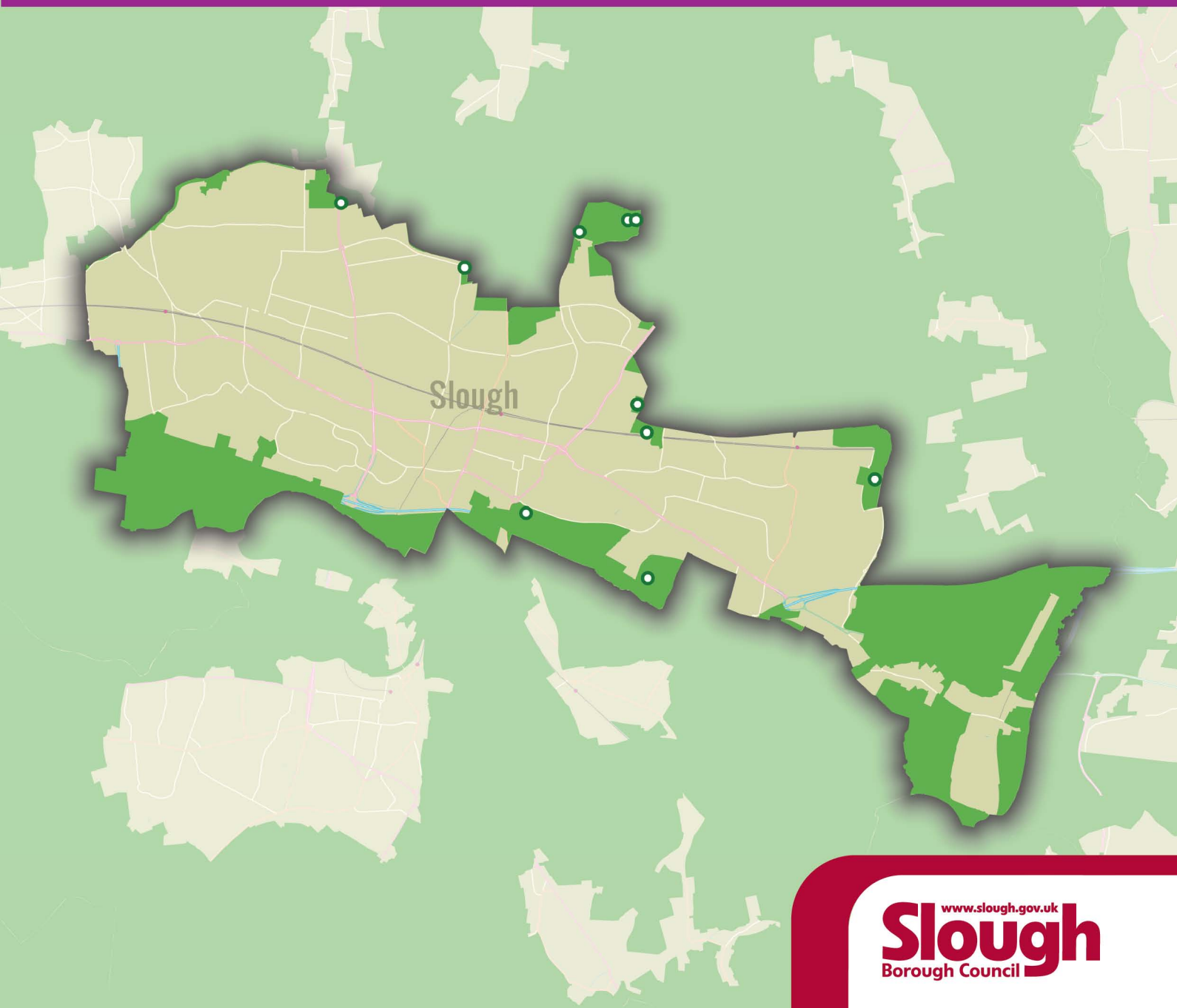


Proposed Release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing

November 2021

Local Plan for Slough (Regulation 18 Consultation)



Local Plan for Slough Borough Council

The Proposed Release of Green Belt Site for Family Housing

Regulation 18 Consultation

5th November – 17th December 2021

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Foreword:

All of us who live in Slough know that there is a huge need for additional family homes in our towns. We want our families to be able to grow up and prosper in our town and ensure we have family homes for them to move into. Slough Borough Council is developing a Local Plan, a document which helps to guide development in the Borough until 2040 which has identified a shortfall of around 5,000 houses, and a particular need for more family homes of 3 bedrooms or more.



We've been working for a number of months looking at the available land and have concluded there are no reasonable options which could accommodate this demand within the town's remaining brownfield sites (which are more suited to high density, flatted development, given their proximity to the town centre and transport links). This has led the council to consider the potential (and I stress potential) release of 10 sites within the green belt to provide much needed family sized housing.

I know that development in the green belt can be an emotive issue and raises significant concerns within our communities. It is for this reason that we want to hear your views by carrying out a Preferred Options Consultation before making any decisions on what development proposals, if any, are in the green belt should be included in the Local Plan. It is important that we hear your views and are able to assess them in tandem with technical and policy information. Any potential future release from the green belt will need to be fully justified.

You will notice the 10 sites identified in this consultation have been given an initial traffic light system as to their potential appropriateness. Just because a site is highlighted as green **does not** mean that it will definitely be released, but rather that it is considered a suitable site for an 'urban extension' which is one of the most sustainable forms of development due to the nearness of local amenities, links to public transport and schools.

As I've said, the council is not taking this decision lightly and it will have to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify any development on these sites – and one of the purposes of this consultation is to help gather evidence about what other constraints there may be to developing the sites.

This public consultation is an important opportunity for the council to receive and take into account your views on potential options for development in the green belt and I would urge local residents and groups, businesses, organisations, landowners and developers to take part in this public consultation.

Councillor Cllr Pavitar Mann
Cabinet Member for Housing, Highways, Planning and Place

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1 About this Consultation

- 1.1 The Council is consulting people about the proposal to release some sites in Slough from the Green Belt so that they can be developed for family housing. As a result we would like your views as to whether the ten sites that we have identified are suitable for housing.
- 1.2 It is recognised that Green Belt boundaries should be permanent and so it will be necessary to demonstrate that “exceptional circumstances” exist before any changes to the Green Belt can be made.
- 1.3 It should be noted that this consultation is only about the possible release of land for housing. Any proposals for the use of Green Belt land for any other purpose will be considered at a later date as part of the Local Plan process.
- 1.4 The consultation period runs for 6 weeks from 5th November to 17th December 2021. All responses must be received before the close of the consultation at 5pm.
- 1.5 If possible responses should be submitted using the online form at www.slough.citizenspace.com. The questions can also be found on the following link: www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy
- 1.6 Those not using the online form should submit representations:
 - via email to: SpatialStrategy@slough.gov.uk
 - via post to: Planning Policy (GB), Slough Borough Council, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Rd, Slough SL1 2EL.
- 1.7 If you have any queries relating to the consultation please contact the Planning

Policy team using the contact details above.

2 Why are we consulting about releasing Green Belt for family housing?

- 2.1 All Councils have a duty to produce a Local Plan which contains proposals and policies for the future spatial planning of the area. We are in the process of producing one for Slough which will cover the period up to 2040.
- 2.2 One of the Objectives of the Local Plan is “to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need of 893 dwellings within the Borough or as close as possible to where the need arises within a balanced housing market” Although the precise number may vary (currently 864) it is clear that there is a genuine need for more housing in Slough.
- 2.3 All of the work that we have done on the Local Plan through the *Issues and Options* and *Proposed Spatial Strategy* consultations has shown that there is a shortage of land for residential development in Slough and a shortage of sites suitable for new family housing in particular.
- 2.4 As a result we have been trying to promote “*the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.*” In practise this would involve the development of Green Belt land in adjacent Council areas. The Planning Process places a ‘Duty to Co-operate’ on all parties involved to address the matter.
- 2.5 As part of this process we have to make sure that we have “left no stone unturned” in our search for deliverable housing sites within the Borough. This means that we have to first consider releasing Green Belt sites in Slough for

housing before asking our neighbours to meet some of Slough's need.

- 2.6 One of the advantages of this is that it is financially viable for greenfield sites have to provide lower density family housing with a higher proportion of affordable

housing than brownfield sites can deliver. Because of the importance of Green Belt, sites can only be released from the Green Belt through the Local Plan process which is explained below.

Figure 1 Consultation stages



3 The Local Plan for Slough

- 3.1 The starting point for the preparation of the Local Plan for Slough (2016 – 2040) was the *Issues and Options* consultation which took place in 2017. This identified a number of options for development. One of these was Option H: “The release of Green Belt land for housing”. There were a number of objections to the principle of the loss of Green Belt land and to the ten possible sites that were identified in the consultation document.

- 3.2 The main conclusion from the consultation was that there were no reasonable options or combination of options which could accommodate all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough.

- 3.3 An “emerging” proposed Spatial Strategy

was agreed in 2018 which took this into account. One of the main focuses of this was how the Local Plan could accommodate the proposed expansion of Heathrow with a third runway as this had a significant impact on land use in Colnbrook and Poyle in the east of the Borough.

- 3.4 Once it became clear that the proposed third runway was not going to go ahead in the short to medium term, a revised Proposed Spatial Strategy was produced. This was the subject of public consultation in November 2020.

- 3.5 This proposed to deliver most of the necessary growth through the major comprehensive redevelopment of the “centre of Slough”. Another component of the Strategy involved “selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development.” Part of this could involve

green field or Green Belt land being released for housing.

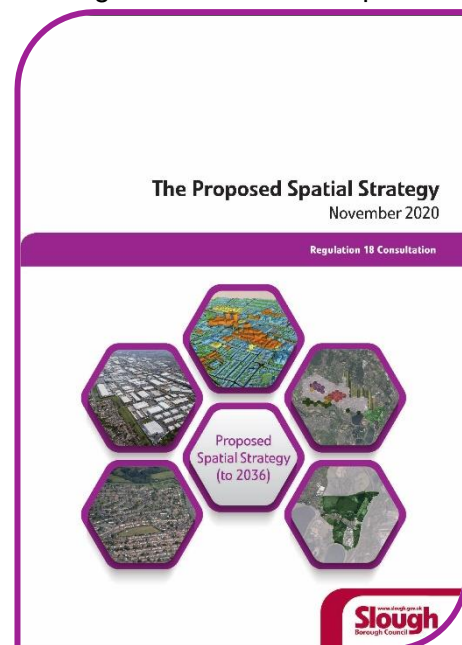
- 3.6 The same ten possible sites from the Issues and Options document were identified for consultation. No details or assessments were included at this stage and it was made clear that further consultation would have to take place before any proposals could be made to release sites from the Green Belt for housing.
- 3.7 It was also suggested that any decision would have to take account of the results of Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth Study which is assessing the potential for developing major sites for housing in and around Slough.
- 3.8 One of the questions asked in the Spatial Strategy consultation was *“If you think that more homes should be built in Slough to meet local needs where should it be?”*. There was a range of responses but only around 10% of respondents thought that Green Belt sites on the edge of Slough should be released for housing. There were also objections to the specific sites that were identified in the consultation. At the same time only around 40% of respondents thought it was appropriate to plan for a shortfall of housing in Slough and promote the cross border expansion instead.
- 3.9 The various stages in the preparation of the Local Plan are set out in Figure 1, but the exact timing is under review

4 Why is there a need for more housing in Slough?

- 4.1 The Government requires Local Plans to make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development. (NPPF para

20) to meet the needs of the population over the long term.

- 4.2 The Government puts particular emphasis upon meeting housing needs and has produced a “standard” methodology for calculating what they are in each Local Plan area using household projections and an ‘affordability ratio’. This currently produces a need for an average of 864 dwellings a year in Slough.
- 4.3 The Spatial Strategy Consultation Document (November 2020) identified that the proposed Strategy could result in a shortfall of 5,000 homes in Slough. This was based upon a slightly higher annual need figure of 893 and the supply of housing sites identified in April 2020.



- 4.4 The most recent annual housing figures have reduced need in Slough slightly, and some new sites have been identified, but the rate of house building has remained low with just 501 completions last year. In addition, as a result of responses to the public consultation, it has been acknowledged that the end of the Local Plan period needs to be extended from 2036 to 2040. This means that another four years supply of housing has to be found.

- 4.5 The Housing Trajectory includes sites with planning permission, allocations and sites that could potentially be developed for residential use. The latest version identifies around 12,000 dwellings mostly in flatted development. This is well below the number needed to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need over the Local Plan period up to 2040.
- 4.6 As a result it is clear that there will continue to be a shortfall of at least 5,000 houses in Slough over the Plan period which requires us to consider the release of Green Belt land to try to reduce this.

5 Why is there a need for more family housing in Slough?

- 5.1 There is currently a mismatch between the type of housing that is needed to meet the needs of Slough residents and the type of new housing that is being built. This is resulting in overcrowding, people living in unsuitable accommodation and families having to move out of the Borough. As a result it is difficult to create a stable balanced community and the Local Plan Objective of enabling people to be able to “stay” in Slough if they want to.
- 5.2 In addition to meeting the overall numbers, paragraph 62 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that “the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. In order to do this a Local Housing Needs Assessment was produced by GL Hearn in October 2019 on behalf of Windsor & Maidenhead, South Bucks and Slough.
- 5.3 This showed that for market housing in Slough, the overwhelming requirement was for larger units with a need of 57% of the supply as 3 bedroomed houses and 20% as 4 or more bedroomed houses. The need for larger affordable housing for rent was not as high, but still constituted 29%.
- 5.4 Monitoring shows that around 80% of the dwellings built in Slough in the first five years of the Plan period were flats. Looking forward only around 6% of dwellings with planning permission are for houses.
- 5.5 This is reflected in research which has shown that the average size of residential properties built in Slough over the last three years is 68m² which is almost half the size of those built in South Bucks which is 132m². This is despite the fact that the average household size in Slough (2.8) is higher than South Bucks (2.6). It also helps to explain why Slough has some of the highest levels of overcrowding with each person having on average 27.2 m² of space compared to an average of 36.5m² in other towns and cities.
- 5.6 In order to address this problem the Core Strategy and proposed Spatial Strategy seeks to protect the existing stock of family accommodation by preventing the redevelopment or subdivision of housing for flats. This will not meet demand and so there needs to be an increase in the supply of new family homes.

6 Is there a need for more affordable housing in Slough?

- 6.1 Slough has a significant shortage of affordable housing. In March 2021 there were 1,911 households on the Council’s Waiting List. Whilst only around 10% of these need 4 or 5 bedroomed houses, there is an extreme shortage of these larger homes with very few becoming available to rent. Indeed in 2020/21 only four units of this size were able to be let

to new tenants which means that these large households can have up to a 5 year wait to get the accommodation that they need.

6.2 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF states that Local Plans should set out the types and level of affordable housing that is needed. Core Policy 4 of the Core Strategy states that all sites with 15 or more dwellings will be required to provide between 30% and 40% of the dwellings as social rented along with other forms of affordable housing. It has not, however, been possible to obtain this level of affordable housing on sites because development will only proceed if it is viability and a developer can make a reasonable return on investment. As a result we have had to grant planning permission on some brownfield sites which have not provided any affordable housing at all.

6.3 This has resulted in an average of around 50 affordable units a year being provided during the first five years of the Local Plan period. Previous peak building rates for affordable housing has happened when there has been a supply of greenfield land.

6.4 Viability is not an issue when developing greenfield sites because they do not have a high existing use value and the cost of building can be lower than on previously developed sites. As a result, it will be possible to obtain a much higher proportion of affordable housing upon any sites that are released from the Green Belt.

6.5 The NPPF also requires plans to identify land for self or custom build homes. The Self Build Register in Slough currently has requests for a building plot from over 200 people. It is not possible to allocate plots for self-build within flatted schemes and so the only opportunity for doing this is likely to be on greenfield sites where

houses rather than flats are being built. More recent Government Policy is requiring the provision of a new type of affordable housing called 'First Homes'. The initial implications of that will also need to be assessed and integrated.

6.6 As a result it can be seen that there is a need for a more balance housing market in Slough which meets one of the main aims of the Local Plan which is to make it a place where people want to "work, rest, play and stay".

7 Are there any alternatives to releasing Green Belt land for housing?

7.1 Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development.

7.2 As a result it is necessary to demonstrate whether the Local Plan strategy:

- a) Makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- b) Optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of the Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport;
- c) Has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they

could accommodate some of the identified need for development.

7.3 These matters have been considered through the Issues and Options consultation (2017) and the consultation on the Spatial Strategy (2020). The key conclusion from the Issues and Options consultation was that there was no reasonable option, or combination of options that could accommodate all of Slough's needs within the Borough boundary.

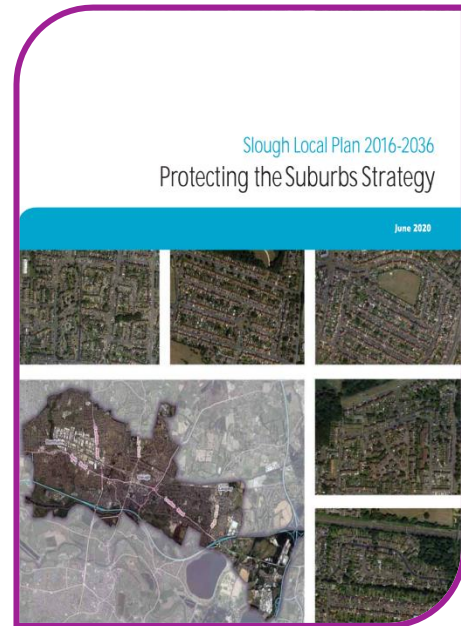
7.4 Taking this into account the proposed Spatial Strategy has the following key components:

- **Delivering** major comprehensive redevelopment within the "Centre of Slough"
- **Selecting** other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;
- **Enhancing** our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;
- **Protecting** the "Strategic Gap" between Slough and Greater London;
- **Promoting** the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

7.5 A large proportion of the proposed growth will take place in the Centre of Slough. The rest of the town is already highly developed. The need to retain Existing Business Areas means that it has not been possible to identify very many selected key locations for major housing development. There is a shortage of public open space and so it is not proposed to identify any more of this for development.

7.6 The only other scope for major new housing would be to redevelop the suburban housing areas. The Spatial

Strategy does not propose to do this because of the need to promote healthy, inclusive and safe communities and retain the existing stock of family housing. The "Protecting the Suburbs" report (2020) showed why it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost.



7.7 As a result it can be demonstrated that there is no suitable underutilised major brownfield land in Slough that hasn't already been identified for housing and optimum use is being made of the existing housing stock.

7.8 Paragraph 125 of the NPPF states that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. As a result it states that Local Plans should include minimum density standards for town centres which should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development.

7.9 The Core Strategy sets out an indicative density range for different location in

Slough. This states that densities should be between 35 and 55 dwellings per hectare in the suburban areas, between 40 and 75 dwellings per hectare in the urban areas and above 70 dwellings per hectare in the town centre.

- 7.10 Development within the Centre of Slough has significantly exceeded this density with some schemes up to ten times higher than the minimum. Whilst these very high densities have delivered the maximum number of dwellings possible they have not produced the range of housing that is required in Slough.
- 7.11 Part of the Spatial Strategy involves promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs. Discussions with neighbouring authorities about meeting some of Slough's unmet housing need have not so far been very successful. One of the reasons is that this would also involve releasing Green Belt land for housing.
- 7.12 As a result it can be seen that the proposal to release Green Belt land in Slough for family housing has been brought forward as a last resort after making as much use as possible of brownfield sites, optimising the density of development and exploring the possibility of building outside of the Borough.

8 How have the possible housing sites been selected?

- 8.1 The ten sites that could possibly be released from the Green Belt were first identified in the Issues and Options consultation document (2017).
- 8.2 This noted that the largest area of Green Belt in the Borough is in Colnbrook and Poyle. This was not considered suitable for new housing because it is subject to a number of environmental constraints and the Government announced its support for a third runway in this location which makes it even less appropriate for housing.
- 8.3 The area of Green Belt south of the M4 in Slough was considered unsuitable for housing development because it contained the Jubilee river and the sewage works as well as having poor access and is mostly liable to flood.
- 8.4 A number of other pockets of Green Belt were also scoped out because they were not considered suitable for residential development for a variety of reasons such as their existing land use (e.g. education, cemetery, allotment, utility infrastructure, public open space); fundamental constraints such as flood risk or designated ecological value, or major utilities underground.
- 8.5 As a result, the ten possible sites identified in the Issues and Options consultation were:
- St Anthony's Field, Farnham Road;
 - Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street;
 - Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street;
 - Land east of Wexham Park Hospital;
 - North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane;
 - Land east of Rochfords Gardens;
 - Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road;
 - Land East of Market Lane;
 - Land south of Castlevue Road (south of Bleheim Rd)
 - Upton Court Farm; Upton Court Road
- 8.6 It should be noted that no detailed work was carried out about possible constraints

to the development of the sites. The consultation document also recognised that they could be subject to policy constraints. These included Bloom Park being public open space, the Castlevue site being part of a Historic Park and Garden, Market Lane being within the Colne Valley Park and Strategic Gap and St Anthony's Field having a role in the prevention of the coalescence of settlements.

- 8.7 The Spatial Strategy consultation document (2020) included the same ten sites as potential housing sites. It should be noted that the site south of Castlevue Road was renamed as being south of Blenheim Road since this is a more accurate description of its location. No further assessments of these sites had been carried out at this stage and the document reiterated that consideration would have to be given to strategic policies and local designations.
- 8.8 No new possible "Omission" housing sites within Green Belt were identified through the Spatial Strategy consultation exercise apart from some in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. As a result these ten sites have been brought forward for assessment as part of this consultation exercise.
- 8.9 One of the key elements of the proposed Spatial Strategy was "protecting the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London". As a result the assumptions about not building any housing in the Colnbrook and Poyle area remained. This strategy would also effectively safeguard land from being developed which could be needed for the expansion of the airport in the future.
- 8.10 As a result no possible housing sites have been identified in the Colnbrook and Poyle area in this consultation document. Any comments upon this would be

welcomed and any proposals that do come forward for the release of sites from the Green Belt will be considered against the criteria for site selection.

9 What criteria will be used for deciding which Green Belt sites could be released for housing?

- 9.1 There are a number of factors that have to be taken into account in deciding whether sites are suitable for housing or not. Some of these relate to Green Belt factors others do not as explained below.

Green Belt Considerations

- 9.2 All of the sites that have been identified as possible housing sites are in the Green Belt. Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 9.3 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF explains that the Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 9.4 All of the sites have a Green Belt function and so it will eventually be necessary to carry out a full Green Belt assessment to determine whether there are the

necessary “exceptional circumstances” to justify making changes to the Green Belt boundary. In the meantime some Green Belt criteria, such as the need to check sprawl and prevent settlements from merging, can be used for assessing the potential housing sites.

- 9.5 Paragraph 141 of the NPPF describes some of the beneficial uses of Green Belt land. This includes providing access and opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation as well as retaining landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity. All of these factors can be included in the site selection process.
- 9.6 Paragraph 146 of the NPPF gives examples of how Green Belt land can be improved by looking for opportunities to provide access; provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity, biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. The potential impact upon any of these existing features can also be used as part of the site selection process.
- 9.7 Finally Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt.

Other Site Selection Criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework

- 9.8 There are a number of other factors that have to be taken into account in order to ensure that any proposed development is

sustainable. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the basic principle that:

“all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects”.

- 9.9 Paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless they are surplus or being replaced with better provision.
- 9.10 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that in allocating sites for development in plans, it should be ensured that there are appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes and a safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved.
- 9.11 Paragraph 159 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development, such as housing, should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding.
- 9.12 Paragraph 175 of the NPPF states that plans should allocate sites with the least environmental or amenity value. This should be achieved by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils and recognising the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland (174).
- 9.13 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF explains that Heritage assets, including sites and buildings of local historic value, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 9.14 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that

Local Planning Authorities should not permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working.

Local Planning Policies

- 9.15** Existing and emerging local planning policies reflect those set out in the NPPF. There are, however, some additional strategic designations which need to be taken into account. The most important are the policies in the Core Strategy and emerging Spatial Strategy which seek to protect the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London and the Colne Valley Regional Park.
- 9.16** The site selection process also has to take account of one of the elements of the proposed Spatial Strategy which is to promote the cross border expansion of Slough to meet local housing needs. This will be informed by the Wider Area Growth Study which was originally jointly commissioned by Windsor & Maidenhead, South Bucks and Slough. Part 2 of this study, which is being carried out by Stantec, is due to be published in the coming months.
- 9.17** The Spatial Strategy also seeks to safeguard the proposed third runway at Heathrow which remains as Government policy as set out in the Airports National Policy Statement.

Conclusion

- 9.18** All the above criteria have been taken into account in coming to our initial conclusions about the suitability of sites for development for family housing. Full details of the site selection criteria and how they have been applied to individual sites are set out in Part 2 of the report.
- 9.19** One of the purposes of this consultation is

to seek views as to whether the correct criteria have been used to assess the sites, and the weight given to them is appropriate and suitable.

10 Sustainability Appraisal

- 10.1** All elements of the Local Plan have to be informed throughout its preparation by a Sustainability Appraisal. This demonstrates how the plan has balanced the relevant economic social and environmental objectives and considered alternative options which could reduce significant adverse impacts upon these objectives.
- 10.2** An addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Spatial Strategy has been produced which considers the proposed Release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing. This does not assess individual sites at this stage but assesses the extent to which the principle of developing greenfield sites to meet local housing needs meets the Sustainability Objectives. As a result this can be used to inform the decision making process.
- 10.3** The Sustainability Appraisal Report is available to view and comment upon and will be subject to public consultation for a six week period as part of the overall consultation exercise.
- 10.4** An Equalities Impact Assessment will also be available.

11 What are the initial conclusions?

- 11.1** All of the sites have been subject to a high level assessment of their suitability for family housing. It should be noted that further detailed technical assessments will be needed. One of the

purposes of the consultation is to help gather evidence about what other constraints there may be to developing the sites.

- 11.2 All of the sites constitute an extension of the existing urban area, which are considered to be one of the most sustainable forms of development once all opportunities for the reuse of brownfield land have been used up.
- 11.3 None of the sites have any particular landscape value and they are not subject to any biodiversity or ecological designations. As a result there are no known fundamental constraints to development in these respects but they will have to be subject to detailed surveys
- 11.4 All of the sites contain potentially developable land that is not constrained by flood risk.
- 11.5 The key factors which distinguish the sites are the impact upon the wider Green Belt in terms of physical and visual sprawl, the impact upon the coalescence of settlements, the loss of public or private open space and the impact upon historical assets
- 11.6 In order to help inform the consultation, each site has been given a preliminary “traffic light” assessment to indicate whether they are considered “suitable”, “possible” or “unsuitable” for housing development. The locations of the sites are in the Figure 2.

“GREEN” Suitable

- 1. Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street;
- 2. Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street;
- 3. Land east of Wexham Park Hospital;
- 4. Land east of Rochfords Gardens;

- 5. Upton Court Farm;

“AMBER” Possible

- 6. Land East of Market Lane;
- 7. Land south of Blenheim Road

“RED” Unsuitable

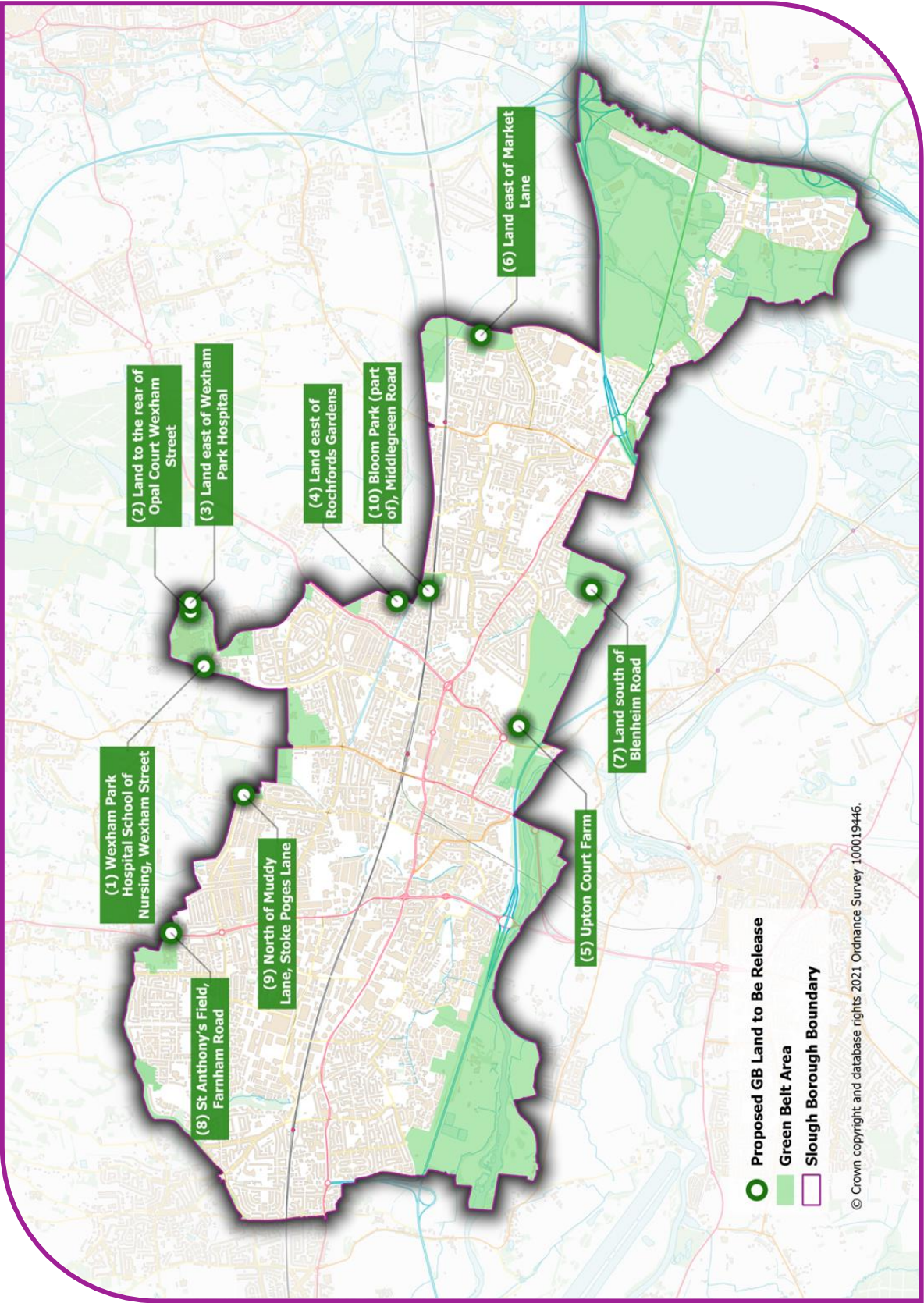
- 8. St Anthony’s Field, Farnham Road;
- 9. North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane;
- 10. Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road;
- All other areas of Green Belt land

- 11.7 More information can be found in the Site Details section in Part 2 of this document but the main conclusions are as follows:

Red - Unsuitable sites

- 11.8 The development of **St Anthony’s Field** would have a significant visual impact upon the small gap between Slough and Farnham Royal resulting in the merging of the two settlements. It would also have an impact upon the adjoining Conservation Area. It is for these reasons that the site is considered to be “**unsuitable**” for housing development.
- 11.9 Building upon part of **Bloom Park** would result in the loss of public open space. This is considered to be sufficient reason to make this an “**unsuitable**” site for housing development.
- 11.10 The site **North of Muddy Lane** is part of the Singh Sabha sports centre playing field. The site consists of a strip of land along the Stoke Road frontage which is not delineated on the ground in any way. This, and the loss of private open space, is considered to make this an “**unsuitable**” site for housing development.

Figure 2 Plan of proposed sites to be released from the Green Belt for family housing (see Part 2 for individual sites)



Amber – sites possibly suitable for family housing

- 11.11 The land east of **Market Lane** is part of the Colne Valley Park and forms part of the Strategic Gap between Slough and greater London. It is very visible with no clearly defined boundary. As a result any development could be described as “sprawl”.
- 11.12 The site was identified for possible housing development in the Slough Northern Extension study produced by Atkins in 2017. It also forms part of the area of search for major housing development in the Wider Area Growth Study which is being produced by Stantec. As a result it remains as a “possible” housing site but it is considered that it should only come forward as part of a wider comprehensive development where a full mitigation package can be provided. This will include the necessary infrastructure to make the development sustainable and include compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land.
- 11.13 The land south of Blenheim Road is adjacent to the recent Kings Reach housing development which was released from the Green Belt for housing development in the 2004 Local Plan for Slough. One of the reasons why the proposed site was not allocated for housing at that time was that it formed part of the designated Ditton Park Historic Park and Garden. Any harm or loss of a designated heritage asset such as a registered park and garden should require exceptional, clear and convincing justification.
- 11.14 The site is not in the same ownership as the rest of the park and has no discernible historic features. As a result it remains as

a “**possible**” housing site provided heritage objections can be overcome with suitable mitigation.

Green – Sites suitable for family housing

- 11.15 There are no fundamental policy objections to the development of the cluster of sites around Wexham Park Hospital. Land to the south was released from the Green Belt in the 2004 Local Plan and the three proposed sites would result in the rounding off of development in the area.
- 11.16 As a result Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street; Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street; and Land east of Wexham Park Hospital are considered to be “suitable” for housing development.
- 11.17 Land east of Rochfords Gardens is a natural infilling site because it is surrounded by development on three sides. It is field with no intrinsic qualities. As a result it is considered to be a “suitable” site for housing development.
- 11.18 The land at Upton Court Farm is a partly underutilised site close to the centre of Slough. It has a number of buildings on the northern side fronting Upton Court Road and is well contained. As a result, on balance, this is considered to be a “**suitable**” site for residential development.

Additional general requirements

- 11.19 Some of the requirements for individual sites have been set out in part 2 of this document.
- 11.20 It should be noted that the sites have not been the subject of detailed site technical assessments at this stage. It is

recognised that some of them may have access issues and parts of some of them are liable to flood.

11.21 As most of the sites are greenfield they have a low existing use value compared to developed sites. This means that the total cost of development, combined with a reasonable receipt for the land owner and profit for the developer, will not be above the end value of the development.

11.22 Land owners and prospective purchasers should take this into account and ensure that any proposals include policy compliant levels of affordable housing. This should include a wide range of products such as social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership and low cost home ownership housing. It will also be necessary to make provision or fund all infrastructures necessary to support new housing.

11.23 Proposed developments should only consist of family homes which are larger than those which are typically provided elsewhere. This means that a range of 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses would have to be provided in the form of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes. They should have gardens and generally provide on-site car parking.

11.24 It will also be very important for any development to be high quality design, address climate change and provide all of the necessary facilities and mitigation measures to make the development acceptable.

11.25 Detailed requirements will be set out in any site allocations made in the Local Plan. What is the process for releasing Green Belt land?

11.26 Although the site assessments have taken account of some elements of Green Belt policy, they have not addressed the

fundamental issue of the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As a result they will have to be subject to a Green Belt Assessment. This will have to consider the impact upon the Green Belt in terms of the loss of openness and the impact upon the five purposes of having Green Belt which are:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

11.27 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts which are to be regarded as permanent. Paragraph 140 of the NPPF states that "Green Belts should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans".

11.28 There is no definition as to what constitutes "exceptional Circumstances" but the Courts have found that "In principle, a shortage of housing land when compared to the needs of an area is capable of amounting to very special circumstances".

11.29 The final decision as to whether it is justifiable to allocate Green Belt sites for housing in Slough will have to be made through the Local Plan process once we have taken into account a number of factors.

11.30 Firstly we will have to consider the response to the public consultation. Secondly we will have to carry out all of

the necessary detailed technical work to ensure that the proposed housing can be delivered. Thirdly we will have to compile further evidence, including a detailed updated Housing Capacity Study, to confirm that we have left “no stone unturned” in our search for alternative ways of providing housing, including family housing.

11.31 It will also be necessary to identify ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land.

11.32 Finally we will have to decide whether the release of Green Belt land in Slough is the most sustainable form of development for the Local Plan to promote in order to meet the objective of meeting a range of housing needs.

11.33 It should be noted that because the provision of family and affordable housing would be a critical factor in deciding whether the necessary “exceptional circumstances” exist, sites will only be released from the Green Belt at the stage a planning permission is granted. This will ensure that all of the requirements have been met and necessary mitigation has been secured. Detailed policies setting out what the requirements would be for any site will be included in the Local Plan.

the suitability of the sites but would like your views on any aspect of this. We have set out some questions in Appendix A for people to answer.

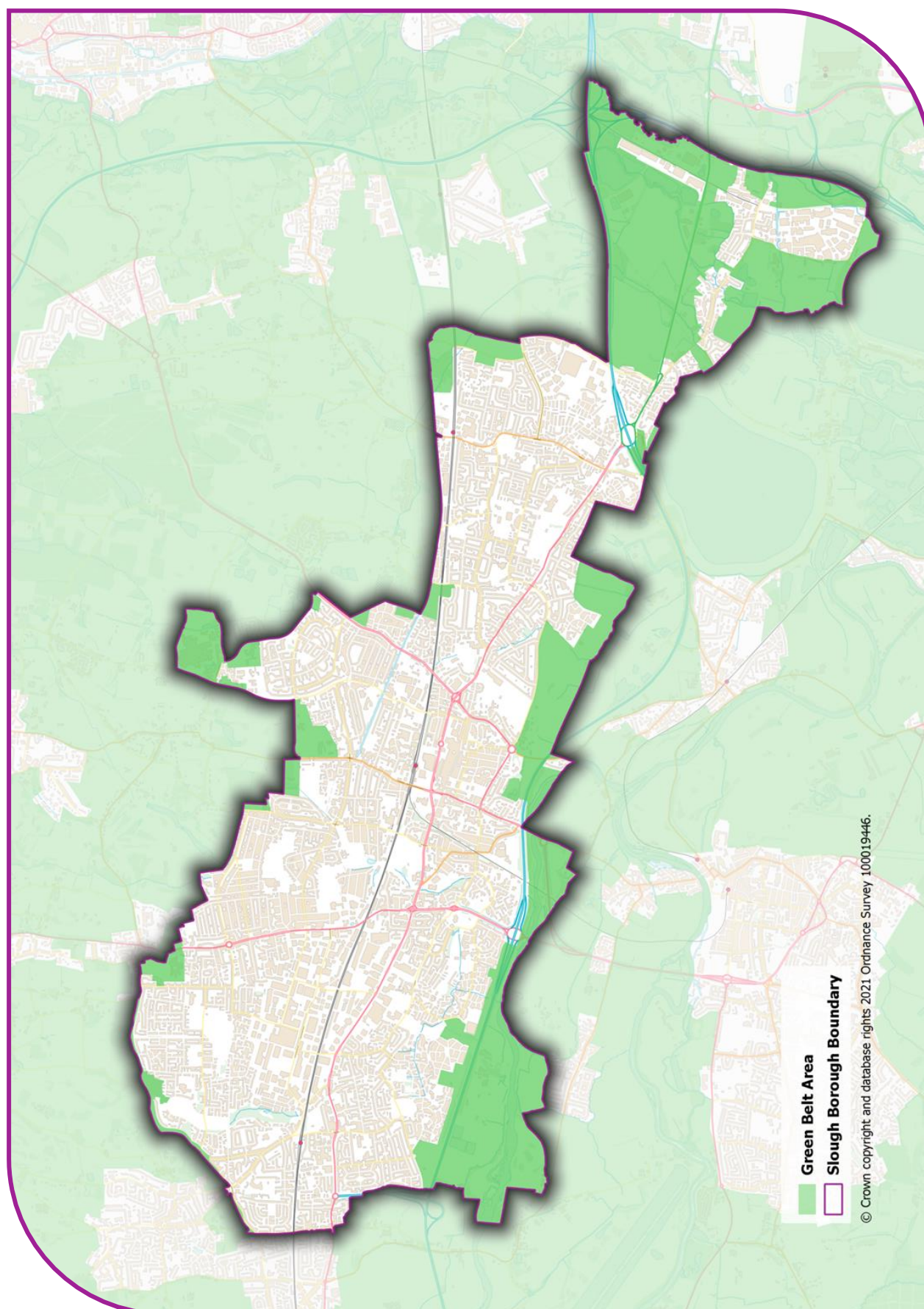
12.3 Comments would also be welcomed about any aspect of this document or the issues raised by the proposed release of Green Belt sites for family housing.

12 **Comments**

12.1 This consultation document identifies ten sites that have had a high level assessment to indicate if they are suitable to be released from the Green Belt to provide family housing. This forms part of the on-going work for the Local Plan for Slough.

12.2 We have done an initial assessment of

Figure 3 Existing Green Belt



Part 2 - Site Details

13 Introduction

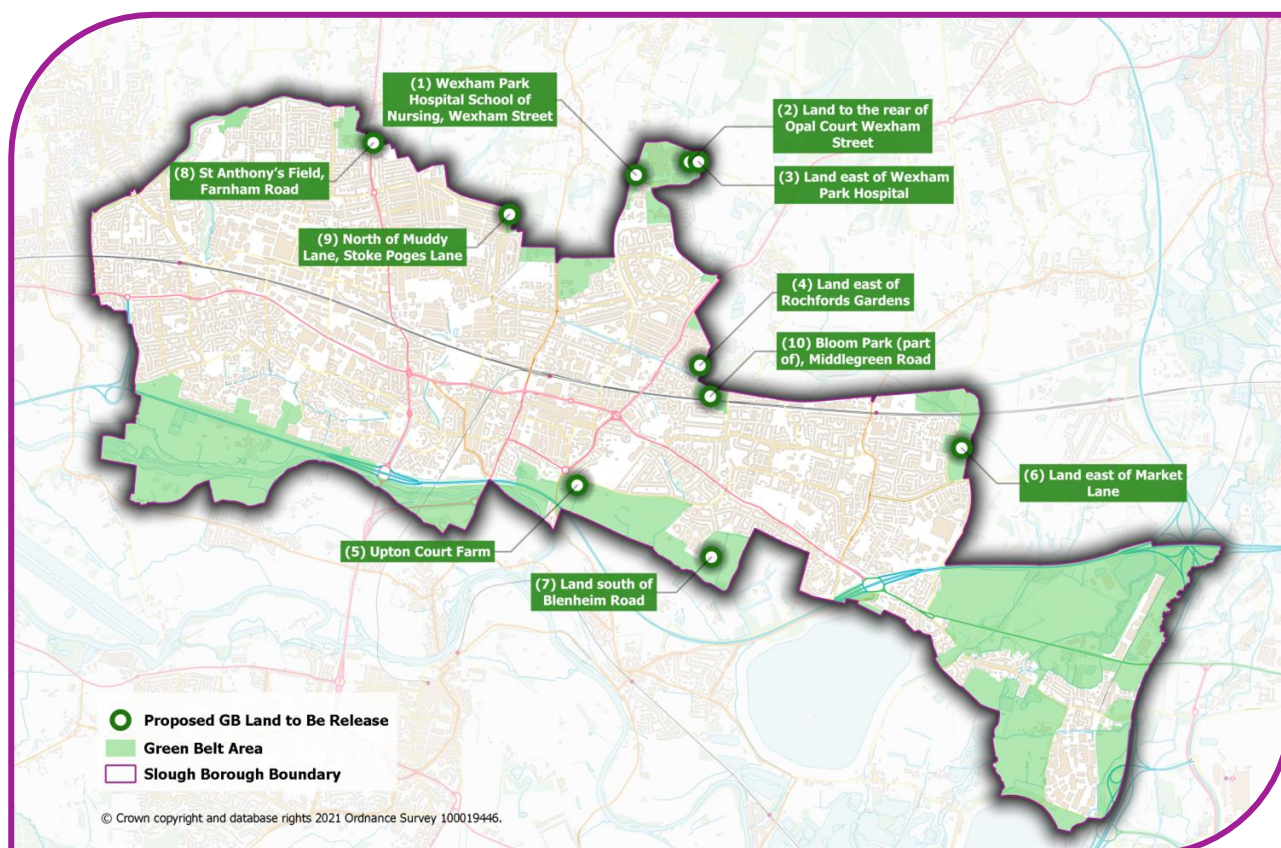
13.1 The details of the individual sites are set out in the following schedules. They should be read alongside Part 1 of this

report that provides context information and conclusions regarding whether sites have been ranked as suitable or not. An explanation of some of the terms used in the schedules is set out below

Table 1 - List of proposed sites to be released from the Green Belt for family housing

Site Name	Initial rating
1. Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing, Wexham Street	Green – Suitable
2. Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street	Green – Suitable
3. Land east of Wexham Park Hospital	Green – Suitable
4. Land east of Rochfords Gardens	Green – Suitable
5. Upton Court Farm	Green – Suitable
6. Land east of Market Lane	Amber – Possible
7. Land south of Blenheim Road	Amber – Possible
8. St Anthony's Field, Farnham Road	Red – Unsuitable
9. North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane	Red – Unsuitable
10. Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road	Red – Unsuitable

Figure 4 - Plan of proposed sites to be released from the Green Belt for family housing



14 Explanation of terms

Capacity Range

- 14.1 An approximate estimate of the number of homes that might be built on the basis they are suburban family houses with a range of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes with reasonably sized gardens and on plot parking. But with the exception that the former school of nursing site at Wexham Park Hospital which might be developed for flats.
- 14.2 The capacity figure takes account of significant known physical constraints and general policy requirements for new residential development that affect land use or scale of development such as land needed for open space, large access junctions, major landscaping or setting of heritage assets. But not every policy constraints on capacity are listed. Detailed site studies and analysis of family housing need in the lead up to any detailed proposals might result in the number of homes proposed being different to the stated range. The capacity figure does not take specific account of any possible need for local childrens nurseries on the larger sites at Blenheim Rd., Market Lane and the combined sites east of the Hospital.

Capacity Notes

- 14.3 Indicates a likely net development area (rather than the total site area) for calculating an approximate number of homes if there are obvious constraints on development. Densities used to calculate the capacity are applied to the likely development area. In most cases they assume a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) and indicate a capacity if a higher density is applied. The density figures and development areas are a

guide only. And as mentioned above may change once detailed assessment takes place. For some sites a different density is applied and where this occurs an explanation is given in the site details. The 30 and 40 dph figures are used to strike a balance between optimum use of land and addressing the need for family accommodation as outlined in part 1 of the report and to reflect in part the character of the surrounding of the sites which are often low or medium density or adjacent to open land. In particular the need for family homes not so easily achieved in the middle of the town such as detached and semi-detached properties many with 4 or more bedrooms and all with reasonably sized gardens and on plot parking.

Development Constraints – Physical

- 14.4 Features on, under or over the site that will limit where or how much development goes on the site or affect the form of development. Some constraints are also linked to planning policies.

Development Constraints – site specific policy

- 14.5 Specific strategic planning policies relevant to the site or key policies relevant to land use, landscape, heritage (1) which will need to be addressed if development goes ahead or (2) could limit where development goes on the site or (3) significantly affect the form of development. Other planning policies will also apply to any development schemes re design, type of housing, infrastructure and impact on the environment etc. (Current planning policies are in the Local Plan 200, Core Strategy 2008 or Proposals Map 2010 and associated guidance plus the National Planning Policy Framework).

Likely Access Point

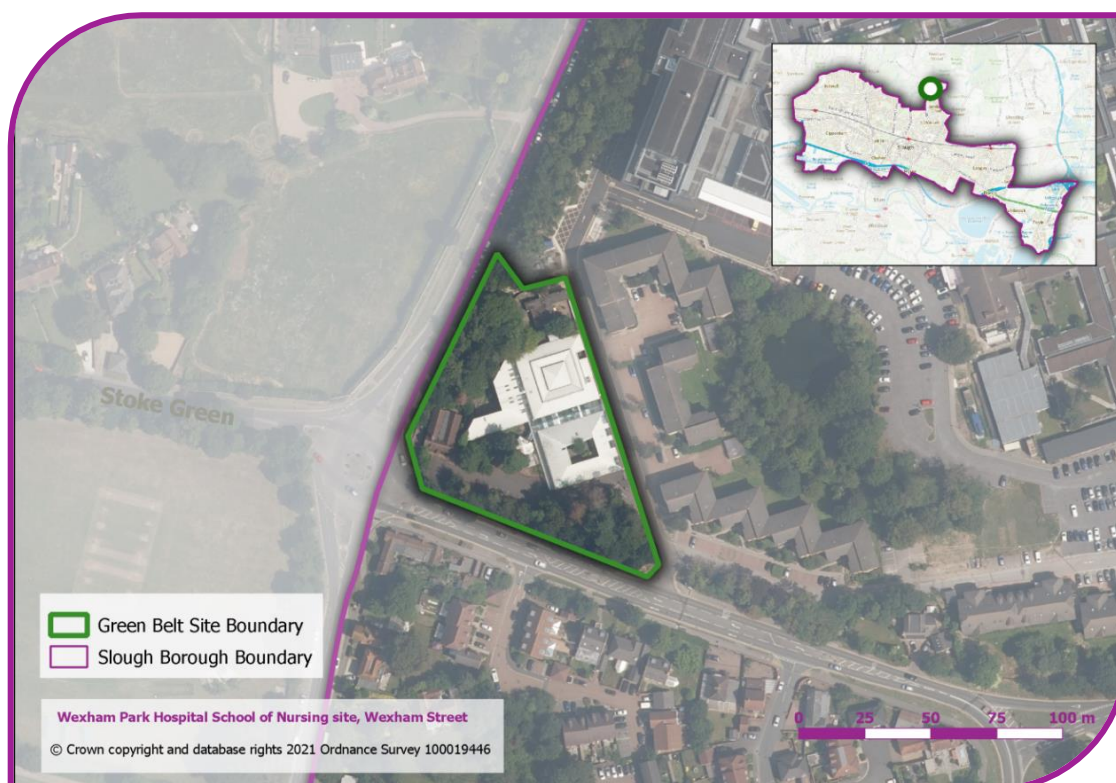
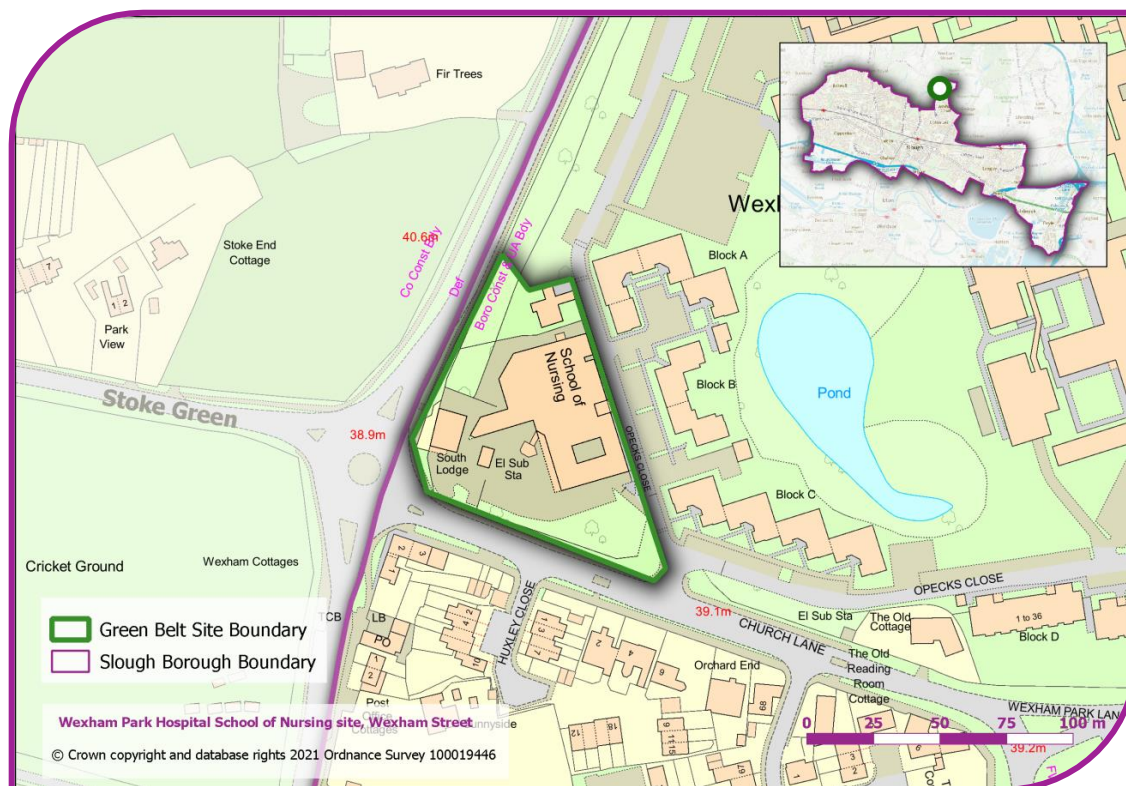
- 14.6 An initial view of where a suitable vehicular access from an existing road could be taken. The suitability of access location and design of access junction will need to be tested before any decision on site access or the development capacity is taken. Similarly suitability of the local highway network regarding traffic capacity will need to be tested. Additional pedestrian and cycle access points might be needed to promote these modes of travel.

Sustainability of Location

- 14.7 A broad overview of local sustainability in terms of travel and access to key facilities without using a car. If any development proposal is considered for any of the sites proximity of access to key facilities will be considered including whether or not access can be improved. In a sub-regional context the sites are all reasonably sustainable in terms of location being linked to an existing town and not too far from the town centre to limit the need to and distance to travel irrespective of mode of travel. But local sustainability is a further consideration. And this will need to be fully tested if any development scheme is proposed and consideration given to improving transport/travel infrastructure or accessibility to key facilities needed for new residential development.

15 Site Schedules

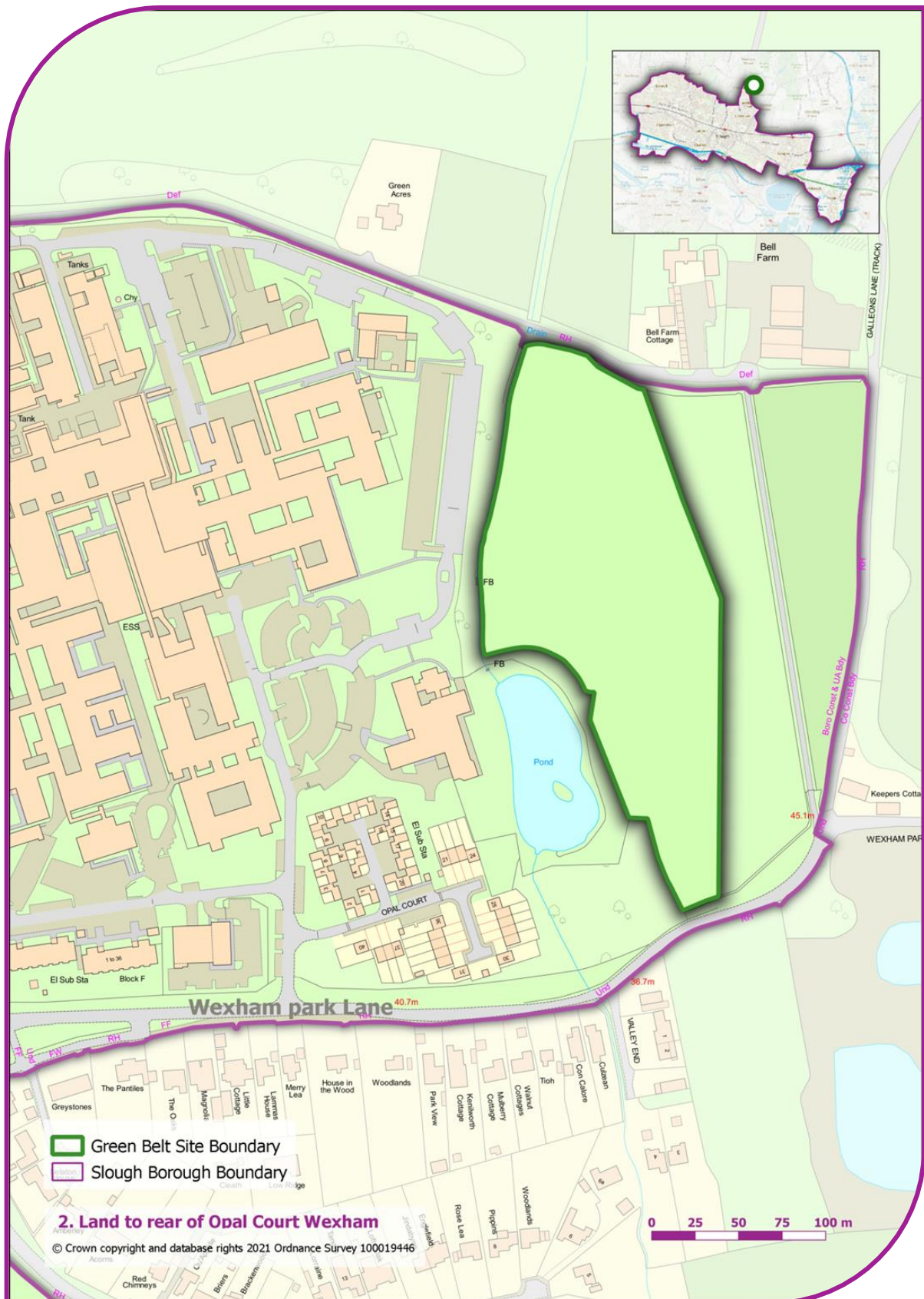
Site 1: Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing, Wexham Street



Site Reference :	1	Ward	Wexham Lea
Site Address/Location	Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street (off Opecks Close)		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	SUITABLE		
Post Code	SL2 4..	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	0.63	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	18 - 44
Existing land use	Former training school and a house (used by Health Trust)		Brownfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Frimley Health Foundation NHS Trust		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees • Sub Station • Highway verge/sightline. • Existing house (used by the Trust) 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	Retain existing house.		
Likely Access Point	Opecks Close (private) leading onto Church Street.		
Sustainability of Location	The site benefits from a reasonable quality bus service; a small shop with post office, primary and secondary school, community hall and open space are within easy walking distance. A parade of shops is a long walk or within cycling distance.		
Capacity Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development area for new build about 0.44 ha. • Density range provides for town houses (40 dph) or flats (100 dph) (see note in comments re flats). 		
Comments	<p>This is a mostly brownfield site. Much of the site is taken up with the now vacant school of nursing building.</p> <p>On the west side of the site is South Lodge, a house, used by the Trust for non-residential purposes as part of the Hospital. To comply with Council policy to retain family homes if the building can be returned to residential use it should remain.</p> <p>There are many trees on the fringe of the site providing a screen between the adjacent roads and hospital buildings.</p> <p>On the Proposals Map the site forms part of a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt; this designation covers the</p>		

	<p>whole Hospital site. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 allows for some infilling provided there is no greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This, together with the fact most of the site is already developed needs to be taken into account when considering acceptability for release from the Green Belt.</p> <p>The housing capacity range is quite wide as it allows for the possibility of both town houses or flats. The latter may not be family accommodation. This exception to the principle of release from the green belt <i>for family housing</i> is unique to this site and is in recognition of the sites circumstances i.e. it is already developed, it forms part of complex of buildings, and associated with the latter, is part of an identified Major Development Site in the Green Belt referred to above. Furthermore flats may benefit the hospital in terms of accommodation for healthcare workers.</p> <p>The Stoke Green Conservation Area, opposite, to west need not prevent development but needs to be taken into account regarding the design and layout of the site.</p>
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Site 2: Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street





Site Reference :	2	Ward	Wexham Lea
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Site Address/Location	Land to the rear of Opal Court		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	SUITABLE		
Post Code	SL2 4..	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	2.65	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	57 - 76
Existing land use	None. Unmanaged field; no obvious agricultural use.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Frimley Health Foundation NHS Trust		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees on the fringe of the site to west and south west. • Ecological and water quality margin for stream and pond adjacent to west boundary. • No access. 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy			
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wexham Park Lane subject to testing and widening, west of an access point, towards Church Lane. Alternative access should be tested to Opal Court or alongside north side of hospital site to Wexham Street. • Access to be shared with site 3. • Pedestrian/cycle access to Church Lane will be important. 		
Sustainability of Location	Access to a reasonable quality bus service, a small shop with post office and secondary school are within easy walking distance. Community hall, open space, primary school and a parade of shops are a long walk or within cycling distance.		
Capacity Notes	Capacity based upon 1.87 hectares development area to take account of constraints and need for open space to serve the new development.		
Comments	<p>As the site is separated from other residential development and has no defined eastern boundary it would be beneficial if it were not developed in isolation of site 3. Any design should be comprehensive for both sites and vehicular access shared</p> <p>There are many trees on the west fringe of the site providing a screen between the site and housing development in Opal Court.</p> <p>Existing boundary hedges, trees and some buildings adjacent</p>		

	<p>or near the site partially enclose site 2 and 3. These, together with supplemental planting could help screen development when from viewed from open areas beyond to the north, east and south.</p> <p>If access is taken from Wexham Park Lane alterations between the access and Church Lane are needed to make it acceptable. Taking access from Wexham Street would involve rearranging Hospital site access along the north arm of Opal Court or a new road outside the north boundary of the Hospital along the route of an existing driveway/pathway involving vegetation loss and possibly third party land adjacent to create an acceptable roadway.</p>
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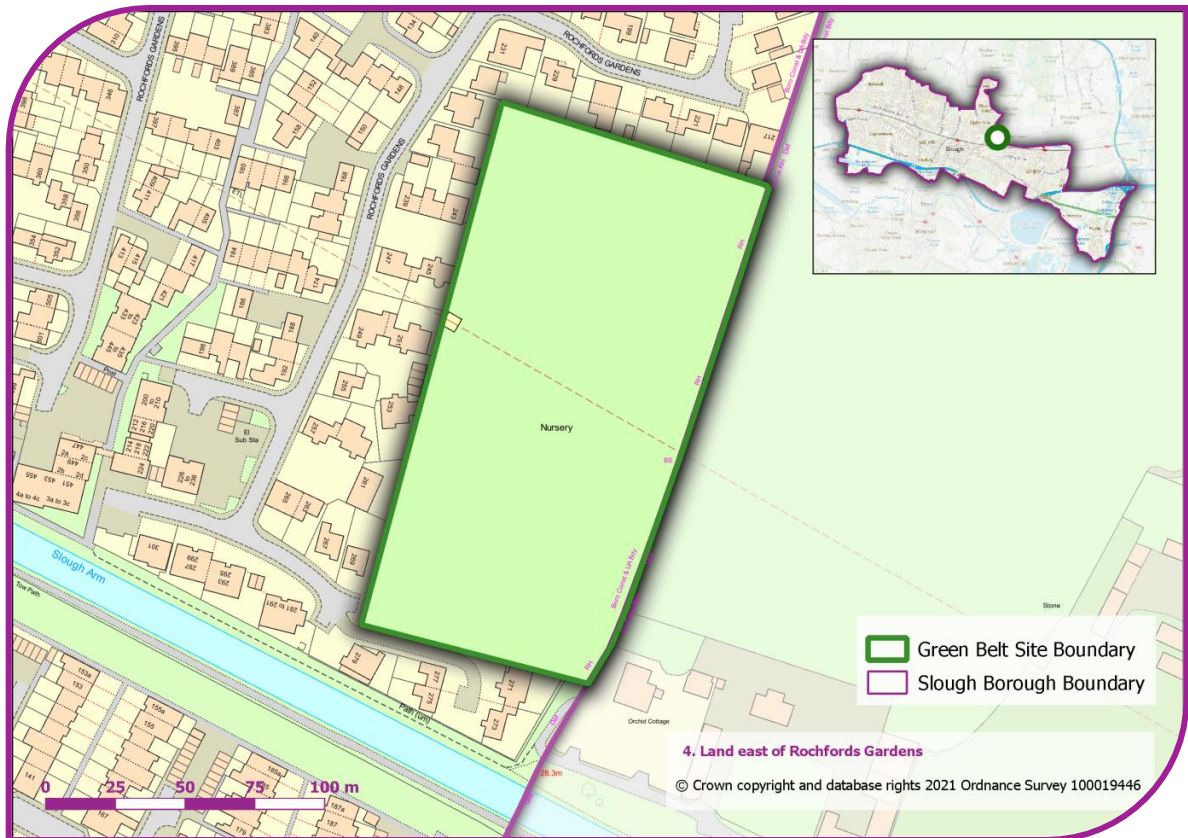


Site Reference :	3	Ward	Wexham Lea
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Site Address/Location	Land east of Wexham Park Hospital		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	SUITABLE		
Post Code	SL2..	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	2.26	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	51 - 68
Existing land use	None. Over grown field with no obvious agricultural use.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Private		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trees on the east fringe of the site 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy			
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wexham Park Lane subject to testing and widening, west of an access point, towards Church Lane. Alternative access should be tested, combined with site 2, from Opal Court or alongside north side of hospital site to Wexham Street. Access to be shared with site 2. Pedestrian/cycle access to Church Lane will be important. 		
Sustainability of Location	Access to a reasonable quality bus service, a small shop with post office and secondary school are within easy walking distance. Community hall, open space, primary school and a parade of shops are a long walk or within cycling distance.		
Capacity Notes	Capacity based upon 1.7 hectares development area to take account of constraints and need for open space to serve the new development.		
Comments	<p>15.1 As the site is separated from other residential development and has no defined western boundary it would be beneficial if it were not developed in isolation of site 2. Any design should be comprehensive for both sites and vehicular access shared.</p> <p>15.2 Existing boundary hedges, trees and some buildings adjacent or near the site partially enclose site 2 and 3. These, together with supplemental planting could help screen development when from viewed from open areas beyond to the north, east and south. To the east is a substantial belt of trees.</p>		

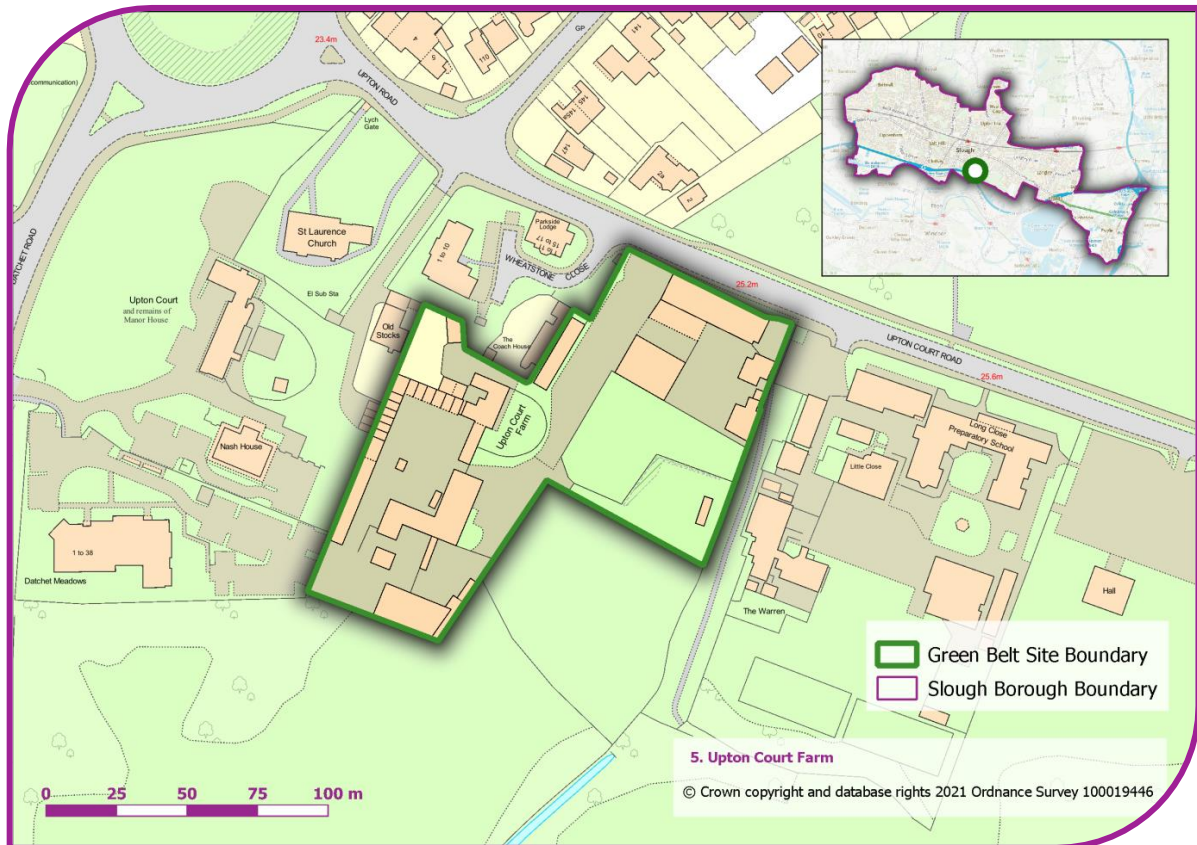
	<p>15.3 If access is taken from Wexham Park Lane alterations between the access and Church Lane are needed to make it acceptable. Taking access from Wexham Street, combined with site 2, would involve rearranging Hospital site access along the north arm of Opal Court or a new road outside the north boundary of the Hospital along the route of an existing driveway/pathway involving vegetation loss and possibly third party land adjacent to create an acceptable roadway.</p>
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Site 4: Land east of Rochfords Gardens



Site Reference :	4	Ward	Wexham Lea
Site Address/Location	Land east of Rochford Gardens		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	SUITABLE		
Post Code	SL25	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	1.8	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	50 - 54
Existing land use	Field. No known use.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Private		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead power lines. Trees on fringe of site. 		
Development Constraint site specific policy			
Likely Access Point	<p>The eastern arm of Rochfords Gardens; extension of road near No. 269. Rochfords Gardens connects with Uxbridge Rd.</p> <p>Pedestrian access to the canal path provides a short cut to Uxbridge Rd. and destinations to the east. This may need improving.</p>		
Sustainability of Location	<p>Access to a bus service, a small shop and open space are within easy walking distance. Access to a parade of shops, Sainsbury's superstore and community hall are within walking distance. Primary and secondary school are a long walk or easy cycling distance.</p>		
Capacity Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development area 1.36 ha. Minimum density 37 dph. applied because of the character of surrounding development. 		
Comments	<p>As the site is bounded on 3 sides with development building housing on it would represent infilling and rounding off of the built edge of the town.</p> <p>Existing vegetation on the east boundary could provide a defined boundary and together with supplemental planting soften the edge of any new development when viewed from the east. There is a small grouping of buildings to the south east.</p> <p>The site has no significant visual amenity qualities and is not visible from the road.</p> <p>The eastern arm of Rochfords Garden has a substantial amount of kerbside parking.</p>		

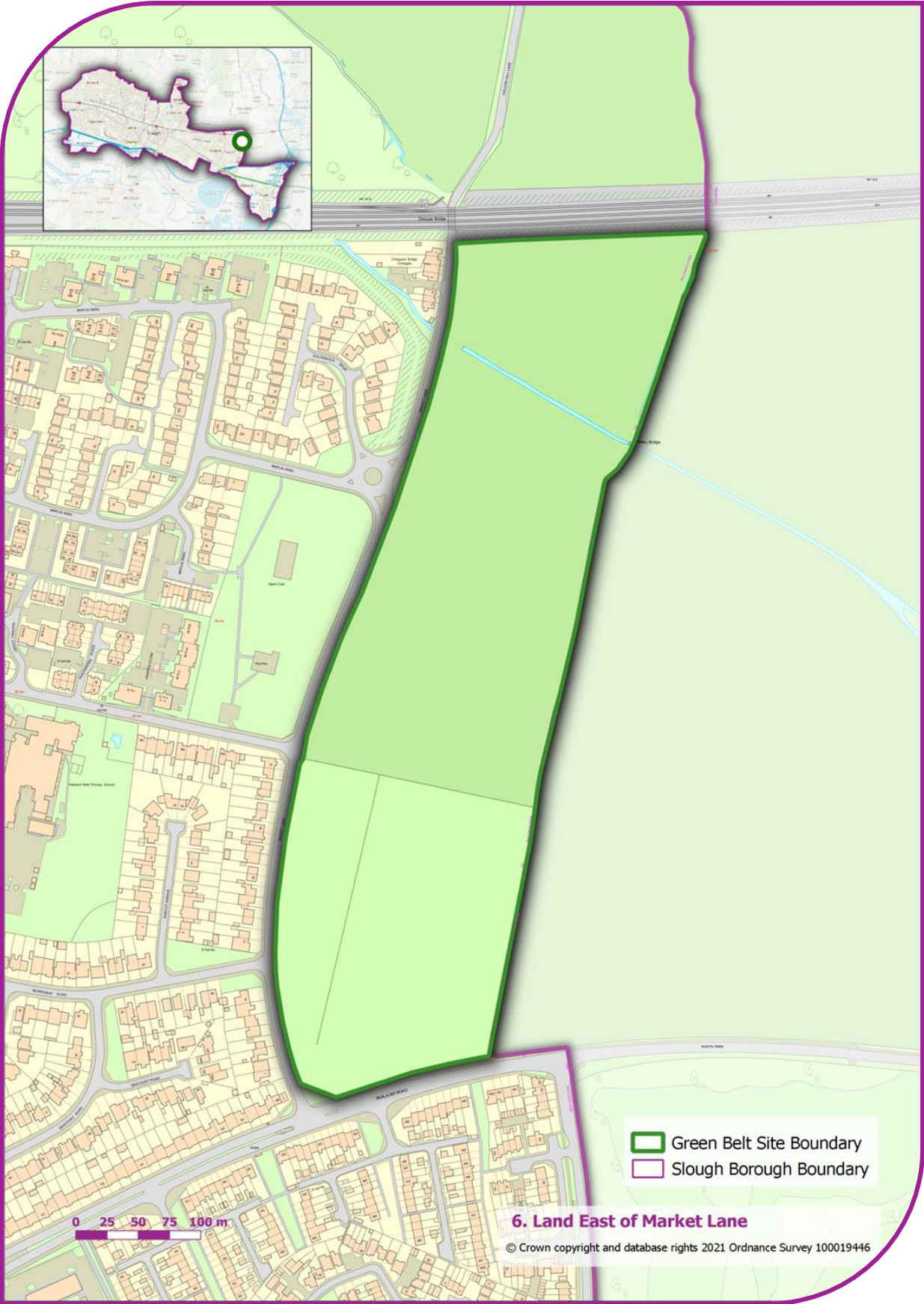
Site 5: Upton Court Farm



Site Reference :	5	Ward	Upton
Site Address/Location	Upton Court Farm, Upton Court Road		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	SUITABLE		
Post Code	SL3 7....	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	1.2	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	33 - 44
Existing land use	Mixed storage and open yard business units and one residential property. A small part in south east corner is an overgrown undeveloped area.		Primarily Brownfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Private. Various leases or tenancies likely.		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees within site. • Existing house 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing house. • Western part of site is within Upton Conservation Area • Listed Buildings adjacent. 		
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upton Ct Rd. • Existing access could be moved to eastwards to improve junction spacing from Wheatstone Close. 		
Sustainability of Location	Most key facilities are within easy walking distance. Part of the town centre and a range of bus services is within walking distance and easy cycling distance.		
Capacity Notes	Development area 1.1 ha. taking account of existing house and trees. Higher density than 40 dph most unlikely because of need to limit the height and bulk of buildings to protect the setting of Listed Buildings adjacent and tie in with character of Conservation Area. To protect the setting of listed building but also tie in with character of adjacent development on the frontage a varied density across the site is expected.		
Comments	The site sits between a cluster of school buildings to the east and a dispersed group of 5 buildings to the west. The latter comprise the listed St. Laurence Church; Upton manor house,		

	<p>a house, and two modern buildings (an office and flats). It sites opposite the corner of Lascelles playing field. To the south is an unmanaged field leading down towards the motorway.</p> <p>The southern end of the site contains low sheds, garages and compounds. The north eastern part, not in the conservation area, has larger industrial buildings.</p> <p>As the site is partially developed either side redevelopment for housing could be considered as infilling. Development of this mostly brownfield site in a relatively sustainable location is in line with the Council's Strategic Objectives in the Core Policy.</p> <p>To comply with Council policy (Core Policy 4) to retain family homes the former farm house should remain. Its location on the edge of the Conservation Area is also a consideration regarding its retention.</p> <p>The visual appearance of the site is poor for its location partly in and next to a Conservation Area and next to a group of heritage buildings. Redevelopment would be an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the site.</p> <p>The potential to improve the appearance of and public access to open land to the south should be explored to improve the quality of the development and provide a public benefit.</p> <p>Loss of some small business premises would be a disadvantage of redeveloping the site for residential development.</p>
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Site 6: Land east of Market Lane



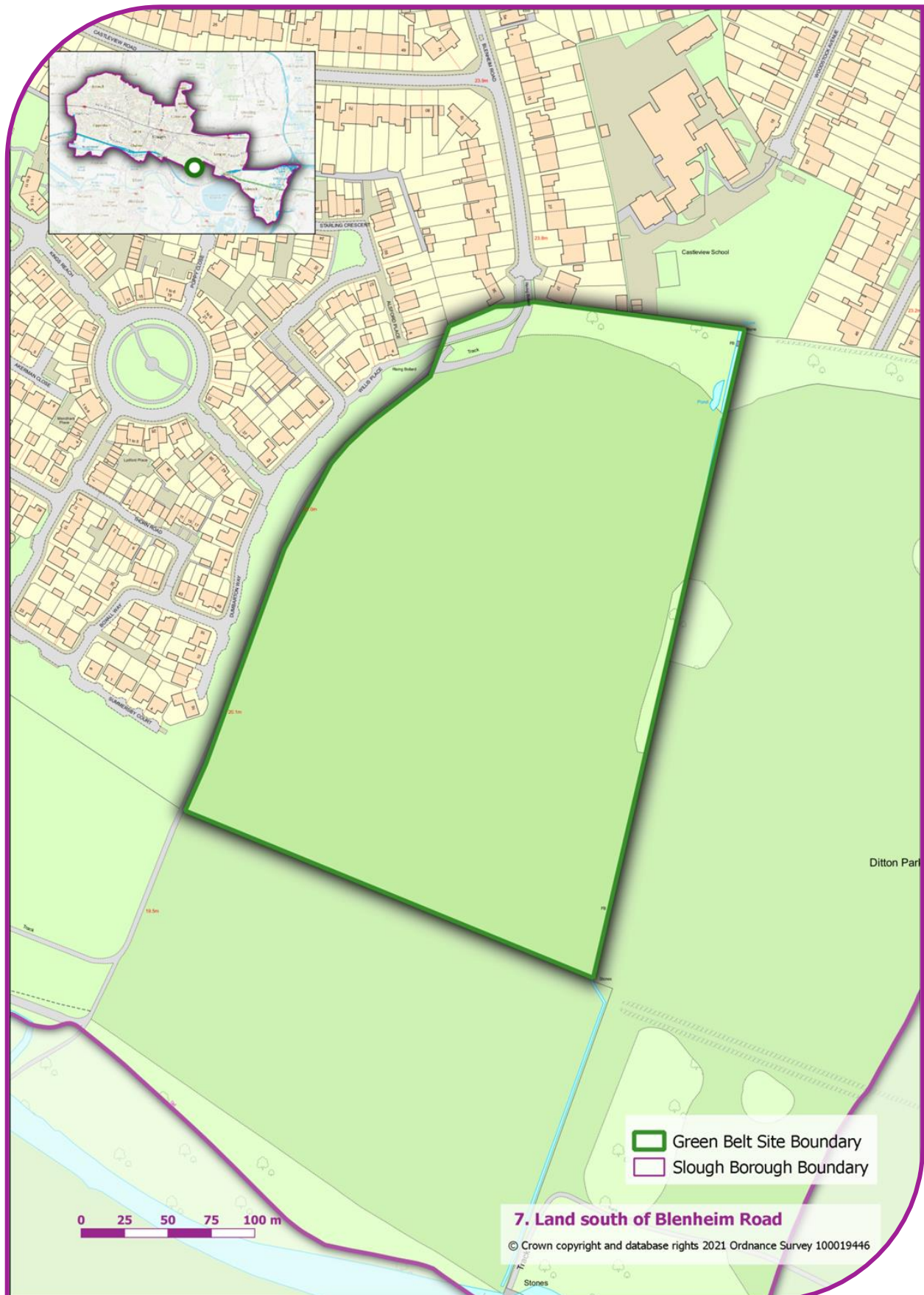


Site Reference :	6	Ward	Langley St. Marys
Site Address/Location	Land east of Market Lane		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	POSSIBLE		
Post Code	SL3 8...	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	12.24	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	225 – 300 units
Existing land use	Fields. Mostly arable and some grazing/unmanaged at south end.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	At least 3 private owners.		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Zone 3 north end. • Future road access to shaft of rail link tunnel. • Stream through site. • Trees 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Gap • Colne Valley Regional Park. • Pipeline buffer area. 		
Likely Access Point	Market Lane.		
Sustainability of Location	Access to a reasonable quality bus service, a small shop with post office and secondary school are within easy walking distance. Community hall, open space, primary school and a parade of shops are a long walk or within cycling distance.		
Capacity Notes	<p>The developable area has been estimated at 7.5 ha. The northern part of site not developable because of flood risk (zone 3). It will also contain, when built, a vehicle access to a shaft for the tunnel of the western rail link to Heathrow. The stream will need an ecological and water quality margin. This zone also contains a pipeline. The buffer area around the pipeline might further reduce the area available for habitable buildings. Open space and associated amenity space will be needed to serve the development. A nursery will also be needed on site. Landscape areas throughout the housing development to ensure the character of the development is appropriate for an edge of town site next to suburban neighbourhood.</p>		

<p>Comments</p>	<p>Regarding strategic planning policies development of this site would conflict with two existing policies :</p> <p>Strategic Gap: Local Plan policy CG9</p> <p>Colne Valley Regional Park: Local Plan policy CG1</p> <p>The subsequent 208 Core Strategy policy 2 repeats the principles of the policy and the relevant part reads as follows: development will only be permitted in the strategic gap between Slough and Greater London and the open areas of the Colne Valley Park if it is essential to be in that location.</p> <p>Consequently any decision to release site 6, east of Market Lane, from the Green Belt needs to be taken in full knowledge that a subsequent decision on development would mean finding a suitable justification for not complying with these two policies.</p> <p>The northern part of the site being designated flood zone 3 means it is most unlikely residential development could take place on that part of the site. That land together with the stream, trees and protected zone for a pipeline across the site comprises a substantial portion of the site. It might be used as part of public open space but the southern part of the long thin site 6 would also need some public open space.</p> <p>If the Heathrow rail link is built there is a possibility of those works affecting and reducing the flood risk area by holding flood water further upstream. But the very northern strip of land would be used for an access road for a tunnel access shaft. It should be noted that construction of the rail link would result in Market Lane being closed at the railway bridge and consequently reducing traffic on the road.</p> <p>Part of the site and adjoining land is planned to be used or construction work associated with the Heathrow rail link work. Furthermore mineral extraction and processing is taking place on a site not far away to the east. And permission for extraction exists for the field east of the northern part of site 6. Landfill is expected to take place after extraction is complete before the land is restored. These uses combined with rail link work might last for several years. They would limit availability of the site or create an unsuitable environment for new homes. So phasing of any approved housing development would need to take this into account.</p> <p>Consequently the site could not be developed until it is available and conditions are suitable for house building; this time may be many years away.</p> <p>Development of this site would represent a substantial extension of the built up area into the countryside. Development on the eastern edge, abutting retained green belt, would need to be lower density development with substantial planting to soften its edge in terms of appearance</p>
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	<p>and relationship to open land beyond.</p> <p>Excepting the area around the stream the site has limited visual amenity. But the loss of a large area of open land and vegetation would need to be mitigated in some way. This could be on site through landscaping, a net gain in biodiversity value, a network of walkways for access.</p> <p>Regarding location of the site in terms sustainable travel – i.e. reducing the need to travel and promoting low polluting modes of travel some key facilities/services to serve new development are reasonably close but not all of them. Bearing in mind the potential size of the development additional facilities/services on the site might be needed to make any development acceptable in terms of sustainable travel. In particular a children’s nursery would be needed plus may be a local shop, community hall and better bus services.</p> <p>Part of the Council’s future Spatial Strategy is promoting cross border expansion to meet unmet housing needs. One possible solution, put forward by the Council, to Buckinghamshire Council is housing development over the north eastern boundary of Slough. This includes land immediately to the east of site 6 (the east fence of site 6 is the Borough boundary). If this proposal ever came forward it would change the context of site 6, change the justification for retaining green belt land in the area and influence decisions on infrastructure to serve new development on site 6 and any expansion area.</p> <p>The possibility of major development across the north eastern boundary of Slough and adjacent to site 6 is something that needs to be taken into account when considering whether to or when to release site 6 from the Green Belt and the timing of when any development should take place. And its relevant to take into account firstly any decision by Buckinghamshire Council to agreed development adjacent to the site will not be known soon and secondly the above mentioned construction and gravel extraction/landfill works would limit scope for housing development in the near future.</p>
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Site 7: Land south of Blenheim Road





Site Reference :	7	Ward	Upton
Site Address/Location	Land south of Blenheim Road		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	POSSIBLE		
Post Code	SL3 7...	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	7.7	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	150 - 200
Existing land use	Field. Arable and group of trees.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	One main owner. The north west fringe and the field entrance from Blenheim Road are in two separate ownerships.		
Development Constraints – Physical	Trees on fringe of three boundaries; substantial group of trees at north end. North west fringe not for development as it is an existing cycleway and landscape area for Kings Reach development		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of a registered Historic Park & Garden (Ditton Park) Protect the setting of Listed Building Ditton Park 		
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kings Reach (leading on to Upton Court Rd roundabout) Pedestrian/cycle access to Blenheim Rd. and to south to connect to linear park cycleway 		
Sustainability of Location	An open space, primary and secondary school is within easy walking distance. Access to a regular frequent daily bus services (town centre and Heathrow and Hounslow) and local grocery shop are within walking distance.		
Capacity Notes	The developable area has been estimated as 4.2 ha. This is for several reasons; the need for a substantial parkland area to justify development in a historic park area, a substantial landscape and tree belt area to protect the setting of Ditton Park – parkland and Listed building, retention of existing trees. Plus the need for space for play space for any new housing, space for a nursery, sustainable drainage, landscaped access road corridor and landscape areas throughout the housing development to ensure the character of the development is appropriate for an edge of town site and next to suburban low density housing (to the north).		
Comments	The site area has been reduced at its southern end compared to		

that outlined in the Spatial Strategy 2020.

The site is next to Ditton Park, parkland around a historic manor house building. The Park together with site 7 is a registered historic park and garden. The site forms the north west corner of the original Ditton Park site and represents 8 % of the registered area. However the site does not look like a park being primarily a field for arable farming. But it does contain many trees on its edge and a small woodland at the north end. The site is in separate ownership from the main Park.

Despite not being a parkland landscape and separated from the main Park new development within it would need a strong justification to make an exception to national and local policy that requires heritage assets to be protected and enhanced. This includes the setting of such historic parks.

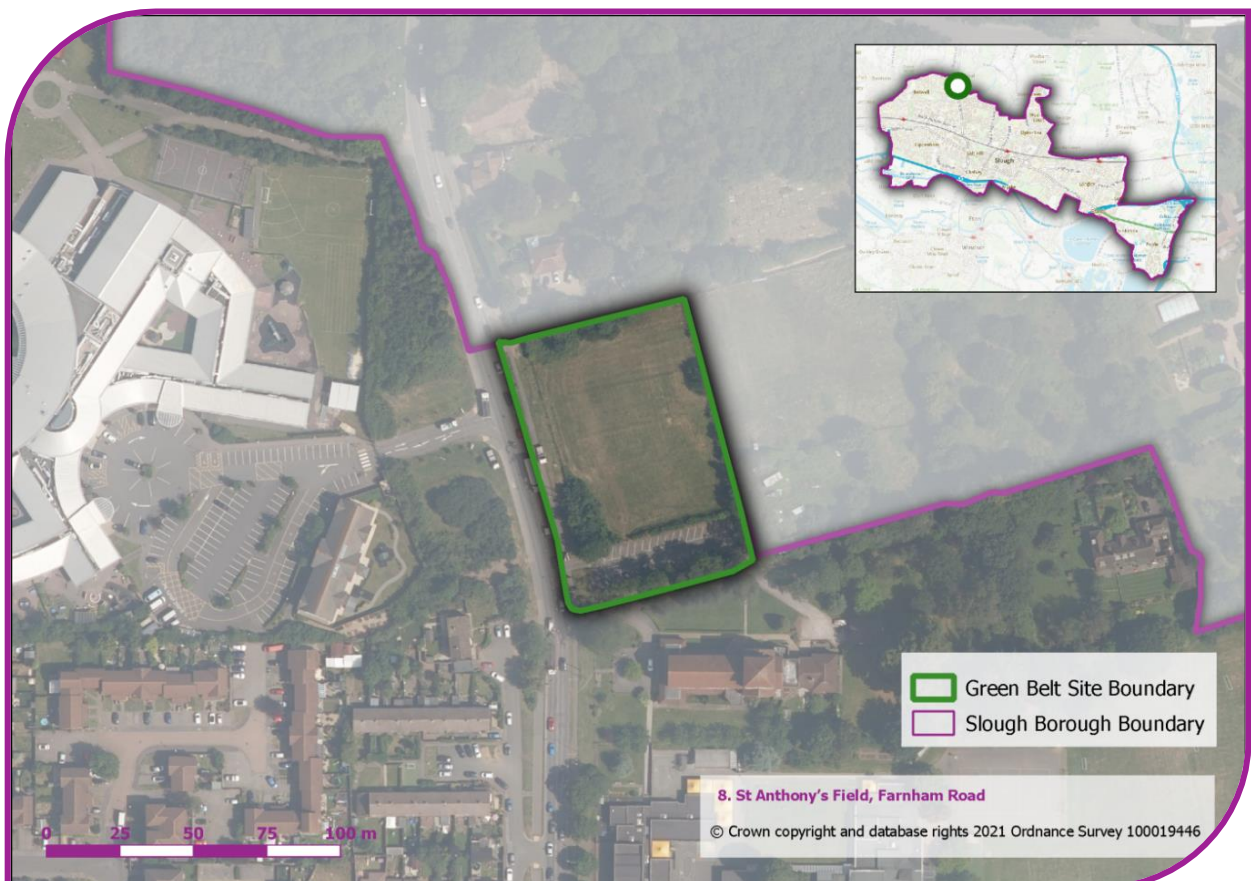
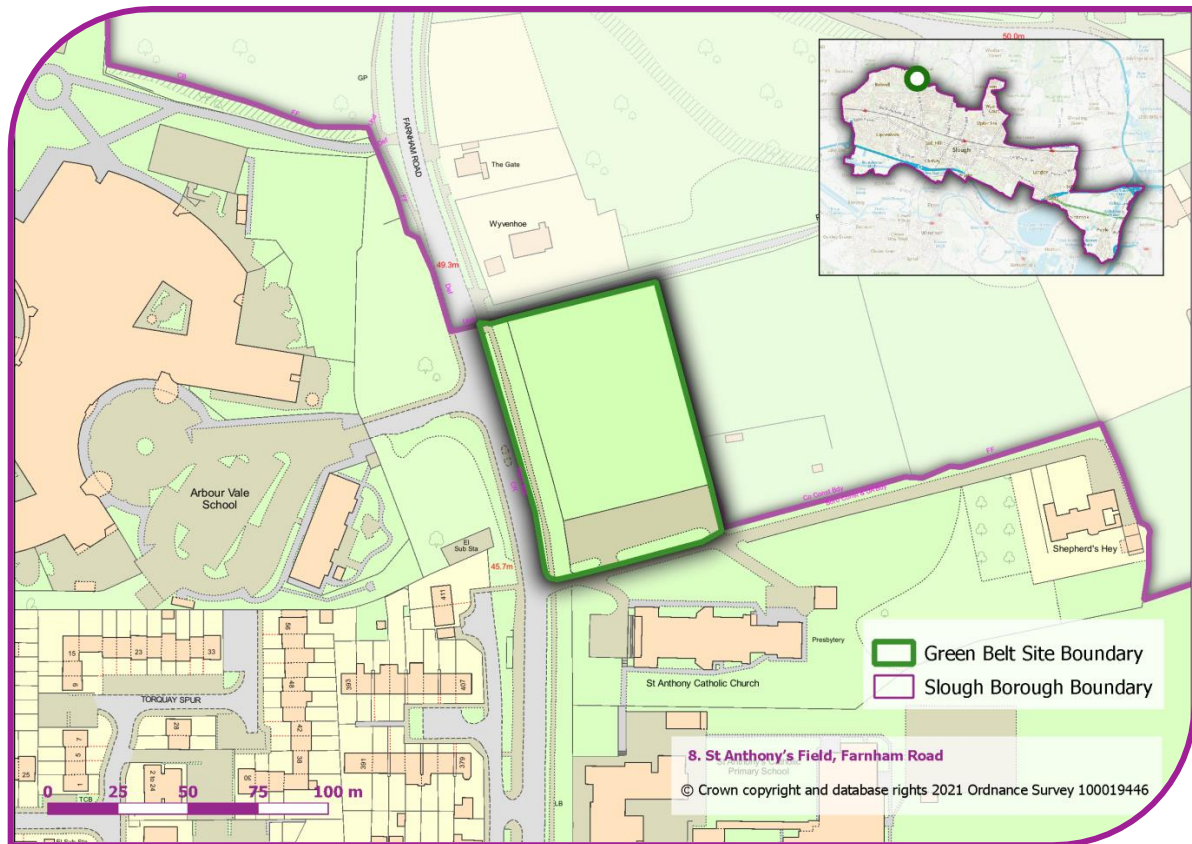
Registration as a historic park and garden is a 'material consideration' in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character. The loss of a substantial open area and its habitat also needs to be mitigated.

However a development scheme that restores some parkland alongside new housing development and provides public access could be judged a substantial benefit compared to now. It would also have to protect the setting of the adjacent historic parkland. A net gain in biodiversity value could also be achieved.

Land to the south of site 7 is a continuation of the field and in the same ownership and is part of the registered historic park area. It has no development adjacent to it and is contiguous with open Green Belt land to the west and east and south. This consultation does not propose this are be released from the Green Belt. Part of it is in a flood zone. At its southern edge is the cycleway of the linear park that runs along the southern edge of the town connecting the Jubilee River to the Colne Valley Regional Park. A connection to this from any new housing development would be important. And securing this land as open space with public access and landscaping would be a public benefit. This would be in line with National Planning Policy Framework objective of compensatory improvement of retained Green Belt land.

Regarding access Kings Reach runs from the roundabout on Upton Court Road, through the housing development built a few years ago and up to the west boundary of site 7. This is considered a more appropriate access than Blenheim Road other than for pedestrians, cyclist and emergency access. The owner of site 7, when selling the Kings Reach site, ensured there was space for an extension of Kings Reach.

Site 8: St Anthony's Field, Farnham Road



Site Reference :	8	Ward	Farnham
Site Address/Location	St Anthony's Field, Farnham Road		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	UNSUITABLE		
Post Code	SL2 3...	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	0.6	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	13 - 18
Existing land use	Field and small CP for school.		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	One owner (Slough Borough Council)		
Development Constraints – Physical	Fringe trees/hedge; highway verge, parking for school		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Area adjacent to north and east • Setting of nearby Listed Buildings to east 		
Likely Access Point	Farnham Road		
Sustainability of Location	A reasonable quality bus service, open space, primary and secondary school are within easy walking distance. Shops and community hall are within walking distance.		
Capacity Notes	The developable area has been estimated as 0.44 ha. This allows for retention of the substantial hedge and grass verge on Farnham Rd. and school parking.		
Comments	<p>The site is immediately north of St. Anthony's church. Two houses in large plots site to the north. There is an open area either side; opposite (the other side of Farnham Rd) is Arbourvale school building beyond to the west. To the east Farnham Royal church tower is visible from Farnham Rd across the site. The village of Farnham Royal is a short distance to the north.</p> <p>The site is adjacent to Farnham Royal Conservation Area on its east and north boundary. These boundaries also form the boundary of the Borough.</p> <p>The site is beyond the built up edge of the town with mostly open land immediately adjacent.</p>		

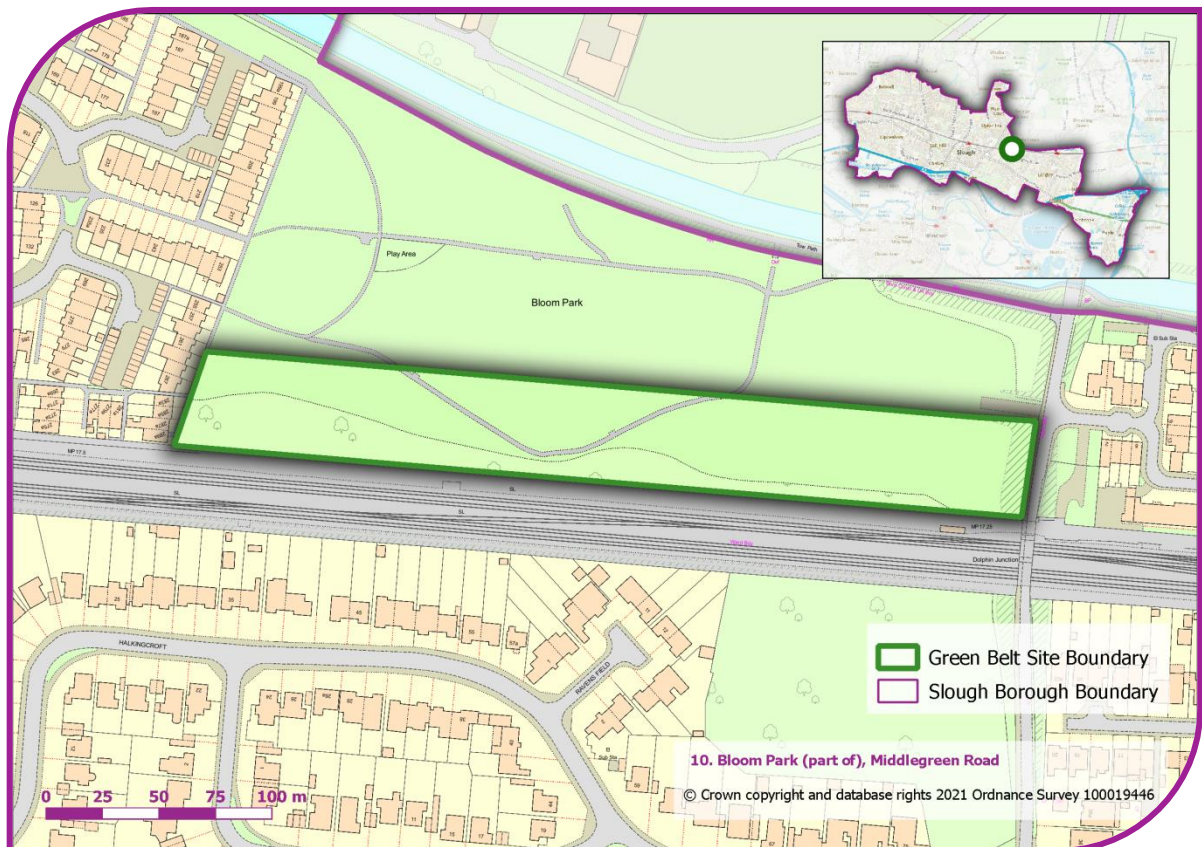
	<p>Development of the site would be quite obvious in the landscape being visible from Farnham Rd particularly from the south as the site sits slightly higher and forward of St. Anthony's. It would also be visible across the open areas adjacent. As it is close to Farnham Royal development of the site could be seen as a partial merging of settlements – Farnham Royal joining with the edge of Slough. That would not be good planning.</p> <p>Development would affect the setting of Listed Buildings to the east in particular Farnham Royal church. Any adverse effect on the setting is likely to restrict development. The relationship of the site to the Listed Buildings and Conservation area is referred to in the 2010 character appraisal by South Bucks District Council.</p> <p>Regarding the adjacent Conservation Area whilst this should not prevent development the effect on the character of the Area needs to be considered. As the part of the Conservation Area adjacent is mostly open land or homes in large plots the development of site 8 would not reflect its character.</p>
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Site 9: North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane



Site Reference :	9	Ward	Baylis and Stoke
Site Address/Location	North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane; (part of Singh Sabha sports field)		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	UNSUITABLE		
Post Code	SL1 3...	Grid Ref.	
Site Area (hectares)	0.94	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	25 - 33
Existing land use	Sports field & country park (small area in NE corner)		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	Single (but with third party land owner re NE corner)		
Development Constraints – Physical	Fringe trees		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss sports field and recreation land 		
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stoke Poges Lane 		
Sustainability of Location	A regular bus service is within easy walking distance. Open space, local shops, hall are within walking distance. Primary and secondary school are a long walk away.		
Capacity Notes	The developable area has been estimated as 0.83 ha. This allows for land not within the same plot, hedge and trees on Stoke Poges Lane.		
Comments	<p>The loss of part of the relatively modern sports field would conflict with national and local planning policies to retain sports pitches and recreation spaces. Similarly the loss of a portion of the new country park being formed by Buckinghamshire would not be acceptable re the small portion of the site overlapping that area.</p> <p>The location of the site is not very sustainable primarily because both primary and secondary schools are a long walk away.</p>		

Site 10: Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road



Site Reference :	10	Ward	Langley St. Mary
Site Address/Location	Bloom Park, (part of site) Middlegreen Road		
Preliminary assessment re Green Belt Release	UNSUITABLE		
Post Code	SL2 5..		
Site Area (hectares)	1.6	Capacity Range (Approximate number of homes)	27 - 36
Existing land use	Park		Greenfield
Current Ownership details (where known)	One owner (Slough Borough Council)		
Development Constraints – Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees. • No access 		
Development Constraints – site specific policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of public open space and substantial trees 		
Likely Access Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlegreen Road 		
Sustainability of Location	A regular bus service is within walking distance. Open space is adjacent. Two small shops are within walking distance. Hall, primary and secondary school are a long walk away.		
Capacity Notes	The developable area has been estimated as 0.9 ha to allow for tree retention and embankment land at east end.		
Comments	<p>The loss of part of the Park would conflict with national and local planning policies to retain sports pitches and recreation spaces. The benefit of additional housing does not override the need for public open space.</p> <p>The location of the site is not very sustainable because of the long walk to schools or for the private primary school to the north east, a walk without a footway to use.</p> <p>The principle of suitability of Middlegreen Road for access needs to be tested as the road is narrow, above surrounding ground level and potential access point is between two bridges. Consent of a third party owner of the embankment might be needed.</p>		

Appendix A – Consultation Questions

To complete the questions online, please visit www.slough.citizenspace.com. Responses must be submitted by 11:59 pm on 17th December 2021. The questions are also available in Word and PDF documents, and can be accessed from the following link:

www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy We will publish all responses we receive on our website.

Those not using the online form should submit representations:

- via email to: SpatialStrategy@slough.gov.uk
- via post to: Planning Policy, Slough Borough Council, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Rd, Slough SL1 2EL.

About You

1. What is your name?

2. What is your email address?

3. What is your postcode?

4. If you are participating on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of the organisation?

5. By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in this study and grant permission for the data generated from this consultation to be used in the Council's publications on this topic.

☐ Agree

6. Do you agree there is a need for more family housing in Slough?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer if you wish:

7. Do you think there is a need for more affordable family housing in Slough?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer if you wish:

8. Do you think this housing need justifies building on some sites in the Green Belt in Slough?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer if you wish:

9. Have you any alternative solutions for providing family housing? *Choose from the following:*

Yes

No

a) Build family homes in Slough's urban area at a high density

☐
☐

b) Build family housing outside the Borough but close to Slough

☐
☐

c) Not provide for family housing within or near Slough (people may have to move away from the Slough area)

☐
☐

d) any other option

☐
☐

Please explain your answer if you wish:

10. Do you think the following are suitable sites for family housing?

Yes

No

Site 1 - Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing, Wexham Street

☐
☐

Site 2 - Land to the rear of Opal Court Wexham Street

☐
☐

Site 3 - Land east of Wexham Park Hospital

☐
☐

Site 4 - Land east of Rochfords Gardens

☐
☐

Site 5 - Upton Court Farm

☐
☐

Site 6 - Land east of Market Lane

☐
☐

Site 7 - Land south of Blenheim Road

☐
☐

Site 8 - St Anthony's Field, Farnham Road

☐
☐

Site 9 - North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane

☐
☐

Site 10 - Bloom Park (part of), Middlegreen Road

☐
☐

Any comments

- 11.** Do you know of any other Green Belt sites in Slough that may be suitable for family housing?
If yes, please identify the site

-
- 12.** If you have any other comments on the proposed Release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing Consultation Document, please specify the section or paragraph number in your response.

Any further comments

Proposed Release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing