freight, supply-chain activity and accessible employment across the wider economy.

Transport and storage are a major foundational sector for Slough, supporting employment while underpinning the borough's wider economy. Its position alongside Heathrow gives businesses direct access to one of the UK's most important freight gateways, which handled **1.59 million tonnes of cargo and £293 billions of goods in 2025**, supporting international supply chains and time-sensitive logistics.

Slough's own employment base strengthens this advantage. **Slough Trading Estate combines strong motorway access with proximity to Heathrow**, supporting freight forwarding, warehousing, distribution and specialist logistics alongside manufacturing and digital businesses. Recent investment, including freight and customs businesses such as **Globexair**, demonstrates continued demand for Slough as a logistics location.

The sector also plays an increasingly important role in supporting Slough's other strengths, from moving manufacturing inputs and finished goods to specialist transport and installation services for the data-centre economy. The **proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow** could further strengthen this position, while automation, digital systems and

³⁴ GVA:ONS, Regional Gross Value added by Industry, 2023 (note is in Real terms); Businesses: ONS, Business Count, 2025; Employees: ONS, BRES, 2023

cleaner transport create opportunities for higher productivity and progression into more technical roles.

Success will mean Transport & Storage remaining a major source of accessible employment while becoming more productive, higher-quality and better connected, with more residents progressing into technical and supervisory roles and local businesses capturing more value from Heathrow and wider supply chains.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from logistics growth will require stronger links between Heathrow, employers, skills providers and local businesses. The Council can use its convening and strategic role to strengthen local supply chains, connect residents to careers and support investment that improves productivity and connectivity.

CASE STUDY: HEATHROW'S LOCAL GROWTH TASKFORCE

Heathrow's Local Growth Taskforce provides an opportunity for Slough businesses to capture more value from the airport's supply chain.

Heathrow spent **£0.9 million with Slough SMEs in 2024**, within **£108.3 millions of SME spend** across its wider local area, indicating scope to deepen local participation.

The Taskforce brings together Heathrow and local partners to strengthen **supply chains, employment and skills**, helping more Slough firms access procurement opportunities and secure greater local benefit from future investment.

7. VISITOR ECONOMY (HOSPITALITY)

£148m	GVA	310	Businesses	4,000	Employees
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35

Slough's proximity to Heathrow, strong accommodation base and diverse hospitality offer provide a platform for visitor spending, accessible employment and a more vibrant local economy.

Slough's proximity to Heathrow gives it direct access to one of the UK's largest visitor and business-travel markets. Heathrow **handled 84.5 million passengers in 2025**, generating demand for accommodation, food and drink, business travel and other visitor services. For Slough, the opportunity is to capture more of this spending locally while supporting a broad base of hospitality employment.

Slough already has a significant accommodation and business-events offer. Hotels across the borough serve airport, corporate and longer-stay markets, while Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 provides major conference facilities for up **to 1,170 delegates**. Combined with Slough's strong corporate base, this gives the borough a foothold in higher-value business travel, meetings and events as well as conventional hospitality.

There is further potential to strengthen Slough's offer through its diverse food and hospitality businesses, town-centre regeneration and links to the wider Berkshire visitor

³⁵ GVA:ONS, Regional Gross Value added by Industry, 2023 (note is in Real terms); Businesses: ONS, Business Count, 2025; Employees: ONS, BRES, 2023

economy. Proximity to Windsor and other major attractions gives Slough an opportunity to complement established destinations, while the Berkshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership provides a stronger platform for promotion and collaboration.

Success will mean a stronger and more distinctive visitor economy that supports good local employment, with more residents progressing into hospitality careers, more visitor spending retained by local businesses and town centres, and Slough capturing greater value from Heathrow, business travel and the wider Berkshire offer.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from visitor-economy growth will require stronger links between hospitality businesses, skills providers and destination partners. The Council can use its convening and place-shaping role to strengthen career pathways, promote Slough's offer and help more visitor spending support local businesses and places.

CASE STUDY: MOXY & RESIDENCE INN

Completed in 2021, the redevelopment of Slough's former library site delivered the **152-room Moxy and 92-suite Residence Inn, adding 244 rooms** to the town-centre accommodation offer. The development also includes restaurants, bars and meeting facilities, strengthening Slough's capacity to serve business, airport and longer-stay visitors.

The scheme shows how hotel investment can support wider town-centre regeneration, bringing new activity and employment while helping Slough capture more visitor spending from its proximity to Heathrow and the wider Thames Valley economy.

8. HEALTH

£445m

GVA

240

Businesses

9,000

Employees

Slough's health sector provides a strong foundation for employment, local career pathways and wider economic participation, while supporting a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Slough has a significant health sector, anchored by **Wexham Park Hospital**, which provides a major source of employment and continued investment in the borough. Access to good healthcare also supports the wider economy by helping residents remain healthy, stay in work and return to employment, making the sector an important part of Slough's economic infrastructure.

The sector will need to adapt as Slough's population changes and healthcare shifts towards **neighbourhood and community-based provision**. Continued investment in facilities, specialist services and digital technologies can improve access and strengthen local capacity. This aligns with Slough's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, which prioritises prevention and neighbourhood-based care.

Health also provides important routes into skilled and accessible employment.

Growing demand will require a resilient workforce across clinical, technical and support roles, creating opportunities to strengthen pathways from local education and training into

employment and progression. Closer relationships between health employers, skills providers and employment services can help residents access these opportunities while supporting recruitment and retention. Slough's Health & Wellbeing Strategy also links health to skills development and stable employment.

Success will mean a resilient health sector able to meet growing local demand, with clearer pathways into clinical, technical and support careers, more residents progressing into good work and stronger neighbourhood provision improving access to healthcare.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents will require stronger links between health employers, skills providers and the wider local economy. The Council can use its convening and public-health roles to strengthen workforce pathways, support accessible neighbourhood provision and work with major health institutions as anchor employers, connecting recruitment, apprenticeships and procurement more closely to local residents and businesses.

CASE STUDY: SLOUGH CDS

The **£25 million Slough Community Diagnostic Centre** opened in March 2026, providing CT, MRI, ultrasound, X-ray and other diagnostic services from a new facility at Upton Hospital. It will provide up to **150,000 additional tests each year**, improving access to diagnostics and helping reduce waiting times and pressure on Wexham Park Hospital.

The investment strengthens Slough's local health infrastructure by bringing diagnostics closer to residents, supporting earlier diagnosis and helping tackle health inequalities. It also reflects the wider shift towards more accessible, community-based healthcare.

9. CONSTRUCTION

£309m	GVA	915	Businesses	4,000	Employees
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Slough's active housing and regeneration pipeline provides a strong platform for construction growth, skilled employment, local business opportunities and a more sustainable built environment.

Slough has an **active programme of housing, regeneration and infrastructure investment**, creating sustained demand for construction across new development, refurbishment and public realm. Existing delivery through major housing and regeneration programmes demonstrates an established market, while continued investment in homes and neighbourhoods provides a platform for further sector growth.

The opportunity extends beyond new development. Slough's housing programme includes investment in maintenance, retrofit and decarbonisation, including **£6.3 millions of Warm Homes funding to improve more than 800 properties**. This creates demand across insulation, electrical works, low-carbon technologies and building improvement, strengthening links between construction and Slough's wider clean-energy ambitions.

Construction also provides an important route into skilled and accessible employment. Nationally, CITB estimates the industry will require around **41,200 additional workers each**

year between 2026 and 2030, while Berkshire employers report shortages across core trades and emerging retrofit skills. Slough's own development pipeline therefore creates opportunities for residents to progress into skilled careers and for local contractors and SMEs to grow through construction supply chains.

Success will mean more construction businesses growing and creating good jobs in Slough, with clearer routes into apprenticeships and skilled careers, more local SMEs benefiting from development and retrofit supply chains, and a workforce equipped for modern, low-carbon construction.

Securing a better deal for Slough residents from construction growth will require stronger links between developers, contractors, skills providers and local businesses. The Council can use its planning, procurement and convening role to connect residents and SMEs to opportunities arising from Slough's housing, regeneration and retrofit investment.

CASE STUDY: HORLICKS QUARTER

Horlicks Quarter is transforming a **12-acre former industrial site into a new neighbourhood of around 1,300 homes**, alongside commercial and community space, public realm and the restoration of the historic Horlicks Factory. The development demonstrates the scale of construction activity being generated through Slough's regeneration.

Delivery is also creating routes into the sector through construction apprenticeship opportunities at the Slough site. The scheme illustrates how regeneration can combine housing delivery and heritage renewal with skills development and opportunities for construction employment.

4. DELIVERY

GROWTH IS A SHARED ENDEAVOUR

Slough's future prosperity cannot be delivered by any one organisation acting alone.

The outcomes set out in this strategy, from improving health and wellbeing, creating pathways into employment, delivering more affordable homes and strengthening local businesses, sit across multiple organisations, funding streams and programmes.

The Council can directly influence some of these outcomes through its own services, assets and policy responsibilities. However, many of the opportunities that will shape Slough's future lie within businesses, educational institutions, health partners, housing providers, investors, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

The central challenge identified throughout this strategy is not a lack of success. It is ensuring that more residents, communities and businesses can participate in and benefit from the prosperity already being generated in the borough.

Delivering that ambition requires a different way of working: one that is collaborative, long-term and focused on shared outcomes rather than organisational boundaries.

OUR COMMITMENT

This strategy recognises the financial and resource pressures facing local government. As a result, Slough Borough Council cannot and should not seek to directly deliver every intervention identified within this strategy. Instead, its role will increasingly be one of stewardship.

The Council will play five distinct roles:

Steward of Place

Providing long-term leadership for the borough's growth and ensuring investment, regeneration and development contribute to wider economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Convener of Partnerships

Bringing together businesses, education providers, health partners, housing providers, community organisations and investors around shared priorities and outcomes.

Enabler of Growth

Creating the conditions for investment, innovation and enterprise to flourish through planning, infrastructure, regeneration and business support

Commissioner and Deliverer

Continuing to directly deliver services where it has responsibility, while commissioning activity that supports growth and inclusion objectives.

Advocate for Slough

Championing the borough's interests within the Thames Valley, working with neighbouring London boroughs, Whitehall and wider partnership frameworks to secure investment, influence and opportunity for local communities

A SLOUGH GROWTH PARTNERSHIP

Many of the challenges identified throughout this strategy intersect across organisational boundaries.

A young person entering employment may interact with schools, colleges, employers, transport providers, health services and voluntary organisations.

A business seeking to grow may require access to skills, premises, investment, infrastructure, networks and supply chains.

A resident's ability to participate in the economy may depend as much on housing, health and transport as it does on the availability of jobs.

The delivery of this strategy therefore requires a stronger partnership model which aligns activity around shared outcomes for People, Place and Enterprise.

The Council will work with partners to establish a borough-wide Growth Partnership that brings together:

- Businesses and employers
- Education and skills providers
- NHS and health partners
- Housing providers
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Investors and developers
- Strategic partners across Berkshire and the Thames Valley
- Government agencies and delivery bodies

The purpose of this partnership will be to coordinate delivery, align investment and collectively steward progress towards the outcomes set out within this document.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Delivery of the strategy will be supported through a shared monitoring framework aligned to the vision and outcomes set out in the strategy.

Rather than measuring activity alone, the framework will focus on the outcomes the strategy seeks to achieve across People, Place and Enterprise, including participation in employment, health and wellbeing, housing outcomes, connectivity, business growth and local value creation.

Annual reporting will provide transparency on progress, highlight areas requiring additional intervention and ensure partners remain collectively accountable for delivery.

CONNECTING THE THAMES VALLEY

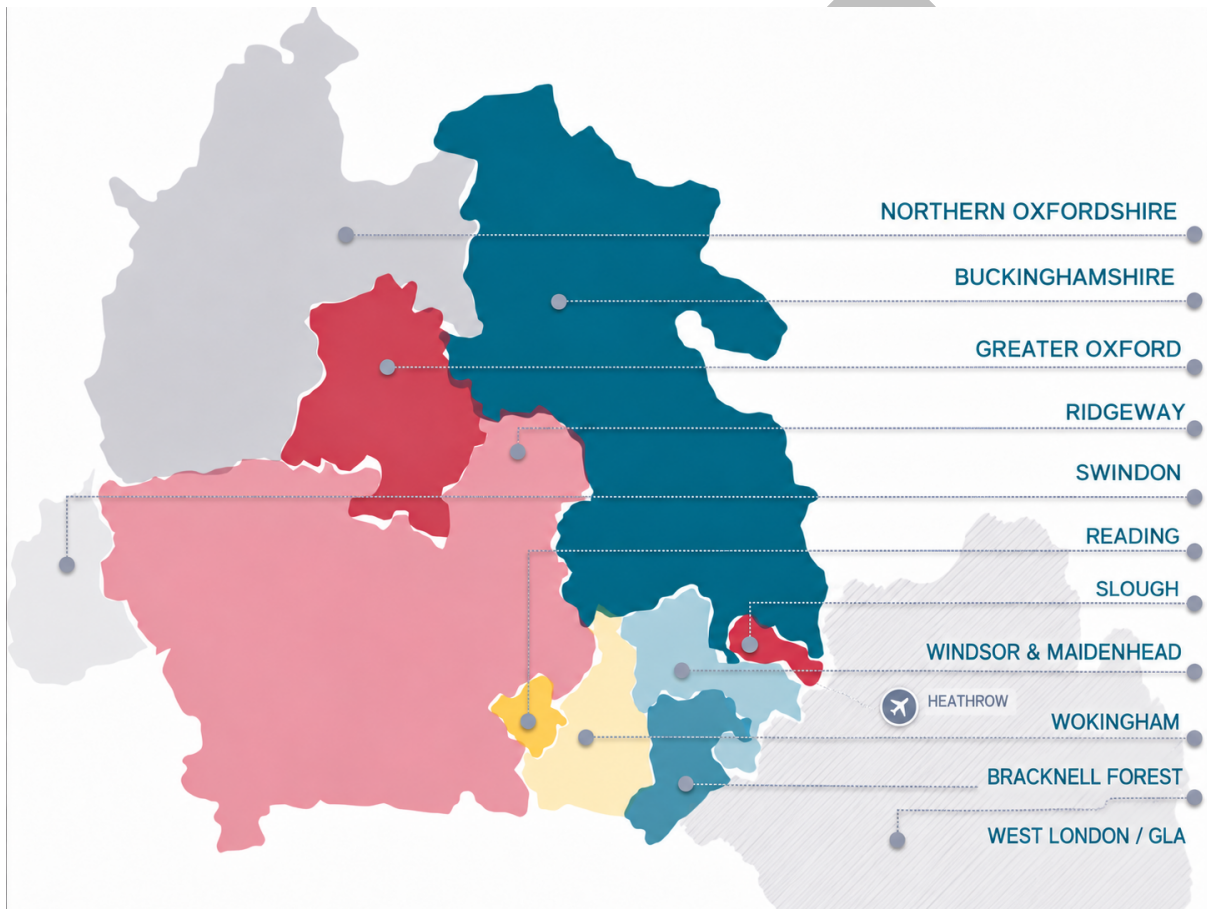
Slough's economy is deeply connected to Heathrow, London, Berkshire and the wider Thames Valley. Residents, businesses, investment flows and supply chains all operate across administrative boundaries. Its position between London and the wider Thames Valley, alongside its close relationship with Heathrow, also makes cross-border working with the Greater London Authority and neighbouring West London boroughs increasingly important.

Emerging devolution arrangements across the Thames Valley create an opportunity to strengthen collaboration on skills, transport, investment, infrastructure and economic development.

For Slough, success will depend not only on influencing what happens within the borough but also ensuring that future regional structures recognise and support Slough's strategic importance, as a gateway between London, Heathrow and the wider Thames Valley.

The Council will therefore continue to work with neighbouring authorities, the Greater London Authority and wider strategic partners to secure a stronger role for Slough within emerging Thames Valley arrangements and maximise the benefits of future devolved powers and funding.

Figure 14: Slough's strategic position within the Thames Valley and wider London economy



5. ACTION PLAN

HOW WE CAN GET A BETTER DEAL FOR SLOUGH

This action plan translates the strategy into a focused set of priorities for People, Place and Enterprise. Across all three pillars, the aim is not simply to generate more growth, but to reduce the barriers that limit economic participation, widen access to opportunity and ensure more of the value created in Slough is retained locally. This means enabling local people, particularly young people, to access and feel the benefits of growth, while helping businesses to start, remain and grow in the borough.

Delivering this will require action across the Council and its partners. The Council will not own or directly deliver every intervention, but will play a central role in creating the conditions for delivery, convening partners and local communities, and seizing opportunities arising from regeneration, Heathrow and wider investment. The enabling priorities set out below provide the governance, communications and funding framework needed to support delivery across all three pillars.

PEOPLE

We will connect Slough's residents to good work, stronger earnings and opportunities to progress in their careers, with clear pathways for young people and targeted support for those facing barriers to employment so that more local people can participate in and benefit from Slough's growth.

- **Establish a Slough Opportunity Guarantee:** bring schools, colleges, employers and community organisations together so every young person can access careers guidance, employer encounters, mentoring, work experience, self-employment support and apprenticeships through trusted local networks.
- **Create integrated pathways into employment:** coordinate health, employment, skills, housing, childcare and VSCE support so residents facing multiple barriers can access a clearer and more joined-up route into work.
- **Establish targeted neighbourhood outreach and support:** use shared data and trusted community networks to identify priority groups and connect residents to employment, skills and wider support pathways.

PEOPLE PRIORITIES						
Actions	Strategic Objectives Supported	Lead	Partners	Role of the Council	Funding routes	Timescale
Establish a Slough Opportunity Guarantee: bring schools, colleges, employers and community organisations together so every young person can access careers guidance, employer encounters, mentoring, work experience, self-employment support and apprenticeships through trusted local networks.	More residents in good work, with stronger earnings and progression Clearer routes from education and skills into local employers and sectors	Economic Development, working with Education and Skills, Communications and Resident Engagement teams.	- Schools - Slough & Langley College - Employers - Community career support - community and voluntary organisations	Convener of partnerships and commissioner/ deliverer: establish the shared offer, secure employer participation, coordinate referral routes and improve visibility of opportunities	Existing education, employment and skills programmes, employer contributions (incl. social value and S106); apprenticeship funding, future devolved skills funding, external grants	2027: agree model and partners 2027/28: launch coordinated offer. Ongoing to 2035: expand and monitor
Create integrated pathways into employment: coordinate health, employment, skills, housing, childcare and VCSE support so residents facing multiple barriers can access a clearer, joined-up route into work.	More residents in good work, with stronger earnings and progression Higher participation among residents facing health and other barriers to work	Employment and Skills, jointly with Public Health	- NHS and health partner - Jobcentre Plus - housing providers - childcare providers - skills providers - community and voluntary organisations	Convener and commissioner: align existing services around residents, clarify referral arrangements, address service gaps and connect provision to employers	Existing employment, public health and skills budgets, UK Shared Prosperity Fund successor arrangements, NHS and DWP programmes, future devolved employment and skills funding	2027: design pathways and governance. 2027-30: embed delivery. Ongoing to 2035: refine against outcomes
Establish targeted neighbourhood outreach and support: use shared data and trusted community networks to identify priority groups and connect residents to employment, skills and wider support pathways.	Higher participation among residents facing health and other barriers to work Reduced poverty and inequalities in economic outcomes	Economic Development and Public Health, supported by Engagement teams	- Community organisations - resident networks - employment and skills providers - health partners - housing providers	Steward, convener and commissioner: identify priority communities, align outreach, improve local access and use monitoring data to adapt provision	Existing service and outreach budgets; public health programmes; neighbourhood funding; Pride in Place where geographically eligible; external inclusion funding	2027: agree priority cohorts and neighbourhoods. Annual: refresh targeting and report outcomes

PLACE

We will create thriving town centres and neighbourhoods, deliver more stable and affordable homes, and ensure regeneration and improved connectivity help local people access jobs, services and opportunity.

- **Deliver regeneration that creates visible local benefit:** lead town-centre and neighbourhood regeneration that improves public realm, connectivity, community facilities and access to opportunity.
- **Activate town-centre and neighbourhood spaces:** work with cultural, community and commercial partners to expand leisure, evening-economy and youth-focused activity through meanwhile uses, events and longer-term occupation.
- **Increase the supply of stable, affordable homes:** work with housing associations, Homes England, developers and regeneration partners to accelerate affordable housing delivery and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.
- **Improve local connectivity to jobs and opportunity:** use partnership forums and the emerging Transport Strategy refresh to improve access from neighbourhoods to employment locations, key services and leisure opportunities, including major employment locations such as Heathrow.

PLACE PRIORITIES						
Actions	Strategic Objectives Supported	Lead	Partners	Role of the Council	Funding routes	Timescale
Deliver regeneration that creates visible local benefit: lead town-centre and neighbourhood regeneration that improves public realm, connectivity, community facilities and access to opportunity.	Better transport and connectivity to jobs, services and opportunity	Regeneration, Highways and Planning	- Landowners - Developers - TfL - Network Rail - community groups - businesses - investors	Lead regeneration programmes; coordinate landowners and delivery partners; use planning powers; and secure and align investment with resident priority outcomes and design (e.g., activated, safe, varied community, cultural and commercial offers)	Existing regeneration programmes, developer contributions, capital investment, Homes England and government regeneration funding, private investment	2027/2028 and ongoing: integrate outcomes into current schemes. To 2035: phased delivery through regeneration programmes
	Safer and more vibrant town centres and neighbourhoods					
	A greener, more sustainable borough with climate action embedded in growth					
Activate town-centre and neighbourhood spaces: work with cultural, community and commercial partners to expand leisure, evening-economy and youth-focused activity through meanwhile uses, events and longer-term programming.	Safer and more vibrant town centres and neighbourhoods	Regeneration, Planning and Culture teams with support from Resident Engagement	- Cultural organisation - community groups - young people - property owners - Businesses - creative enterprises	Coordinate and steward cultural, community and commercial partners; support meanwhile and longer-term uses; and align activity with regeneration programmes and long-term maintenance and programming	Cultural grants; Arts Council funding; meanwhile-use agreements; sponsorship; commercial income; regeneration and neighbourhood budgets	2027: identify spaces and delivery partners. 2027-30: expand successful activity and engage market/occupants
	A greener, more sustainable borough with climate action embedded in growth					
Increase the supply of stable, affordable homes: work with housing associations, Homes England, developers and regeneration partners to accelerate affordable housing delivery and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation.	More affordable, good-quality housing and reduced homelessness pressures	Regeneration, Planning, Public Health Housing and Assets	- Housing associations - Homes England - Developers /regeneration partners - employment, health and support providers	Coordinate housing associations, Homes England, developers and regeneration partners; use planning and partnership levers and connect housing support with the integrated People pathways, and leverage small sites portfolio to mature wider delivery pipeline.	Homes England programmes, affordable housing funding, developer contributions, housing-association investment, Council land and capital where agreed	Immediate and ongoing to 2035: accelerate current schemes and mature the wider delivery pipeline
Improve local connectivity to jobs and opportunity: use partnership forums and the emerging Transport Strategy to improve access from neighbourhoods to employment locations, key services and leisure opportunities, including major employment locations such as Heathrow	Better transport and connectivity to jobs, services and opportunity	Highways and Planning, Economic Development	- Transport operators - Heathrow - Neighbouring authorities - GLA / TfL - Major employers	Convene transport, employer and regional partners; use the emerging Transport Strategy to identify priorities and advocate for improved access to key employment locations.	Existing and future transport funding; regional and devolved funding; developer and infrastructure contributions where relevant	2027: identify priorities through the emerging Transport Strategy and partnership forums. 2027-30: progress priority connectivity improvements and funding opportunities.

ENTERPRISE

We will build a productive and balanced economy where employers help create good work, local businesses can start, remain, scale and contribute more to Slough's economy, and major investment delivers more jobs, skills and supply-chain opportunities while retaining more value locally.

- **Build stronger priority-sector networks:** bring employers, education providers and delivery partners together to agree roles in progressing Slough's growth priorities, identify workforce needs, share intelligence and coordinate sector and business-support interventions.
- **Agree a Slough Employer Charter:** setting commitments on good work, local recruitment, apprenticeships, work experience, mentoring, workforce development and career progression.

- **Open up procurement and supply chains opportunities:** connect Slough businesses to Council, anchor-institution and major-project spending.
- **Secure local-benefit commitments from major investment:** embed local jobs, skills and supply-chain opportunities into major investments and infrastructure projects.

ENTERPRISE PRIORITIES						
Actions	Strategic Objectives Supported	Lead	Partners	Role of the Council	Funding routes	Timescale
Build stronger priority-sector networks: bring employers, education providers and delivery partners together to agree roles in progressing Slough's growth priorities, identify workforce needs, share intelligence and coordinate sector and business-support interventions.	Grow a balanced mix of growth and foundational sectors Help SMEs start and scale by unlocking space, infrastructure and markets	Economic Development	• Priority-sector employers • SMEs • Slough Trading Estate • Heathrow-linked partners • education and skills providers • business organisations	Convene priority sectors, employers, education providers and delivery partners, gather intelligence and translate priorities into coordinated interventions and agreements from partner organisations.	Existing economic-development and business-support resources; partner contributions; sector programmes; future government or devolved growth funding	2027: establish initial forums. Ongoing: regular meetings and annual priorities
Agree a Slough Employer Charter: setting commitments on good work, local recruitment, apprenticeships, work experience, mentoring, workforce development and progression.	Strengthen employers' contribution to good work, skills and apprenticeships	Economic Development and Employment and Skills	• Major employers • SMEs • anchor institutions • education and skills providers • business organisations	Build on the Employment Charter, broker commitments (e.g., local placements, social value commitments), maintain employer relationships, and connect participating businesses with the People pathways.	Primarily partner and employer contributions; existing employment and skills budgets; apprenticeship funding	2027: co-design and launch. 2027 onwards: recruit employers and report delivery
	Secure more local jobs, skills and supply-chain benefits from investment					
Open up local procurement and supply-chain opportunities: connect Slough businesses to Council, anchor-institution and major-project spending.	Secure more local jobs, skills and supply-chain benefits from investment Help SMEs start and scale by unlocking space, infrastructure and markets	Economic Development and Procurement	• SMEs • anchor institutions • developers • major contractors • business-support organisations	Simplify procurement routes where possible, publish opportunities accessibly, provide particularly SME supplier support and coordinate expectations with anchor institutions and major contractors.	Existing procurement and business-support budgets; anchor and contractor contributions; external SME-support funding	2027: map opportunities and barriers. 2027/28: launch coordinated supplier offer. Ongoing monitoring
Secure local-benefit commitments from major investment: embed local jobs, skills and supply-chain opportunities into major investments and infrastructure projects.	Secure more local jobs, skills and supply-chain benefits from investment	Planning, Regeneration, Procurement and Economic Development	• Investors developers / contractors • Government • employers • skills providers	Engage investors, developers, contractors and government; use planning, procurement and contractual levers; and route agreed opportunities through the Employer Compact, local supply-chain activity and People priorities.	Developer and investor contributions, planning obligations, contractual social-value commitments, project budgets	Immediate: develop consistent requirement once forums established Ongoing: apply to major projects through 2035

ENABLING

We will put in place the leadership, coordination, capacity and delivery framework needed to turn the Growth Strategy into sustained action and ensure that progress across People, Place and Enterprise is collectively owned and progressed, while creating the conditions for partners and local people to participate in and share the benefits of growth.

- **Delivery and governance:** Establish a single delivery framework for the Growth Strategy, with named owners, cross-service workstreams and shared performance reporting across key growth actions.
- **Communications and visibility:** Create a coordinated communications platform for jobs, business support, regeneration opportunities and investment promotion, aligned with ongoing website updates.

- **Funding and devolution:** Develop and maintain a funding and devolution pipeline aligned with Growth Strategy priorities, supporting the case for priority investment initiatives

ENABLING PRIORITIES						
Actions	Strategic Objectives Supported	Lead	Partners	Role of the Council	Funding routes	Timescale
Delivery and governance: Establish a single delivery framework for the Growth Strategy, with named owners, cross-service workstreams and shared performance reporting across key growth actions.	All: conditions for successful delivery across People, Place and Enterprise	Senior Responsible Officer for the Growth Strategy, PMO	• All relevant Council services • Growth Partnership and forum members	Provide programme leadership, assign ownership, align internal resources; maintain accountability to the action plan and report progress through agreed governance.	Core Council resources; aligned partner capacity; programme-management support secured through future funding bids where eligible	First six months following adoption and wider transformation initiatives: establish framework. Annual: refresh action and performance plan
Communications and visibility: Create a coordinated communications platform for jobs, business support, regeneration opportunities and investment promotion, aligned with ongoing website updates.		Economic Development and Communications	• Council services • Employers • education and skills providers • anchor institutions • regeneration partners • community networks • Slough is Now	Coordinate Slough is Now brand with Council website updates, Council services, anchor institutions and delivery partners, maintain shared messages and direct audiences to the relevant pillar programmes, including up to date skills/ apprenticeship/ placement opportunities.	Existing communications and digital budgets; partner content and contributions; funding attached to employment and business-support programmes	2027: design and launch minimum viable platform. 2028: scale functionality and grow opportunities base for consistent updates Ongoing: maintain provision and updates
Funding and devolution: Develop and maintain a funding and devolution pipeline aligned with Growth Strategy priorities, supporting the case for priority investment initiatives.		Economic Development, Finance and Strategy, Members	• Service leads • regional partners • central government • investors • Growth Partnership	Identify fundable propositions, coordinate bids, build relationships with government and regional partners and advocate for Slough's priorities through upcoming devolution discussions.	Government programmes; regional and devolved funding; Homes England; transport and infrastructure funding; skills and employment funding; private and partner investment	Immediate: establish live pipeline. Quarterly: review readiness and opportunities ahead of any updated governance