

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE 10th September 2020

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WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

SLOUGH LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED SPATIAL STRATEGY

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to explain the proposed content of the Spatial Strategy part of the Local Plan for Slough which is due to go out for public consultation in November and December..

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to resolve that

- a) the proposed content of the Local Plan Spatial Strategy be noted; and
- b) any comments be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration..

3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Ensuring that needs are met within the local area will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

- *Economy and Skills*
- *Regeneration and Environment*
- *Housing*

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The proposed Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan will have impact upon the Five Year Plan outcomes:

- **Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to protect and enhance the local environment.
- **Outcomes 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to ensure that we have a balanced housing market that can meet the range of housing needs in Slough.
- **Outcome 5: Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investments to provide opportunities for our residents.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will promote areas for employment growth in Slough.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications.

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That the Committee approves the recommendation.	Failure to agree the proposed Spatial Strategy for consultation will affect the Council's ability to bring forward the Local Plan and plan for development in the most sustainable way.	Agree the recommendations.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications as a result of this report.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 All Councils have a duty to produce a Local Plan and the Government has set a target for all Local Planning Authorities to have one adopted by 2023.
- 5.2 We have been working on our local Plan for some time beginning with the Issues and Options consultation in 2017 and following this up by agreeing an “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy. We were unable to progress this through the next formal stages because of the uncertainty as to what was happening with Heathrow. It is now very unlikely that any proposal for the third runway will come forward in the short term and so we can now proceed with our plan on the basis that any new proposals for Heathrow can be dealt with in a review.
- 5.3 We are proposing to carry out public consultation on the Spatial Strategy in

November and December.

- 5.4 The Spatial Strategy is just the first, but important part of the Local Plan. It sets out what the pattern, scale and nature of development will be in Slough. It has to make provision to meet housing, employment and other needs, whilst conserving the natural, built and historic environment.
- 5.5 It will not contain any policies but will set out the principles for what will be required to deliver the Strategy and help to mitigate any impacts. Environmental issues, and the need to deal with climate change, are embedded in the choices made in the Spatial Strategy as to “what goes where” in the most sustainable way.
- 5.6 In considering how to decide what the best use of scarce land in the Borough should be, the following factors have to be taken into account:
- Based upon the Government’s standard methodology, there is a need for 15,460 additional homes over the remaining 16 years of the plan period at an average of 966 a year.
 - There is also a significant need for affordable housing and for a range of house types including family housing.
 - We are unable to set a target for the number of jobs that are required to support the Slough economy but will continue to aim to provide an additional 15,000 jobs in order to meet the needs of the growing resident workforce. This should not be regarded as a maximum figure.
 - There is a general demand for land for warehousing in the Slough area.
 - There will be a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace in Slough town centre in recognition that it will no longer be a sub-regional shopping centre.
 - Slough will become an increasingly important transport hub
 - There continues to be a shortage of public open space in the Borough.
- 5.7 The Spatial Strategy has a Vision, a set of Objectives and some guiding principles. These are:
- We should aim to meet as many of our needs as possible in Slough, or as close as possible to where the needs arise.
 - Development should be located in the most accessible locations, which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
 - We should promote inclusive growth with more of the wealth generated in Slough staying in Slough.

- 5.8 The overall aim is to make Slough a place where people want to “*work rest play and stay*”
- 5.9 We have divided Slough into distinct geographical areas and produced a strategy for each of these components. These can be summarised as:
- ***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.
- 5.10 The main outcome of this strategy is that nearly all of the growth will take place in the centre of Slough. There will continue to be on going redevelopment in places like the Trading Estate and support will be given to our existing District and Neighbourhood centres.
- 5.11 There may have to be some release of Green Belt sites on the edge of Slough to meet housing needs. The suburban residential areas will be protected from major development and there will be no loss of public open space.
- 5.12 Any unmet housing needs will be met in a major expansion of Slough outside of its borders. More details of each component are set out below.

Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;

- 5.13 As explained above, the overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 5.14 One of the other core principles is to make the most effective use of land by using that which has been previously developed. The centre of Slough contains a lot of these brownfield sites which should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact. The Centre of Slough is also the area with the most demand for new development and so should be the area most likely to be able to deliver this.
- 5.15 As a result concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is at the heart of the Spatial Strategy. The “square mile” as it is sometimes referred to will provide the bulk of housing that will be built in the Borough. The proposed expansion of the Central Business District with new office development provides the main opportunity for employment growth in Slough.

- 5.16 The centre's role as a transport hub will make it the focus for the Council's forthcoming Transport Strategy. Although it is currently failing as a shopping centre it has the potential to provide a smaller but more attractive retail offer. There is a lack of leisure and cultural facilities in Slough and so there is the opportunity to create a range of these throughout the centre.
- 5.17 The Centre of Slough will provide the bulk of the new housing proposed in Slough on a range of sites. The key thing is to ensure that all of these new housing developments are linked and integrated with the centre so that full use is made of facilities on offer.
- 5.18 The Spatial Strategy takes into account the work that has been carried out to produce the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee. As a result it is not proposed to duplicate this here.

Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;

- 5.19 There is potential for development to take place outside of the centre to help meet local needs.. The opportunities are, however, limited.
- 5.20 The largest and most important part of the Borough, outside of the centre, is Slough Trading Estate .As a result it is identified as a Selected Key Location where continual renewal will take place to meet changing needs. This is likely to be implemented through the preparation of a new Simplified Planning Zone for the Estate.
- 5.21 The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough which also needs to be identified as a Selected Key Location. Proposals have be set out for this could regenerated primarily for airport related development.
- 5.22 The regeneration of Chalvey has been underway for some time. It has been decided to continue to identify this as a Selected Key Location for regeneration in order to ensure that that the remaining major sites are fully integrated with the neighbourhood.
- 5.23 There is an opportunity to redevelop the former Trade Sales area on the Bath Road for residential use. This has been identified as a Selected Key Locaton known as the Cippenham Central Strip.
- 5.24 Elsewhere we have previously considered expanding the centre of Langley around the railway station. The opportunity for doing this appears to have gone because key sites, such as Langley Business Centre, are no longer available for large scale residential or commercial use. As a result this is no longer identified as a Selected Key Location. Suggestions have been put forward for

this Key Location should circumstances change.

- 5.25 Langley and Farnham Road are both District Shopping Centres which have an important role to play. They have therefore been identified as Key Locations but it is not envisaged that there will be any major new development in these areas. There will be no new major out of centre retail development.
- 5.26 Due to the shortage of land for housing in Slough and the lack of opportunities to provide family and affordable housing it is proposed to consider releasing some green field/Green Belt land for residential development. Ten possible sites have been identified but they will have to go through a separate consultation process which also takes account of the results of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result none of these have been identified as Selected Key Locations for development at this stage.
- 5.27 As a result it can be seen that there are selective opportunities for major development outside the Centre of Slough, but these are not likely to produce much of a net increase in commercial floorspace or a significant number of new residential units.

Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;

- 5.28 Enhancing the areas where most people live is an important part of the Spatial Strategy. We recently produced a “Protecting the Suburbs” which showed why it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost. There is, however, scope for redevelopment on non garden land such as garage courts and other brownfield sites.
- 5.29 It is also important that we protect and enhance the open spaces, parks and other assets of community value within the residential areas in order to support healthy and active lifestyles.
- 5.30 At the same time we want to our neighbourhood centres to be vibrant and have an improved range of facilities within them so that people are able to “live locally” if they want to, without the need to travel. This will enable residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives. This will be partly implemented through the Council’s hubs strategy.

Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;

- 5.31 In the “emerging” Spatial Strategy the proposals for the Colnbrook and Poyle area was to “accommodate the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigate the impacts”
- 5.32 For the purposes of the Local Plan it is now assumed that proposals for the third runway will not come forward in the short to medium term which means

that if they do, they can be dealt with by a review of the plan.

- 5.33 In the absence of any policy support or any demonstrable need for airport related development it is considered that the most appropriate approach is to revert back to restraining development in order to protect the Green Belt, Colne Valley Park and Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London. This will also effectively safeguard land from being developed which could be needed for the expansion of the airport in the future.
- 5.34 Proposals for the improvement of the area have been included within this component of the Spatial Strategy. Although the Poyle Trading Estate sits within the Strategic Gap, it has been identified as a Selected Key Location where regeneration can take place in order to take advantage of its location next to Heathrow and provide new airport related facilities.

Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

- 5.35 The main conclusion from the results of the Issues and Options consultation was that there were no reasonable options, or combinations of options, which would enable all of Slough's housing and employment needs to be met within the Borough. This is one of the reasons that the Council has been promoting the proposed Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.36 It should be noted that the proposed "garden Suburb" has also been promoted as the best way of meeting unmet needs in southern Buckinghamshire as well as Slough. It would also be able to provide much needed family housing and create a more balanced housing market in the area.
- 5.37 Although a Northern Expansion of Slough remains the Council's preferred option, it is just one of many that are currently being assessed in the joint Wider Area Growth Study. We are not seeking to anticipate the results of Part 2 of the study which will not be available until the end of the year. As a result the Spatial Strategy is just promoting the "cross border" expansion of Slough.

Next Steps

- 5.38 The formulation of the Spatial Strategy has been overseen by the Planning Committee. Final approval of the plan will be sought at the Cabinet meeting on 12th October. Any comments from this Committee can be reported to this meeting.
- 5.39 There will then be a six week public consultation period from 2nd November to 11th December.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The Spatial Strategy is an important part of the Local Plan which seeks to determine how much development goes where. The proposals set out in this report are intended to be put out for public consultation in November.

7 Background Papers

Review of the Local Plan for Slough – Issues and Options Consultation Document (2017)

Reports to Planning Committee meetings on 24th June, 29th July, 26th August and 9th September 2020

Draft Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework (August 2020)