

Slough Local Plan 2026–2046

Draft Engagement Strategy

Shaping Slough's Future

Early engagement for a new Local Plan

This document sets out how Slough Borough Council will engage residents, businesses, community organisations, infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders during preparation of the Slough Local Plan 2026–2046.

Publication date: 13 July 2026

(i) Accessibility

If you need this document in an alternative or accessible format, please contact Planning Policy at PlanningPolicy@slough.gov.uk, by post or in person at Planning Policy, Slough Borough Council, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough SL1 2EL, or via the Council call centre on 01753 475111.

(ii) Status of this document

This Draft Engagement Strategy will be an important document to set out how the Council will comply with its duties as the Local Planning Authority to carry out public engagement on the Plan to support the Slough Local Plan 2026-2046 production process.

The draft Engagement Strategy will replace all or part of our adopted Statement of Community Involvement, as this was produced under previous Planning regulations.

We have used the principles and methods set out in the [Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI) (December 2025) in the Scoping consultation.

(iii) Foreword

The Council is preparing a Local Plan for the period 2026–2046 using the ‘new’ plan making system introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026. This draft document forms part of the Regulation 20 Scoping Consultation.

It is complemented by a scoping matters document on the contents of the plan; and additional early evidence base documents that are also being consulted on. Representations (comments) made during the consultation will be used to refine it, and the final engagement strategy used to guide engagement on the new plan to adoption.

The borough is growing, communities are evolving and new opportunities are emerging through investment, regeneration, improved transport connections and economic growth. An up-to-date Plan to accommodate and integrate these pressures and opportunities will help the Borough get the right development in the right places.

Engagement is central to the plan-making process to enable local knowledge, experiences and aspirations to inform and shape its policies. This engagement strategy must meet the statutory requirements for the Local Plan but complements others across the Council.

The consultation is an early opportunity for those interested or impacted by the Plan and required stakeholders to advise how the Council engages with those it needs to, in a timely and mutually effective way, throughout the plan-making process.

The methods in the engagement strategy seek to enable the plan process and plan content to be easy to understand and gather the issues and priorities that matter most to residents including what the new Local Plan should contain, and how to involve people as the plan is prepared.

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1. Purpose of the draft Strategy

- 1.1 The purpose of this draft Strategy is to give consultees the opportunity to advise us how they want to be engaged in the process so we can record it formally. After this consultation, an updated Engagement Strategy will be created and used.
- 1.2 The draft document sets out a clear, practical and inclusive approach to meeting the Council's duty to set out an engagement strategy for the production of Slough Local Plan 2026–2046. It explains how the Council will involve communities and required stakeholders at each stage of the Local Plan process and how those views will be considered.
- 1.3 The Draft Strategy has been prepared as part of the Regulation 20 Scoping Consultation. Regulation 20 of [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2026](#) (The 2026 Regulations). The Scoping consultation requires the Council to invite representations about matters relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan, including what the plan should contain, and how the Council should engage in preparing the plan.

Relationship with the SCI

- 1.4 The Council adopted its [Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI) in December 2025. The SCI remains the Council's statutory statement of how communities will be involved in planning matters. However, as the SCI was prescribed by previous Local Plan regulations, it is out of date with the new 2026 Regulations.
- 1.5 The requirement for an Engagement Strategy is prescribed by the new Local Plan Regulations. It invites consultees to confirm how they would like to be engaged. It also sets out how engagement will be planned, targeted, delivered and reviewed for the Slough Local Plan 2026-2046.

2. Legislative and policy context

- 2.1. The Local Plan is being prepared under Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended. The detailed plan-making process is set out in the 2026 Regulations. The stages include:
- i. Regulation 20: Scoping consultation on what the Local Plan should contain and how engagement should take place;
 - ii. Regulation 22: Publication of summary of the scoping consultation;
 - iii. Regulation 23: Consultation on proposed Local Plan content and evidence;
 - iv. Regulation 24: Publication of summary of scoping consultation;
 - v. Regulation 27: Consultation on the proposed Local Plan before submission;
 - vi. Regulation 30: Publication of a summary of the proposed Local Plan consultation, and
 - vii. Regulation 88: Requirements for making specified documents available.
- 2.2. The Engagement Strategy has been prepared under Plan making regulations, and has regard to the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council's adopted SCI, the Council's equality commitments, national planning policy, and relevant Government guidance on the new plan-making system, including [Engaging the public when preparing a local plan](#).
- 2.3. This Strategy has also been informed by the Council's [Equality Plan 2025-2027](#) and the [Resident Engagement Framework Equality Impact Assessment](#) prepared for the Resident Engagement Framework. These documents emphasise the need to understand Slough's communities, remove barriers to participation, engage with diverse communities and those who represent them and use evidence to improve future engagement.
- 2.4. The strategy will remain draft until adopted by the council.

3. Understanding Slough's boundaries and strategic location

- 3.1 Slough occupies a strategically important location within the Thames Valley and the wider South East. The borough sits between Greater London and the Thames Valley, close to Heathrow Airport, with major transport corridors including the M4, M25, M40 and rail connections.
- 3.2 These relationships shape how the Local Plan needs to engage with neighboring authorities, infrastructure providers, businesses and strategic partners.

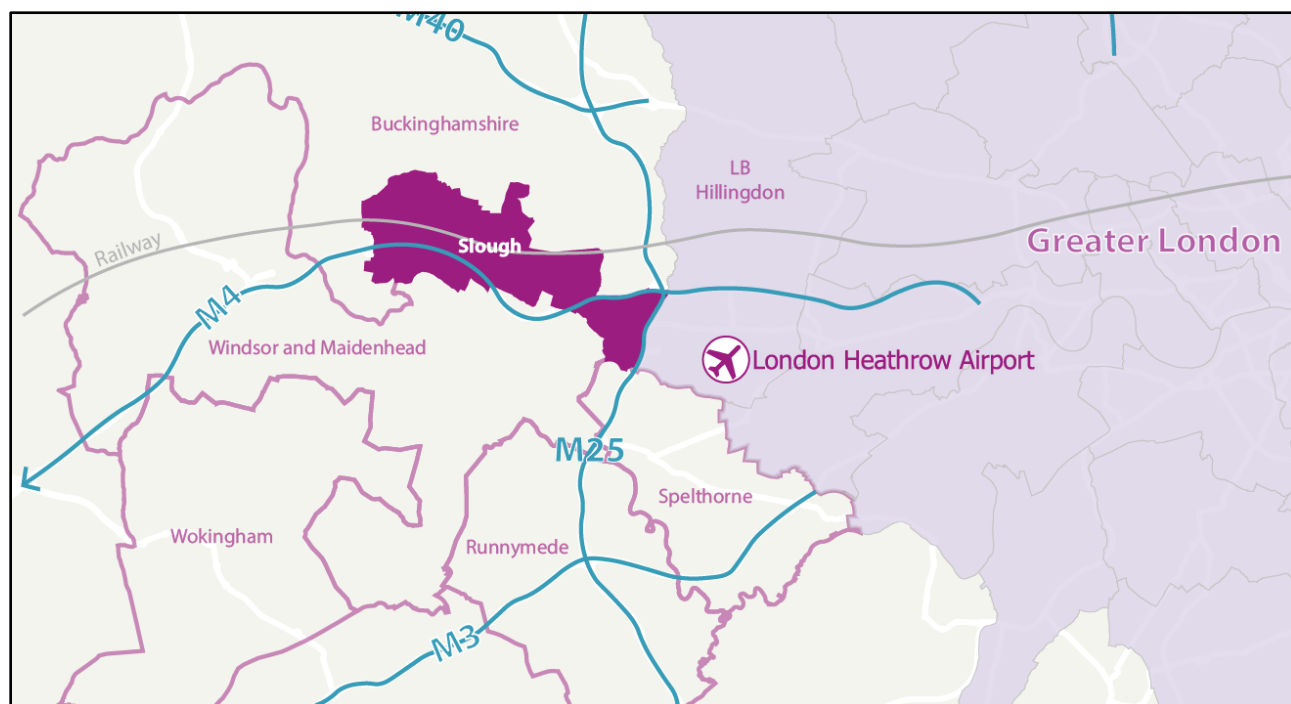


Figure 1: Slough in its wider strategic context

- 3.3 Slough Borough shares boundaries and strategic relationships with Buckinghamshire Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the London Borough of Hillingdon and Spelthorne Borough Council. The Council will engage, consult or notify infrastructure providers, transport bodies, environmental bodies, health and education partners and landowners where strategic or cross-boundary issues arise as prescribed in regulations. Statutory partners who are required to be notified of engagement the Plan

4. Understanding Slough's communities

- 4.1 Engagement methods must respond to the character of Slough. The borough has a young, diverse and digitally connected population, a strong economy and significant opportunities, but also faces major challenges including housing need, overcrowding, infrastructure pressures, environmental quality, health inequalities and affordability.
- 4.2 The Council's [Equality Plan 2025-2027](#) describes Slough as a young, urban and highly diverse borough, shaped by migration, economic opportunity and significant population change. It also recognises inequalities linked to housing, health, income, access to services and opportunities for children and young people.
- 4.3 Engagement on the Local Plan's production must accommodate the needs of all residents, including these 'hard to reach groups' to support participation from a broad cross-section of Slough's communities.
- 4.4 The Strategy is intended to support the Equality Plan by working directly, or with advocates for, children and young people's needs, health and well-being, community and safety, as well as the day to day lived experience of Slough's diverse communities.
- 4.5 The engagement methods are chosen to suit our target audience for the stage we are at. This will include ensuring that documents are accessible, proportionate and locally relevant to reach new audiences whilst retaining existing audiences. We also want to enable digital methods where possible.
- 4.6 The Council's corporate communications team have supported the wording of this document.

5. What engagement will focus on

- 5.1 The engagement approach will focus on what is being consulted on at that time.
- 5.2 This consultation is the first stage of engagement under the new Local Plan process. It asks what the plan should contain (in a separate Scoping Matters Consultation document) and how the Council should engage people (this engagement strategy) as the plan is prepared. We are also consulting on elements of our evidence base.

6. Engagement principles

- 6.1 The eight principles below guide the way the Council will design and deliver Local Plan engagement. The Resident Engagement Framework Equality Impact Assessment identifies principles that are directly relevant to Local Plan engagement: coordinating activity to avoid duplication, inclusive participation, providing time and support, honesty and openness, and respect for participants. These principles are carried forward as set out in the proposed approach below.

							
Early	Inclusive	Accessible	Transparent	Meaningful	Proportionate	Continuous	Feedback-led
Early Engagement should take place before decisions are made, so views can influence the emerging vision, strategy and policies.	Inclusive The Council will seek to encourage participation from a wide range of communities and stakeholders, including people who may not usually respond to planning consultations.	Accessible The Council will aim to provide information clearly and make it available through digital and non-digital routes, with reasonable adjustments where needed.	Transparent The Council will seek to be clear about the purpose of each consultation, what can be influenced and how responses will be used.	Meaningful Engagement should ask focused questions and give people enough information to respond effectively.	Proportionate The scale and method of engagement will reflect the stage of plan-making, the communities affected and the issues being considered.	Continuous Engagement will not be limited to formal consultation stages. The Council will seek to maintain dialogue with key stakeholders throughout the process.	Feedback-led The Council will publish summaries explaining who was engaged, the main issues raised and how feedback has informed the Plan.

7. How the Council will engage

- 7.1 The Council will use a proportionate mix of digital, in-person, targeted and, where appropriate, printed and accessible material. The methods below will be selected according to the stage of plan-making, the audience being engaged and the issues being considered.
- 7.2 The new regulations provide autonomy for consultees to advise how they would like to be engaged. This is resource and cost intensive, but the Council will look into measures to allow automatic updates from when web pages are updated.
- 7.3 The Local Plan consultations have been set up on the SBC external facing website to all flow from one dedicated page on the council website. That will remain through the plan-making process, with information available from historical consultations available from that.

			
Digital engagement Consultation portal, web pages, email alerts, social media and digital explainers.	In-person engagement Drop-ins, exhibitions, workshops and attendance at local meetings or events.	Targeted engagement Focused outreach with young people, faith groups, community organisations, businesses and strategic partners, or those representing them.	Printed and accessible material Paper summaries and leaflets where appropriate.

7.4 Digital engagement methods

- i. Consultation portal for formal responses;
- ii. Council website and Local Plan pages;
- iii. Direct email notification to those on the Local Plan contact list;
- iv. Awareness raising through Slough's usual communication channels – e.g. social media and digital communications;
- v. Other methods that may become available, and as they are approved by the Council's IT or Communication Strategies.

7.5 In-person engagement

- i. Drop-in sessions and exhibitions;
- ii. Workshops on themes or areas;
- iii. Attendance at community or stakeholder meetings, and
- iv. Events at accessible venues including libraries and community buildings.

7.6 Targeted engagement

- i. Age or characteristic based engagement;
- ii. Interest based community group outreach;
- iii. Business and infrastructure provider discussions;
- iv. Neighbouring authority and strategic partner meetings, and

7.7 Printed and accessible material

These will be provided at minimum as per the Statement of Community Involvement.

- i. Paper copies of consultation materials at the Council's head office Observatory House;
- ii. Paper summaries and leaflets where appropriate;
- iii. Paper response forms, and
- iv. Alternative formats or translation support where appropriate.

7.8 Established networks for target audiences

- i. Residents - Where appropriate and possible, the Council will work through trusted community organisations, faith groups and local networks to raise awareness of consultation opportunities and encourage participation.
- ii. Specific and General Consultees
These will be consulted as per the regulations but also using additional contacts if able to raise awareness and forward plan engagement.
- iii. Members
These will be consulted as per the regulations but also using additional contacts if able to raise awareness and forward plan engagement.
- iv. Others
These will be consulted as per the regulations but also using additional contacts if able to raise awareness and to front load plan engagement.

8. Who the Council will engage

- 8.1 The Council will meet or exceed the requirements to engage statutory bodies and consultees. Where possible it will also engage residents or provide an explanation why it cannot do this (such as for legal reasons).
- 8.2 The Council's Local Planning Authority Planning Policy department will retain a discreet register of contacts. People and organisations can ask for themselves, or with permission from those they act on behalf of, to be added to or removed from the list by contacting PlanningPolicy@slough.gov.uk.
- 8.3 If the Council receives an automated reply that the email address does not exist it will remove the contact from our contact database.

Statutory bodies and prescribed consultees

- 8.4 The 2026 Regulations refer to specific and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include organisations such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. General consultation bodies may include, for example, voluntary and community organisations operating in Slough, organisations representing people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, and organisations representing business interests within the borough.
- 8.5 Some of the organisations listed below may also be specific or general consultation bodies for the purposes of the Regulations. However, the Council's engagement will not be limited to statutory or prescribed consultees. The Council will also seek views from other local communities, stakeholders and interested parties, including groups and organisations with local knowledge, service responsibilities, community links or an interest in how Slough changes over the plan period.

Local communities and stakeholders

- 8.6 This may include:
 - i. Residents and neighbourhood groups;
 - ii. Community and voluntary organisations;
 - iii. Faith or interest based organisations;
 - iv. Businesses, employers and business representative bodies;
 - v. Young people, schools, colleges and youth organisations;
 - vi. Health, education, community safety and infrastructure partners;
 - vii. Landowners, developers, agents and registered providers;
 - viii. Neighbouring authorities and strategic partners

Reaching under-represented groups

- 8.7 Response rates to work on the Plan since 2016 has indicated the Local Plan structure and content may not easily be of interest to most residents, and particularly hard to reach groups. Many people and organisations face time or interest barriers to participation and may be less likely to respond to formal planning consultations.
- 8.8 The Council as the Local Planning Authority will in plan making respect the autonomy of an individual to choose not to participate, but take reasonable steps to identify these barriers and use the experience of the Council's Corporate Communication team and their resident engagement board to support participation, identify gaps in existing contacts and support the inclusion of affected residents and communities.
- 8.9 The Council as the Local Planning Authority in plan-making may give particular attention to communities disproportionately impacted by policies in the plan such as spatial proximity to development, faith communities, residents for whom English is not a first language, young people, disabled residents, residents experiencing digital exclusion, and communities that may not be reached effectively through standard digital or written consultation methods.
- 8.10 The Council may use anonymous monitoring statistics such as visit rates to the Councils planning webpages, emails, other colleagues and engagement methods to check response rates.

Group	Potential barriers	Engagement response
Young people	Low awareness of planning; formal documents may not feel relevant or accessible to younger audiences.	Seek to share information with Resident Engagement group to raise awareness with schools, colleges, youth groups and others. Use of digital channels; short non-technical explanations, plain language and visual material.
Older residents	Digital exclusion; mobility or access barriers.	Work with Resident Engagement group to raise awareness Use paper material, accessible venues, local drop-ins, libraries and community venues where appropriate.
Disabled residents and people with long-term health conditions	Accessibility of venues, formats and online material.	Provide accessible documents, reasonable adjustments, accessible venues and alternative formats on request where appropriate.
Residents with limited English	Language barriers and confidence in written consultation.	Use plain English, work with established community representatives, add footer for translation on paper copies.
Minority ethnic, faith communities and migrant communities	Consultation may not reach trusted community networks. Language barriers, frequent movement between addresses and limited familiarity with the planning system may also affect participation.	Use community representatives, targeted outreach through community organisations, faith groups and local networks where appropriate. Use plain English and provide translation support as required.
Digitally excluded residents	Limited internet access or confidence using consultation portals.	Use printed summaries, paper response forms, telephone support and in-person assistance where appropriate.
Private renters and residents in temporary accommodation	Lower participation in place-based consultations and less time to engage.	Use community venues, service partners and concise materials that link planning issues to everyday concerns where appropriate.

Small businesses and employers	Limited time to engage with technical documents.	Work with existing networks to raise awareness, join existing sessions and offer resource such as business briefings, email updates, targeted roundtables and clear summaries of employment and infrastructure issues where appropriate.
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9. Accessibility, equality and data

Making Engagement Accessible

- 9.1 The Council will seek to make engagement accessible by using plain English, clear consultation material, digital and paper routes for responding, accessible venues and alternative formats where needed. Where possible, documents will be prepared so they can be read by assistive technology.

Equalities

- 9.2 The Council will take account of the [Equality Plan 2025-2027](#) and the [Resident Engagement Framework Equality Impact Assessment](#) when planning Local Plan engagement. This includes recognising the importance of children and young people, faith communities, residents with different language needs, disabled residents and communities experiencing health, housing or socio-economic inequalities.
- 9.3 The Council will consider the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty when designing and undertaking Local Plan engagement. Equalities considerations will help inform us how consultation material is prepared, how venues are selected, and how targeted engagement is undertaken with groups who may otherwise be under-represented.

Data and confidentiality

- 9.4 The Local Plan is a public process. Representations (formal written comments) that are duly made will be logged and considered. Personal information will be handled in accordance with data protection requirements. The Council will not normally publish personal contact details, but representations cannot be treated as confidential where they are considered in the plan-making process.
- 9.5 Privacy notices will be provided to advise how data provided will be used.

10. Engagement through the Local Plan process

- 10.1 The new plan-making process includes three formal consultation points and a series of Gateway stages. The Council will publicise each formal stage and publish consultation summaries explaining the engagement undertaken, the main issues raised and how the Council has considered feedback in preparing the Local Plan.

10.2 The Council will keep the Local Plan timetable under review. The current timetable is available on the Council website: [Timetable for the new Local Plan](#).

Stage	Engagement purpose	Example Engagement Methods
Regulation 20 Scoping Consultation	Seek early views on what the plan should contain and how engagement should take place.	Consultation portal, Local Plan webpages, direct mailshot email of notification, Council communications led social media, targeted community outreach. Publish in local paper.
Gateway 1 and Summary of Scoping Consultation	Publish the self-assessment summary and summarise how scoping responses have been considered.	Publish a record of the methods used and general summary of results on Council website. Consultation summaries and notifications to consultees and stakeholders.
Regulation 23 Proposed Content and Evidence	Consult on proposed plan content, evidence and emerging strategic choices.	Consultation portal, press release events, stakeholder briefings and targeted outreach.
Gateway 2	Publish observations or advice received from the appointed person.	Council website updates, publication of Gateway documents, email notifications and stakeholder communications.
Regulation 27 Proposed Local Plan	Consult on the proposed Local Plan intended for submission.	Formal consultation, consultation portal, exhibitions, public information events, stakeholder briefings and targeted engagement with affected communities.
Gateway 3 and Examination	Publish required documents and support public understanding of the examination process.	Publication of examination documents, website updates, notifications to consultees and public information material.
Adoption	Notify relevant parties and publish the adopted Local Plan and associated documents.	Publication of the adopted Local Plan, website updates, notifications to consultees and stakeholders, and public notices.

11. Governance, reporting and review

Officer and Member engagement

- 11.1 The Planning Policy Team will coordinate Local Plan engagement. Members will be engaged through briefings, Member bulletins, working groups and formal reports to Planning Committee, Cabinet and Full Council as appropriate. Ward Members will play an important role in raising awareness of engagement opportunities and helping the Council understand local issues affecting their communities.
- 11.2 An all-party Member group will be formed and convened for Member engagement in the plan content and process.

Strategic and cross-boundary engagement

- 11.3 The Council will seek to maintain dialogue with neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and prescribed bodies on matters that may affect more than one authority area, including housing, transport, infrastructure, employment, environmental matters and the implications of Heathrow Airport and wider strategic planning activity.
- 11.4 It will classify the bodies and hold one main named contact, with supplementary contacts if requested.

Reviewing Engagement

- 11.5 The Council will review duly made and other informal representations after each formal consultation stage to understand what engagement took place, who was reached, the main issues raised and what could be improved for future stages.
- 11.6 It may publish the name of a contact who made the comment. It may also publish the name of the company / organisation along with details of representations made.

12. Measuring success

- 12.1 The Council may monitor:
- the number and type of consultation responses received;
 - the range of organisations and communities engaged;
 - the use of digital and non-digital response methods;
 - whether further steps may be needed to support participation by under-represented groups;
 - the issues raised and how they have been considered in plan preparation; and
 - lessons learned for the next stage of engagement.
- 12.2 The Council will publish a summary of the comments received together with an explanation of how those comments have informed the subsequent stage of plan preparation. Consultation summaries will explain the engagement undertaken, the main issues raised and how the Council has considered feedback in preparing the Local Plan. Where suggestions have not been taken forward, the Council will seek to explain the reasons for its decision where appropriate.

- 12.3 The Council, where necessary, may use optional equalities monitoring questions in consultation activity to help understand whether engagement is reaching a broad range of communities. This information may be used to identify potential under-representation and inform future engagement activity.
- 12.4 The Council will also seek to use feedback from consultation activity to support wider resident engagement outcomes, including keeping residents informed, showing how concerns have been considered, improving understanding of choices taken and decisions made.

13. Summary

- 13.1 The Draft Engagement Strategy sets out how the council proposes to engage with residents, businesses and stakeholders throughout the plan-making process.

The current consultation

- 13.2 The consultation on the draft Engagement strategy is supported by the following consultations. We welcome your support and comments on any or all of the following documents.

Click on this [link](#) to find out more

- i. **Scoping Matters Document and Draft Engagement Strategy**– the Scoping Document identifies the key planning issues, opportunities and priorities for the new Local Plan.
- ii. **Draft Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Methodology**– explains how potential development sites will be identified and assessed.
- iii. **Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals**– evidence to inform the Local Plan and future conservation work.
- iv. **Call for Sites 2026**– invites submissions of land that may have development potential or other future uses.

How to take part

- 13.3 Comments can be submitted:

- i. Through the Council's consultation portal
- ii. By email to planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk
- iii. By post to the Planning Policy Team.

Future consultations

- 13.4 Details of future consultation stages are set out in the Local Plan timetable. Previous consultations and engagement are available [here](#) .

Appendix A: Consultation questions

The Council is seeking views on this draft Strategy as part of the Regulation 20 Scoping Matters Consultation document. The following questions may help respondents comment on the proposed approach:

The Council will continue to apply the Statement of Community Involvement until it is replaced.

1. Are the proposed engagement principles and overall approach clear and appropriate?
2. Are there any additional ways the Council should engage communities and stakeholders?
3. Are there groups or communities that may find it harder to participate in Local Plan engagement?
4. What reasonable steps could the Council take to help those groups engage?
5. How can the Council encourage more people and organisations to take part in Local Plan consultations?

Contact: PlanningPolicy@slough.gov.uk