

Slough Local Area Agreement – Submission to GOSE 15th January 2008

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1. About Slough

Demographics

Slough is a densely populated urban area of 32.52 sq km in the east of Berkshire, and geographically, is one of the smallest unitary councils in the UK. It is located to the west of London, near to Heathrow Airport and close to the M4, M25 and M40 motorways.

Slough is estimated to have a population of about 119,500 (ONS, 2007) an increase of 13% compared to the last census on 1991. However, like many local authorities throughout the country Slough believes that there is an under-estimation in the population numbers and that the council is catering for the needs of a far larger (and more diverse) population. Slough is multicultural; a town with close to 40% of its residents hailing from a black or minority-ethnic background. Over 50 different first languages are spoken and the town has the highest proportion of Sikh residents in the country, the highest percentage of Muslim residents in the region and the highest percentage of Hindu residents in the south east. There are also high levels of new arrivals and asylum seekers many of which are vulnerable and in need of key services. One third of the population was born outside of the UK and one-fifth from outside the EU. Slough has a young population with a higher than national average number of young people and those of working age. 13 per cent of people are of pensionable age and this is much lower than either the regional or national averages of around 19 per cent.

Slough has experienced a number of fluctuations in its Index of Multiple Deprivation profile. Thus whilst it was ranked 107th in the original list in 2000, it moved to 129th by 2004. However more recently and as of 2007 Slough ranked at 115th most deprived locality in England. However this global figure obfuscates, more than illuminates, what is a complex local picture. For instance there are large disparities between wards with 1 Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) ranking among the most deprived 10% nationally and a further 4 LSOAs appearing amongst the 20% most deprived nationally. In terms of further indicators of deprivation 6.5% of households in Slough have no access to central heating. The Berkshire average is 4.5%. 23.2% of Slough residents have no access to a car or van. The Berkshire average for this indicator is 16.4% whilst the regional average is 19.4%.

Health and Well-Being

The factors affecting the health of Slough's population are complex and varied. At one level are the structural issues which affect all communities. This includes the urban environment and corollary issues of poor quality housing (both public and private sector), the presence of a large industrial estate and several smaller industrial zones towards the east of the town, traffic congestion with the close proximity of the M4, M25 and M40 as well as the A4 and Slough's close links with Heathrow. Combined these factors have a detrimental impact upon the health of local residents from all backgrounds. A second factor to assess relates to the demographics of the population itself. The percentage of households in Slough that had one or more persons with a limiting long-term disability (2001 Census) stood at 14%, a relatively high percentage when compared to regional peers. This itself can be attributed to the nature of industry that has historically been in the town and the preponderance of manual, low skilled work that had been available for residents.

Poor health is strongly correlated to poverty and approximately 5,800 children are living in low-income households whilst socio-economic issues can also affect dietary habits and levels of alcohol consumption and smoking. And although people's lifestyles (alcohol, diet) are significantly better than the national or regional average, a higher percentage of the adult population are estimated to smoke (25.2%) whilst alcohol consumption remains higher amongst certain demographics.

Finally, Slough is home to a heterogeneous mix of communities each of which brings unique challenges. In Slough circulatory diseases (coronary heart disease and strokes) are the largest cause of loss of life, closely followed by all cancers. Diabetes is also a major health problem and is particularly common in the Asian communities. Death rates for circulatory diseases in Slough are significantly higher than the rest of Berkshire, the South-East and England & Wales, although death rates in Slough appear to be falling at least as fast as the rest of the country. Loss of life attributable to cancer is not significantly different from the average for the South East and for England & Wales. Life expectancy in Slough is slightly lower than the South East and national Average. In 2003 life expectancy for the most deprived 20% of the town stood at 75 years, 4.5 years less than for people in the most affluent 20% of the town. Both figures remain the lowest in Berkshire, and very low for the region. The death rate in Slough as indicated by the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) was 94 in 2003 compared with a United Kingdom average of 100, indicating a lower death rate than the national average. This is also the joint highest SMR in Berkshire.

Taking into account these issues and based on findings from the public health needs assessment the following areas remain a priority for the town:

- Coronary heart disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Mental health
- Smoking and Obesity
- Sexual health

In addition to the priority areas above the following remain key challenges:

Firstly is the fast growing population and the presence of the existing aging population. Slough has one of the highest black BME populations outside London. The older people population is set to increase by 13% by 2020 with sharp increases in the number of people aged over 75. The ageing population will see a corresponding increase in people with long term conditions and also those suffering from mental health and old age primarily dementia related conditions and depression. These trends will require reconfigurations of service to meet such challenges.

In Learning Disability the challenges include people living much longer who have more complex health needs and an estimated additional 37 people with moderate to severe learning disabilities moving from children's to adult services over the next five years. In relation to Physical Disabilities, it is estimated by 2025, 50% of the national population will have at least one long-term condition. For Slough this means circa 57,000 people on current population figures. In relation to sensory needs a recent review of national statistics indicate that a far greater number of Slough residents have a sensory needs compared with those currently registered on the hearing and visual impaired registers. The development of integrated services to meet the needs of these communities remains a priority for us.

Finally a comprehensive review of population needs is taking place as part of the joint health and social care strategic needs analysis. The work undertaken to date indicates the need to address services particularly in the three most deprived Wards in the Borough i.e. Chalvey, Britwell and Stoke and Baylis. Much of this work will be cross-cutting and will invariably need to be tied into work around addressing housing needs and wider poverty and deprivation issues.

Economy and Learning

Slough's economy remains buoyant. A recent economic assessment and national analysis by Local Futures has identified that the economy of Slough contributes close to £7.5 billion to the national GDP and up to £700 million of manufacturing output, placing Slough as the third most productive town outside of London. A number of factors contribute to the economic success story. Firstly Slough has excellent accessibility. The town is situated within 10 minutes of London's Heathrow Airport and has 3 exits off the M4 motorway which gives easy access to both London and the West Country. It is within 10 minutes of the M25 and close to the M40 motorway. Slough also has fast rail links to Reading and London Paddington both being within 20 and 15 minutes on the Great Western Line. The second factor to account for this economic success is the demographic make-up of the town. The heterogeneous mix brings dynamism and enterprise. Slough continues to see an increase in VAT registered businesses (3,280) at a faster rate of net growth than the UK or the south-east as a whole. Self-employment has grown by 56% over the last 6 years and now represents 8.4% of the working population. Finally the presence of the Trading Estate both adds to the presence of Slough as a major economic hub whilst also providing a home to 20,000 of the towns 81,000 total jobs as well as a home for over 400 business including international names such as O2, Sara Lee, Ferrari Masserati and Research in Motion.

However behind this ostensible success lies a more mixed picture. Unemployment rates for males have recently been recorded at 5% while female unemployment rates were 7%. Elementary occupations, that is occupations requiring minimal or no skills, grew from about 12.2% in February 2002 to 16.8% by September 2006. 79% of people were registered as economically active in Slough or about 64,200 people. Factors which could help explain unemployment levels include the relative paucity of part-time employment which especially affects females as well as the arrival of migrant labour from Eastern Europe which has led to displacement of indigenous workers. The number of claimants of incapacity benefit as at the end of 2006 was 6.1%. This was higher than the regional average of 4.7%. The number of claimants of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) had however fallen between 1996 and 2007 from the earlier figure of 6% to the new low of 2.6%. Again Slough performed poorer than its regional neighbours with the South East registering a JSA claimant count of only 1.6%. Gross weekly pay of residents in Slough increased from £380.4 in 2002 to £449.5 by 2006. However this was still markedly below the South East average of £488.7 and substantially lower than the average salary for jobs in Slough which stands at £574. This growing disconnect between the changing profile of local industry and the accompanying skills required for a knowledge driven economy and the skill profile within the local community is of particular concern.

The April 2001 census showed that 28.11% of 16-74 year olds have no qualifications at all and 19.68% have a first degree or equivalent. This is compared to 23.92% and 21.75% for the South East respectively. The underperformance in this area poses significant challenges in terms of employment chances and quality of life for Slough residents. In 2001 the number of Slough residents in full time education was 6018 or 5.05% of the population. This was slightly higher than the regional outturn of 4.85%. 40.9% of Slough's full-time students were economically active more than the average for the South East (40.3%) and England (36.7%). As of 2006 55.1% of Slough pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C. This compared to the England average of 45.8%. 19.2% of children in Slough schools have a special need with 3% having a statement of Special Educational Needs. Slough has also performed well in increasing the number of entrants to university. Between 1999/00 and 2005/06 the percentage of young people entering university grew by 35%. This compared favourably against both the regional average (17%) and the national figure of 18%. Wards that performed particularly well in this regards included Central, Upton and Baylis and Stoke.

A major element of the Slough story relating to the economy and skills is the growing gap between 'have's' and the 'have nots'. Despite Slough being a relatively compact geographical area, there are communities living in relative proximity but with contrasting economic fortunes. Thus according to recent figures (February 2007), sourced from NomisWeb, wards with relatively high number of JSA claims (Job Seekers Allowance) included Chalvey at 5% and Central and Baylis and Stoke at 3.5% and 3.1% respectively. In terms of the aggregated Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) claimant count (individuals in receipt of at least one form of DWP benefit) Baylis and Stoke, Britwell and Central wards feature most prominently. In terms of the percentage of the working age population who are economically active (according to Census 2001 stats) wards where challenges still remain include Baylis and Stoke (70.3%), Central (72.5%) and Chalvey (75.2%). In comparison the more affluent parts of the Borough fared much better with Langley St Mary's and Cippenham Green both registering at 85%.

When in employment the types of jobs engaged in by local residents differed. Thus whilst only 28% and 29% of residents living in Baylis and Stoke and Britwell respectively were in professional occupations, 50% and 45% of residents in Upton and Cippenham Meadows were in such forms of employment. Whilst only 13% and 14% of residents in Langley St Mary's and Upton were in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations 30% of residents in Baylis and Stoke and 28% of residents in Central were involved in this type of work. Finally, in terms of the percentage of households with *no* adults in employment but *with* dependent children Baylis and Stoke and Britwell both featured at 8%. In comparison 2.3% of households in Upton and 2.6% of households in Langley St Mary's faced similar challenges.

A similar profile exists for learning. Thus 37.6% of residents in Britwell had no qualifications followed by Baylis and Stoke at 35%. In comparison Cippenham Meadows, Upton and Langley St Mary's all performed particularly well at 19.5%, 20% and 21% respectively. In terms of people with level 5 qualifications (first degree or above) 32% of residents in Upton could tick yes to this indicator with 23% in Langley St Mary's and 25% in Cippenham Meadows being able to do likewise. However only 10.3% of residents in Britwell and 16% in Cippenham Green had similar levels of qualifications.

Addressing this gap between and within communities should remain a key priority for the council.

Safer Communities

The crime and safety profile of Slough continues to be an area of key concern. Figures obtained from the most recent Annual Attitude Survey 2006 reinforced this fact. Figures found that approximately one in five residents (19%) feel unsafe in Slough in the daytime with one in ten (11%) feel unsafe at all times – a proportion which has not changed substantially from previous years. Looking at how safe people feel outside after dark we see that there has been a slight rise in the proportion of people who feel safe, rising from 28% in 2004 to 32% in 2006. There has been no significant change in the proportion of residents feeling unsafe where it remains around two in five (43%). Women tend to feel less safe than men with just 22% feeling safe outside at night compared to 42% of men. Ethnic minority residents tend to feel safer than white residents (37% compared to 29%). Those in social rented accommodation or those in the lower income bracket, or with no qualifications are less likely to say they feel safe in their area.

Some of these perceptions are however borne out by reality and despite Slough's relatively low population it continues to have a crime rate above the CDRP family average. A recent audit which fed into the development of the Crime, Drug and Disorder Strategy for 2005-8 showed that the total number of incidents increased between 2001-2004 compared to the preceding three years (1998-01). One in three of Slough's residents have experienced vandalism whilst one in five has experienced abandoned vehicles and graffiti. Between April 2005 and March 2006 there were 2886 reported cases of violence against the person and 2460 reported cases of theft from vehicles. Both of these were disproportionate for a town the size of Slough.

Vehicle crime, burglary and violent crime are of particular concern, as is actual and perceived incidents of anti-social behaviour. In terms of the first of these findings have shown that despite progress made between 2001 and 2003, the theft of and theft from vehicles has again increased with a disproportionate amount of thefts targeting laptops and other business peripherals. Burglary remains a problem though the town has witnessed a steady decline since 2002/03. Violence against the person, robbery and sexual offences have all increased year on year since 2001 with the latter increasing by 14% in 2003/04 alone. Finally, Slough continues to contend with a variety of anti-social behaviour offences ranging from environmental damage, misuse of public space including the taking of drugs and consumption of alcohol and street prostitution.

Slough has a significant drug problem. Paradoxically, given that this a contributory factor to its economic success, Slough's location exacerbates the problem as the good transport links make Slough an ideal transit route to the rest of the country. Crack and Heroin remain the most prevalent Class A drugs in Slough both with purity levels of 80% which means they are amongst the most pure and cheapest in the country. Contacts with offenders over the years has allowed the council to build a good profile of typical offenders. Data suggests that the average offender tends to be White, Male and in the early twenties. Typically the criminal activity is used to fund a drug habit. From the detected offences, males tend to be charged with violent crime, shoplifting or burglary whereas females tend to be charged with shoplifting, fraud and theft.

Thus a number of areas continue to be of key concern, however like many social problems, finding effective remedies will invariably involve addressing cross-cutting issues as much as the actual incidents themselves. Thus whilst the immediate focus maybe on addressing the prevalence of drugs or looking at the rehabilitation of women involved in street prostitution doing so will mean addressing underlying issues of poverty, educational failure and raising the prospect of alternative employment.

Environment

Slough has historically fared poorly against the environmental agenda. A largely urban environment ensconced by key transit routes and in close proximity to Heathrow airport, the town suffers from poor air quality and traffic congestion. The standard of the built environment remains poor with approximately 51% of social housing failing to meet the government's 'decent homes standard'. The presence of the Trading Estate and smaller industrial estates to the east of the borough, whilst offering many advantages, exacerbates problems especially in relation to air quality.

Given the issues and the importance being attached to this area nationally and internationally, it is unsurprising to learn that environmental concerns remain a key priority for local residents. Indeed in the most recent Annual Attitude Survey (2006-07) a significant proportion of residents (50%) stated clean streets as being a key characteristic of what a 'good area to live in' would look like. A further 37% and 26% respectively cited good facilities in terms of Parks and Open Spaces and level of pollution.

Taking these priorities into account the council has made significant strides in addressing some key issues. The council launched the Green waste kerbside scheme now covering 20,000 homes. Coupled with the Big Green Day Out event, the council helped increase the profile of recycling within the Borough. At the same time increased resources allowed significant strides to be made in service delivery with satisfaction levels for street cleaning and recycling services increasing by 9% (74% to 83%) and 20% (46% and 66%) respectively. Progress was made in taking forward the Heart of Slough Project which has now reached the master-plan stage, Art @ the Centre which began work on the ground in October 2007 and the regeneration of Britwell and Northborough which now has a finalised master-plan. The council continued the roll out of the 20mph zones in residential areas a move which helped improve road safety and cut the numbers seriously injured or killed in road casualties. However the council recognises that further work is still required. The Annual Attitude Survey showed that in terms of what residents thought most needed improving the following environmental issues were cited – levels of traffic congestion, cleanliness of streets and road/pavement repairs (24%, 22% and 20% respectively).

Finally, and again an issue identified in the Annual Attitude Survey, was the lack of affordable and fit-for-purpose housing. Like many other issues affecting Slough, the housing experience differs across communities. Thus whilst the wards of Britwell, Foxborough and Wexham Lea all register relatively low levels of owner occupation (53%, 62%, 63%) the more affluent parts of the Borough perform better (Langley St Marys – 78% and Cippenham Green 76%). Britwell, Kedermister and Foxborough (41%, 31% and 31%) all have a relatively high percentage of residents in social housing. Only 9.7% of residents in Langley St Mary's and 11.8% of residents in Upton rent from a social landlord. The Slough average for this indicator is 20.9%. This is on par with the national average (19.2%) but is well above the Berkshire average of 14%. Finally Central (23.6%), Baylis and Stoke (22%) and Wexham Lea (20%) all featured prominently in the indicator related to overcrowded housing. In comparison only 10% of households in Cippenham Green and 12% of households in Foxborough and Haymill suffered from overcrowding.

Offering effective housing provision is therefore crucial. And not only does Slough need to close the gap between the more deprived and affluent parts of the borough, further work is required to offer affordable housing, larger housing to meet the needs of particular communities and raising the potential for communities in particular parts of the borough to enter the owner-occupied market.

Conclusion

This overview provides a general snapshot of Slough and the issues public agencies, alone and in collaboration, are seeking to address. A key fact highlighted by this overview is the way in which Slough is distinct from its regional peers. The issues affecting Slough means that it stands out within the south east and in many respects is more akin to areas to the west and centre of London. In attempting to understand the challenges Slough faces and to place this in context it is perhaps more advisable to draw parallels with London rather than the south east.

Slough is a town of contrasts with affluent communities sitting alongside the more deprived all within a compact geographical space of six square miles. Slough can lay claim to being a dynamic business hub and home to a veritable list of successful multinationals but at the same time contains communities which struggle on the minimum wage. This paradoxical position, with affluence alongside deprivation, has recently been highlighted by the IMD 2007 which demonstrated the gap between particular wards (Foxborough, Chalvey, Britwell) which feature amongst the most deprived in the country and other wards (Langley St Marys, Cippenham Meadows) for which the obverse is true. For the first time Slough has a Lower Super Output Area within the most deprived 10% of the country.

In many respects Slough is a victim of its own success. The ability to welcome and integrate communities from across the globe has contributed to its dynamism and enterprise. However new communities, whilst bringing advantages, also bring unique challenges. Arguably the decline of Slough in terms of IMD ranking from 129th to 115th is partly due to the arrival of new and often vulnerable communities – something which has affected Slough since 2004 and which the town, like many localities has had to deal with and accommodate within existing resources. A further challenge in absorbing the new communities remains community cohesion and the need to gel communities together often in very difficult circumstances. Slough has done very well in both these regards but further work will almost certainly be required.

Further work will also be required in addressing some of the underlying issues which feed into the poverty and deprivation found in the town. Indeed like many social problems, remedial action often involves dealing with a complexity of cross-cutting issues which act as contributory factors to the problem, rather than the problem itself. Thus whilst the problem may be street prostitution – dealing with this in a preventative way will invariably involve addressing issues of educational failure, poor or inadequate housing, drug prevention and rehabilitation and the opening up of alternative and employment opportunities. Ultimately, it is in addressing these cross-cutting issues that the wider problems of poverty or potential problems of community cohesion can be solved in a more sustainable way. This will require investment and long-term planning. However Slough continues to challenge the ONS population statistics and is becoming increasingly concerned about the shortfall in resources to meet the needs of its communities.

2. Locally Distinctive Themes

This LAA seeks to deliver a range of outcomes that contribute towards the achievement of the emerging vision for the town.

The vision is being developed for our Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which will set the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the social, environmental and economic well-being of the local area. As such the strategy will set out how we will address difficult and cross-cutting issues such as economic development and community cohesion.

Our shared evidence base has informed the development of this vision and informed the identification of our themes and priorities. This includes taking account of the Local Development Framework so that we can ensure that it is fully integrated with and helps us deliver our SCS.

The themes and 20 years outcomes for our vision that have been identified are:

- Health and Well Being
- Safer Communities
- The Environment
- Economy and Skills

4 cross-cutting themes have also been identified:

- Closing the Gap ¹
- Community Cohesion
- Housing
- Transport

For each theme we have worked on identifying long term measurable outcomes. Change against these will only be demonstrable in the long term and not within the 3 year period of the LAA. Therefore we have identified outcomes that can be delivered over the life of the LAA that will contribute to the achievement of the long term outcomes. In identifying these we have considered the following:

- Universality – delivering the greatest good for the greatest number of people
- Spatial level – the appropriate geographical area or target groups for interventions
- Focus of prevention
- Whether outcomes are theme specific or cross-cutting.

The draft outcomes and indicators are set out in Appendix 1 of this document.

Testing against these criteria, prioritisation of improvement areas and further consideration of the relevance of National Indicators will help reduce the 'long list' of outcomes and indicators for the purposes of the LAA.

• ¹ Inequalities within Slough and between Slough, the region and the country

3. Consultation and Decision-Making Process

There have been 5 stages to the consultation and decision-making process that supports the selection of themes and outcomes in this draft. The outcomes from each stage were taken forward into and used to shape the next part of the consultation process. The Councils Management Team and the Slough Focus Steering Group have endorsed the approach.

Preparation of evidence base - August and September 2007

Council leads worked with colleagues and partners to identify the current position and performance, inequalities, threats and opportunities, and issues and options for the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for a range of themes.

These were brought together with an overview of Slough's wards and resident priorities, informed by various consultations, to form the evidence base to be used for the development of the SCS and LAA.

The Evidence Base is under continual review to ensure that it takes account of any new evidence that becomes available - Indices of deprivation (published in December 2007), the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Health and the Slough Children and Young Peoples plan 2008.

Awareness raising and consultation with SBC - September and early October 2007

The councils Senior Management Development Forum and Elected Members have had opportunities to consider and discuss the evidence.

The Senior Management Development Forum spent time sharing their evidence with each other and discussing issues arising. This has not only raised the profile of the LAA within the council but has also helped to facilitate the consideration of more challenging cross-cutting issues.

In early October 2007, Elected Members considered the key challenges facing Slough over the short, medium and long term and began to think about a long term vision and the potential priorities to be taken forward within the new SCS and LAA.

As a result Elected Members are better equipped with the knowledge to engage in further consultations and discussion with Slough Focus to develop the priorities to be taken forward in the LAA.

Stakeholder Visioning Workshops - November 2007

A range of partners were invited to attend one of 3 sessions held to discuss a long term vision for Slough. Attendees used evidence base to inform discussion of the biggest challenges facing Slough today, the likely needs over the next 20 years and a vision for Slough in 5, 20 and 50 years. Over 40 people attended from a range of organisations.

Priority Setting Workshop – December 2007

Just over 40 partners attended this workshop which considered the outcomes of the stakeholder visioning workshops and developed a shared vision of the key themes. They also began to discuss and started to get clarity on priority outcomes.

Roundtable meeting with GOSE - December 2007

Local themes and leads were agreed at this meeting. These leads have continued to work, with key partners, to develop the long list of outcomes and to select potential indicators.

Following on from this meeting, an LAA Development Group will be established to take forward the development of the LAA and to lead development against each of the themes.

Provisional membership of this group is given at Appendix 2.

Next Steps

The Slough Focus meeting on the 1st February is an important milestone in the development of the LAA. At that meeting we will formally agree the themes and potential indicators for the LAA, the role of the LAA Development Group and the process for Slough Focus to sign-off the final LAA.

A draft Project Plan is attached at Appendix 3 which shows the key decision-making points in the future development of the LAA.

4. Engagement of partners – including named partners, the 3rd sector and the business community

Slough Focus

Engagement of partners in the LAA has been primarily through Slough Focus, our Local Strategic Partnership, and the numerous partnerships that are covered by this umbrella partnership.

Slough Focus has developed out of a tradition of strong partnership working in Slough. The partnership was established in 2001 and its structure has been evolving since its inception. Following a Slough Focus summit in 2005, a more streamlined structure focused on delivery has emerged. The structure is made up of a core Steering Group and 6 sub-partnerships, known as Priority Action Groups (PAGs). Each of these PAGs brings together a wide range of partners to deliver against key themes.

Community partnerships, statutory agencies, the business community, voluntary groups and local people feed into both the Steering Group and PAGs.

Throughout the development of the LAA engagement has been via the existing PAG structure and also via specific events arranged to discuss the LAA. The Health and Well Being PAG, the Safer Slough PAG and the Economy and Skills PAG have all discussed the LAA in detail. The Children's Trust has formed a clear view on its priorities as part of the Autumn Annual Strategic Planning meeting and consultation on the revised Children and young peoples plan, led by the Children's Trust, will continue to shape those priorities.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in health will further information the development of outcomes and selection of indicators. A range of partners are engaged in this process. The Safer Slough PAG held its six monthly strategic assessment in July which has helped them to shape priorities to feed into the LAA.

We recognise that some of the PAGs need to be strengthened and their role clarified. This is covered in the last section of this document which deals with partnership capacity.

The specific events arranged for partners to engage in the development of the LAA were explained in the previous section². A list of partners who have been represented at LAA development events is given at Appendix 4.

Engagement of the Business Community

The partnership benefits from a well established business partnership – Slough Community Business Partnership (SBCP). The partnership is an important contributor to many of the outcomes and delivers some key supporting projects. SBCP is a key organisation in the town which has been working in partnership with its members, the Voluntary and Community Sector and public sector agencies to raise aspirations of people who live learn and work in Slough. SBCP's activities also support other areas of Slough Focus and enable local businesses to make a difference in the town.

² Slough Visioning Workshops and the Priority Setting Workshop

The recent Skills Summit, attended by 90 people, was arranged specifically for the private sector to articulate their future skills needs.

The Economic development and Learning PAG is particularly strong and a range of private sector organisations are involved in this partnership. These include SEEDA, the Chamber of Commerce, Business Link, Slough Trading Estate and the Federation of Small Businesses as well as individual businesses.

Engagement with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The Statement of Voluntary and Community Engagement developed for our first LAA explained how the VCS are involved in Slough Focus. As stated then, Slough continues to be committed to strengthening the participation of its VCS in the development and implementation of the LAA. Slough's VCS contribution is in a range of ways:

- Service design, planning, delivering with high levels of trust from users
- Enabling strong and meaningful community participation in decision- making;
- Builders of social capital and community cohesion;
- A source of expertise; and
- Part of the governance, monitoring and evaluation of the LAA.

The principles of VCS participation in the development and implementation of the LAA are based upon and echo Slough's Compact. The Compact is the outcome of an extensive planning process among statutory and voluntary sector partners and relied on the participation of those partners in its production.

In our first LAA we identified that formal methods and structures to elicit representative views and participate in decision-making from the VCS were lacking. The recent ongoing participation work that brings together the Local Public Sector Agreement and ChangeUp Infrastructure Development Plan through the work of the Participation and Compact Worker has facilitated progress in this area.

A Community Network has now been established which the aim of bringing together VCS organisations build partnerships and to participate in decision-making. In a Community Networking Event in early November community and voluntary organisations talked about their vision for the future of Slough. The outcomes from this workshop are currently being finalised and will be fed into the next stage of the LAA development.

VCS representatives also attended the Visioning workshops and the Priority Setting workshops. Appendix 4 gives a list of organisations represented at the events.

Engagement of named partners.

The majority of (appropriate) named partners are already involved in Slough Focus and have been invited to attend the LAA events that we have held.

Future drafts of the LAA will be widely circulated amongst partners for comment, particularly targeting any organisations that have not so far been involved.

We are reviewing the existing Slough Focus structure as explained in the next section and this review will encompass consideration of which partners are and need to be engaged as well as the appropriate level for this engagement.

5. Partnership Capacity

We are confident that we will be able to get to a final LAA at the beginning of June in line with GOSE's timetable.

We acknowledge that we have some issues to address in order to ensure that the LSP is fit for purpose as we move into the new LAA. A summary of those issues and the action we are taking follows.

- A 'fit for purpose' LSP – a Partnership Development Group has been established by Slough Focus Steering Group to consider a revised structure for Slough Focus. It is particularly concerned with ensuring that there is effective management of the LAA with the associated governance and accountability, performance management, risk management and engagement arrangements. This includes a review of the existing PAG structure.
- LAA development – The decision-making process for agreement of the final LAA and opportunities for engagement in the process need to be clear. A draft timetable which sets out the key dates is nearly finalised (and is attached in Appendix 3). An LAA Development Group has been proposed following the Roundtable meeting with GOSE in December. There will be discussion and agreement on their role and the process for signing off the LAA at the Slough Focus Steering Group meeting on the 1st February.
- Member Engagement – Slough Focus is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council. We have recognised the need to ensure that there is wider engagement from Members, both from the Council, and from other organisations, in setting priorities and as representatives of their communities. There is also an important role for Overview and Scrutiny, who are receiving performance reports for the current LAA, but can play a greater role particularly in light of the new powers available to them. We have begun a program of engaging Members in the development of the LAA and this will continue.
- Direct Support for Slough Focus – Partners have agreed to pool part of the Local Public Service Agreement Reward to fund the appointment of an LSP Manager and Support Officer for a 3 year period. It has proved difficult to appoint to the posts and the jobs are currently being re-advertised. The appointments will provide an important resource to take forward work on the LSP, the SCS and LAA.